

What Is Unitarian Universalism?

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Unitarian Universalism began within the Christian Church as two separate heresies: belief in the oneness of God (Unitarianism) and belief in universal salvation (Universalism). These ideas, though preceding it, gained followers after the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's and were widely taught in the United States in the 1700's at Harvard College and within the congregationalism of the Pilgrim church.

In 1785 King's Chapel in Boston was the first American church to declare its Unitarianism. Through the years as they were affected by transcendentalism and the rationalist humanists, Unitarianism and Universalism grew further from traditional Christianity and closer to one another and officially merged in 1961.

From their founding both Unitarianism and Universalism were non-creedal, claiming freedom of belief as a basic value. The authority for our individual beliefs is the evidence of our local experience refined through reason and spirit and tested in community. Although those beliefs may range from liberal Christianity to naturalistic humanism, it is probably true that nearly all of us can agree to these four statements:

1.

Each of us has the right and the responsibility to seek his or her own truth.

2.

Our faith, although it may transcend reason may not be contrary to it.

3.

We respect all people for their individual worth without regard to color, creed, gender, or sexual orientation.

4.

We must focus on the needs and purposes of this life rather than an afterlife in which some of us may believe, but for which we have no evidence.

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This only scratches the surface, there is a wealth of information about Unitarian Universalism available on the web site of the [Unitarian Universalist Association](#) .

