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# Timeline and Background Of Discord with the UUA and UUMA

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's history  
with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the  
Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

# Overview

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's Committee on the Ministry decided to compile the history up to the current events of our discord with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministry Association.

This document is pretty self explanatory. In orange is the date of event, then the paragraph explaining the event, and then finally if you see an underline word or sentence, you can click on that and it will take you to an external website with more information pertaining to the event i.e. a sermon, a letter, or other documents.

# Common Abbreviations and Other Information

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem: UUCS

Committee on Ministry for UUCS: CoM

Unitarian Universalist Association: UUA

Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association: UUMA

Good Officer: helps ministers when there is tension.

[UUMA Good Officer Program](#)

# About Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a movement that is a non-creedal religion. Instead members are committed to 7 Principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Continued....

# About Unitarian Universalism

UU's place significance on the formal statements of their mutual covenant, or shared agreement, of religious community. The faith tradition is diverse and inclusive and has a rich past dating to the 1600's and has been active in many defining moments in the United States history from the Women's Movement, Civil Rights Movement, and the LGBTQIA+ Rights Movement.

Each UU congregation is autonomous - congregational leaders set their own priorities and choose their own ministers and staff. In recent years the UUA bylaws were changed so that the denomination is no longer governed by principles of representative democracy. UUA trustees who govern the denomination are elected at large by the delegates to General Assembly instead of by delegates to district meetings. Therefore, congregations are not represented in the governing of Association. For most of the denomination's history, delegates who were answerable to their congregations elected trustees to the UUA board, and trustees represented geographical regions of the denomination. The UUA is led by the elected President, Moderator, and Board of Trustees. These leaders are elected every few years by congregational delegates at the annual General Assembly gathering. [More Information about UU Beliefs](#)

# About UUCS

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, Oregon is a religious home for those who seek a religious community that will accept and honor you as you are. We stand by our tagline: *Diverse people. Diverse beliefs. One community.*

UUCS was first established in 1889, then in 1949, after many obstacles and challenges, we became the 6th Unitarian fellowship in the United States. We had several temporary and part-time ministers throughout the years, and one brief experience of full-time ministry. Then in 1986 Reverend M. Maureen Killoran came to us as an extension minister. In 1991, Rev. Killoran accepted a ministerial position in North Carolina. In 1992, we called Reverend Rick Davis as our full-time minister. The following year our congregation voted to change our name to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, Oregon. UUCS is a Welcoming Congregation, a Sanctuary Congregation, and is one of the 160 EarthWISE businesses and organizations in Marion County that is dedicated to the environment. We partner with a fellow UU church in Simenfalva, Transylvania for mutual support, friendship, and respect for our cultural and religious customs. As of 2016 UUCS's membership stands at about 250 individuals. [UUCS In-depth History](#)

# About Reverend Richard “Rick” Davis

Reverend Rick has been the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem’s settled minister for 27 years and prior served the Emerson Unitarian Church in California for 6 years. He has served as a “Good Officer” in the association’s Pacific Northwest Chapter four separate times, which is an elected position by his colleagues.

Rev. Rick’s is inspired by wisdom from many spiritual traditions. He loves the UU tradition that has been the spiritual home of many brave souls who were not afraid to challenge the status quo, a religious movement deeply grounded in American history. In the summer of 2018, he was arrested, along with a few other clergy of the Portland/Salem area, in front of ICE (Immigrations, Customs Enforcement) headquarters in Portland, OR for standing up against the unjust incarceration of asylum seekers. Then in 2019 he stood up against the UUMA and the UUA against the treatment of Todd Eklof first as a Good Officer then as a friend. [More about Reverend Rick](#)

# December 2009

In 2009 the UUA board commissioned a "5th Principle Task Force" to examine whether democratic principles were the basis of the governance of the denomination. The Task Force report clearly stated that the UUA was no longer governed by democratic principles because trustees were not answerable to districts or congregations and because delegates to the General Assembly had to have the financial means to attend and were not given support by the denomination if they lacked adequate funds.

The Task Force recommended changes be made to restore a more representative democracy. The board never discussed the Task Force recommendations.

[Fifth Principle Task Force Report](#)

# March 2017

Controversy about the hiring practices of the Unitarian Universalist Association emerged when Peter Morales chose to hire a white man over a woman of color. Peter Morales chose to write a letter to the UUA board, which he later regretted doing.

To read that letter, see below.

[UUA Peter Morales Conflict](#)

# March 30, 2017

Peter Morales resigns from his position as the first Latino president of the Unitarian Universalist Association three months before his term ended.

# April 2017

The Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees declared that the UUA was based on white supremacy culture, and pushed the support of Critical Race Theory.

[More information about Critical Race Theory](#)

# April 5, 2017

Black Lives of UU urges the adoption of “8th Principle” in Unitarian Universalism which would state: “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountability dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

[8th Principle](#)

# June 2017 UUA Board of Trustees and BLUU

Following UUA General Assembly in New Orleans in June 2017, the UUA launched The Promise and the Practice of our Faith, inviting all Unitarian Universalists to take part by:

1. Financial Support;
2. Scheduling one worship service around the campaign;
3. Making a long-term commitment to dismantling white supremacy, racism, and oppression within our congregations, association, and beyond.

The UUA Board of Trustees Committed \$5.3 million to BLUU in efforts to support black UUs and expand the role and visibility of black UUs within the faith prior to this push.

# May 1, 2019

The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association voted to change the bylaws to make Ministers enforce UUA guidelines in their congregation and enforce a Right Relations Guide which would overpower the current Good Officer Program.

[UUMA Guidelines Proposal](#)

# June 12, 2019

70 Ministers objected to the direction of the changes that the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association were doing within and wrote a response in response to those changes.

[A UUMA Guidelines Proposal Response](#)

# June 25, 2019

Reverend Todd Eklof a registered delegate and host minister of the General Assembly attended 2019 General Assembly in Spokane.

There he and volunteers of his congregation distributed his book The Gadfly Papers (which is still currently being sold on [Amazon](#)). Reverend Todd Eklof was removed from GA and was not allowed to return.

Eklof was quickly accused of disseminating “racism, ableism, and other forms of oppression, including classism, and homo-and-transphobia” although no single passage has been been cited in supporting these claims.

# June 26, 2019

500 ministers, both attending General Assembly and not, signed a letter condemning Reverend Todd Eklof and The Gadfly Papers' message.

Here is the letter: [An Open Letter from the White Unitarian Universalist Ministers](#)

Reverend Eklof was banned from the General Assembly.

# August 16, 2019

Reverend Todd Eklof was removed by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and issued a [letter of censure](#). Eklof was not given a forewarning nor was he given a chance to hear the specifics, or present his own case, nor was there any acknowledgement that 500 UU clergy had violated, en masse, the UUMA Guidelines which state: “I will refrain from relating to colleagues, staff, and members of the congregation or constituents of the setting in which I serve in a manner that creates an intimidating, hostile or oppressive environment. I will not engage in bullying behavior or emotional abuse, further defined in the Addendum of these Guidelines. I will not intentionally deceive colleagues, staff, congregants or constituents in any setting.” [UUMA Guidelines](#) - Code of Conduct, Ethical Standard, #8

The UUMA censure of Eklof without following due process that is outlined in the UUMA Guidelines for Professional Conduct was a violation of their own guidelines.

# UUMA's Leadership Response to Reverend Rick

Reverend Rick publicly supported Rev. Eklof and due to that, he was told to back off - was advised that his role as a Good Officer was to bring Eklof to heel.

When Rev. Rick completed his fourth and final term as a Good Officer, he was promptly removed from the position by the UUMA Pacific Northwest Chapter leaders at the recommendation of the UUMA board.

# September 22, 2019

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's Reverend Rick Davis spoke In Defense of Liberal Religion to UUCS and hosted a follow up discussion.

[In Defense of Liberal Religion](#)

[In Defense of Liberal Religion follow up](#)

## September 29, 2019

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's Committee on Ministry began hosting a four-week Sunday discussion about *The Gadfly Papers*, which they distributed to those who needed them and encouraged others to get copies of the *Gadfly Paper* and read the essays. This was to encourage dialogue among the UUCS congregation members about the book in general, the 500 ministers who publicly ostracized Reverend Eklof, and the harm that has been done to not only Eklof but to Reverend Rick.

General consensus of those who read the book was outrage and disbelief.

# February 9, 2020

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's Reverend Rick Davis and long time UU member Eric Schuman spoke in the pulpit: Does Unitarian Universalism Support our Freedom of Conscience?

[Freedom of Conscience](#)

# February 23, 2020

Reverend Todd Eklof spoke to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem “A Gadfly in Salem” along with a follow up discussion.

[A Gadfly in Salem](#)

[A Gadfly in Salem Discussion](#)

# March 1, 2020

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem's Committee on Ministry held a special congregational meeting to ask members about sending a letter to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association asking them to rescind the censure of Eklof and to refrain from calling the Unitarian Universalist movement a white supremacy movement.

[Letter to the UUA and UUMA](#)

# June 5th, 2020

The UUA removed Reverend Eklof from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) for “refusal to engage” with the fellowship review process after a complaint of ethical misconduct was filed by the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) in January of 2020.

The fairness of the investigation can be called into question since the lead investigator had publicly gone on record condemning Rev. Eklof’s book. When Reverend Rick questioned the fairness, he was ignored. [Letter from Ministerial Fellowship Committee](#)

Although the Gadfly controversy caused dissension within the congregation in Spokane, Eklof’s ministry was endorsed at a congregational meeting where all newly elected trustees supported his continuing to serve.

# UUA General Assembly June 28, 2020

The Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) released its final report entitled Widening the Circle of Concern. This report was commissioned by the UUA Board of Trustees in April 2017 when they declared that the UUA was based on white supremacy culture.

[Widening the Circle of Concern](#)

# September 15, 2020

Reverend Rick Davis and others resigned (or supported the letter but did not resign) from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.

[We Quit](#)

# The Future Endeavors & Additional Reading

The 5th Principle Project will be releasing a book with a chapter written by Reverend Rick Davis.

[5th Principle Project](#)

[Don't Label Me by Irshad Manji](#)

# Additional thoughts

We need to bring to light how GA is itself what the UUA is trying to dismantle, GA is usually in a distant city. For most that requires a person to have 3+ days off in a row (plus you usually need to know 6 months to a year in advance because that is when they sell GA tickets). You need money: GA isn't cheap to attend-- typically \$200+ per person and a \$50 cancellation fee with no scholarships, let alone the cost of hotel, food, transportation. Then each congregation must select delegates to vote on matters that matter most to that congregation. Only a privileged few get to attend GA which means your congregation voice doesn't get to be represented.

We also need to ask if Critical Race Theory the right path for the UUA to be taking.

# Final Words

The UUCS CoM would like to thank you for viewing this document. We have tried to give an accurate view of what is happening within the Unitarian Universalist movement and what has happened to Reverend Rick Davis and more so to Reverend Todd Eklof.

UUCS as a Congregation plus individual Members have reached out to many people inside the UUMA and the UUA asking for a civil dialogue to happen between the UUA, UUMA, Eklof and Rick. Unfortunately those requests have fallen upon deaf ears.