**General Assembly 2024**

**Actions of Immediate Witness—General Session Agenda**

The following Actions of Immediate Witness have been added to the General Session Agenda for the consideration to be sent to Congregations for attention this year. Following are the dates of consideration pre-GA and at the General Sessions.

[**World On Fire: Humanitarian Aid and Climate Change**](http://url9064.uua.org/ls/click?upn=u001.Hv9yNsBfG2bJhPsF1HM6xq6IyJEvJHyRvNe71mScwOH79JCMr1f8lGXgfuTJ9MKM6cqNfMSiPAjzJuPxMc2QWUB4R1l7Mn0Wsaow8qcGohXA0TiQUxwfFzMwSgH9cJRUjeS9N6Oy8tF0P-2FiJEAbWTg-3D-3DzrEB_inVWg9XmpevcLlDXwDxTI0Tow8cuFjGiJSo81XuzXhThrfNpg37uIRJ2eVsP5z5asGlldj0yhLEkl8-2B4UVYArFxx3kviNDxc4durBLeJ4wdgqK9fFb6W4Dyc-2FOO58qsCBzDgpzPtIrUZB79c3XqX27OzT4a8-2FMkhY4sF-2Bimh0wbUeTqs-2FocqlJZ9vJM35zZIdlfkGv0LAkVnLSS99Jd74jC8AzJ0uTIgJqShALo-2FS0iCjt7qS43IKYEcNXH-2Ff8baOEMP22zu7gw8Ni9b0hBl14mi4xCwvi0LLW7azA20rEGrC-2B3cBaZ6JxqYvHzWew7o6pI03NjnSm-2F9YfeaBuR60ILGS7ORQ59-2FXbe4kaXSD-2Bw3WoxoAWE4qXaZK-2Bc-2FLHtUFmGD-2F24mkxcZf1SGvFiV8m1oDs9RgkLfnEVA6YupwoMTrO1wS0VIX7eRk-2BQNgDdMo-2FbwdkI7XT5-2FsFtz523UHZmabCVLNY8MOP3R2kCTdmilQiI4Q8ce-2BWjtrszgpiQIC5P86FE-2Bapf-2FSiX2wsgygGldTgoqnmJO-2Bw8lZOQaiTuFe5v6keHJMq-2Foww2g-2Bq2KAF6tCjxKFt2IjEVDVZZLdEwXlLWmJEFY-2BJlVomGe43MdTBqNi-2Bgj3dKt3Jjl9aAZjagid5ZMGcu9kqiGCe-2BTTJLr6NpsEu-2BSA7twXX4BZtX8UIS1WlGncOxSl4zQDlpk2lCoJqw-2BGEUVJeZ4h6NuPKuEY7GT-2Fya75hiGzgNGXAW8rsC6VATU0SHbtdjJK9her9Bp-2B-2F5jdkzfWXtLnshCSFRiYzRqbqmonl2kUruIVGurWn2bx06ceM35GGtvOcQ374G2246D3-2B1M-2BrP5DKqlzNxGrALHH4D00VKi6EPiSacOAAJGqmc7IXnpDFQOaUUpvlBNHQY8Wv4dhjCj5-2B3NWULy75GydoT96tRUFRjRFW881smIj5CsieFsnf4fKUqN-2FAY-2Fa3-2BT1XnZ4JmLaMu3TNU5xZ77O604vf2JruY8vis-3D) Tuesday, June 11 at 7pm ET

[**Solidarity with Palestinians**](http://url9064.uua.org/ls/click?upn=u001.Hv9yNsBfG2bJhPsF1HM6xq6IyJEvJHyRvNe71mScwOH79JCMr1f8lGXgfuTJ9MKMtmXo-2BRixdrxfW51GwCvjDnjb-2B5rtH23Qi0G8ZxIYNXXkijvAmW-2F1PWHNn3g4y2KdgsmE_inVWg9XmpevcLlDXwDxTI0Tow8cuFjGiJSo81XuzXhThrfNpg37uIRJ2eVsP5z5asGlldj0yhLEkl8-2B4UVYArFxx3kviNDxc4durBLeJ4wdgqK9fFb6W4Dyc-2FOO58qsCBzDgpzPtIrUZB79c3XqX27OzT4a8-2FMkhY4sF-2Bimh0wbUeTqs-2FocqlJZ9vJM35zZIdlfkGv0LAkVnLSS99Jd74jC8AzJ0uTIgJqShALo-2FS0iCjt7qS43IKYEcNXH-2Ff8baOEMP22zu7gw8Ni9b0hBl14mi4xCwvi0LLW7azA20rEGrC-2B3cBaZ6JxqYvHzWew7o6pI03NjnSm-2F9YfeaBuR60ILGS7ORQ59-2FXbe4kaXSD-2Bw3WoxoAWE4qXaZK-2Bc-2FLHtUFmGD-2F24mkxcZf1SGvFiV8m1oDs9RgkLfnEVA6YupwoMTrO1wS0VIX7eRk-2BQNgDdMo-2FbwdkI7XT5-2FsFtz523UHZmabCVLNY8MOP3R2kCTdmilQiI4Q8ce-2BWjtrszgpiQIC5P86FE-2Bapf-2FSiX2wsgygGldTgoqnmJO-2Bw8lZOQaiTuFe5v6keHJMq-2Foww2g-2Bq2KAF6tCjxKFt2IjEVDVZZLdEwXlLWmJEFY-2BJlVomGe43MdTBqNi-2Bgj3dKt3Jjl9aAZjagid5ZMGcu9kqiGCe-2BTTJLr6NpsEu-2BSA7twXX4BZtX8UIS1WlGncOxSl4zQDlpk2lCoJqw-2BGEUVJeZ4h6NuPKuEY7GT-2Fya75hiGzgNGXAW8rsC6VATU0SHbtdjJK9her9Bp-2B-2F5jdkzfWXtLnshCSFRiYzRqbqmonl2kUruIVGurWn2bx06ceM35GGtvOcQ36REcH-2B7U5hRh5kz6eHV8GMakVxmgJrTFS1FofzXGBx6tiYijmZzBcdpGlyfTBGXoQOUDqvOTMsuXilbfr7bMC7xnyfjqDUIJUhsnwrjFbgoDS-2B3fFYQ-2Fk6etTXzbd4l-2BionhijeG54HhnxDyLc-2Fx5eIg3XuTzcBu9QrNTGpXJSA-3D) Tuesday, June 11 at 9pm ET

[**Centering Love Amidst the Ongoing Impact of COVID-19**](http://url9064.uua.org/ls/click?upn=u001.Hv9yNsBfG2bJhPsF1HM6xq6IyJEvJHyRvNe71mScwOH79JCMr1f8lGXgfuTJ9MKMb8ZxKLY5lHpgAj5OTNxYdygqR1AXgDGuXvw9dAqHPOl-2BlGUTg9ycrZvUSxEQzfcZ1zRZIKBHEeFsi2JoLTbBDg-3D-3D2Kco_inVWg9XmpevcLlDXwDxTI0Tow8cuFjGiJSo81XuzXhThrfNpg37uIRJ2eVsP5z5asGlldj0yhLEkl8-2B4UVYArFxx3kviNDxc4durBLeJ4wdgqK9fFb6W4Dyc-2FOO58qsCBzDgpzPtIrUZB79c3XqX27OzT4a8-2FMkhY4sF-2Bimh0wbUeTqs-2FocqlJZ9vJM35zZIdlfkGv0LAkVnLSS99Jd74jC8AzJ0uTIgJqShALo-2FS0iCjt7qS43IKYEcNXH-2Ff8baOEMP22zu7gw8Ni9b0hBl14mi4xCwvi0LLW7azA20rEGrC-2B3cBaZ6JxqYvHzWew7o6pI03NjnSm-2F9YfeaBuR60ILGS7ORQ59-2FXbe4kaXSD-2Bw3WoxoAWE4qXaZK-2Bc-2FLHtUFmGD-2F24mkxcZf1SGvFiV8m1oDs9RgkLfnEVA6YupwoMTrO1wS0VIX7eRk-2BQNgDdMo-2FbwdkI7XT5-2FsFtz523UHZmabCVLNY8MOP3R2kCTdmilQiI4Q8ce-2BWjtrszgpiQIC5P86FE-2Bapf-2FSiX2wsgygGldTgoqnmJO-2Bw8lZOQaiTuFe5v6keHJMq-2Foww2g-2Bq2KAF6tCjxKFt2IjEVDVZZLdEwXlLWmJEFY-2BJlVomGe43MdTBqNi-2Bgj3dKt3Jjl9aAZjagid5ZMGcu9kqiGCe-2BTTJLr6NpsEu-2BSA7twXX4BZtX8UIS1WlGncOxSl4zQDlpk2lCoJqw-2BGEUVJeZ4h6NuPKuEY7GT-2Fya75hiGzgNGXAW8rsC6VATU0SHbtdjJK9her9Bp-2B-2F5jdkzfWXtLnshCSFRiYzRqbqmonl2kUruIVGurWn2bx06ceM35GGtvOcQ3aBcoBvnE45RZe93XxPUBYq-2FnSN4wfj9oOSjiEYxNWz2iVLxynAEvtI76wbPYWEwQGJQrK9omu3shQPGjRzlb8cpC94s1vDruPhoIOMaJoRX3q0hj9nj2zl2gqE-2FhEBUIfiKRjqCYvF8XyjHS89fJK3LV-2Fxy-2FbOxC95RWbkqMcFU-3D) Wednesday, June 12 at 7pm ET

General Session Discussion Sunday, June 22

**World on Fire: Humanitarian Work and Climate Change**

<https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-world-on-fire-humanitarian-work-and-climate-change/1509>

**Primary Proposer: Amelia Hanley of One Island Family in Key West, Florida**
**Additional Proposer: Rev. Robert Murphy of St. Petersburg, FL**

* **Immediate Concerns:** The sea keeps rising and each summer is hotter than the previous summer. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that the year 2023 was the hottest year in recorded history for planet Earth. Major storms, wildfires, droughts, and other disasters were reported on every inhabited continent.

NOAA states that the summer of 2024 will probably be as hot or worse than last summer. NOAA anticipates (May 23) above-normal hurricane activity for this year.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled in April that the climate crisis is a human rights crisis. The crisis is here and now. As Unitarian Universalists move into a difficult season, how can congregations and clusters of congregations defend human rights and provide humanitarian services? How can we reduce suffering before, during, and after this year’s disasters?
* **Theological Grounding:** The Bylaws and Rules of our Unitarian Universalist Association identify the purpose of our Association. “The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its members congregation, organize new congregations, and extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implements its principles.” (Bylaws Section C-2.2)
The principles of our Association affirm and promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. Unitarian Universalists respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. Unitarian Universalists pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. (Bylaws Section C-2.3)
* **Immediate Actions:** The General Assembly calls on the President of the United States to use the National Emergencies Act to declare that the climate crisis is a national crisis.

The impact of climate change brings congregations into a new era for religious activities, education, and humanitarian work. The General Assembly calls for immediate and direct action during the next one hundred and twenty days. Congregations are asked to help each other and to act with marginalized groups to provide humanitarian services while working for justice.

Community advocates for racial justice, indigenous people, migrants, houseless people, people living in prisons and in other institutions, the very young and the very old, and other marginalized groups, can identify community needs and opportunities for cooperation. Cooling stations, emergency transportation, and emergency shelter will be needed in some places. Congregations may be asked to provide food and water, to provide financial assistance, to assist with health care and legal services, to assist with firefighting, and to assist with mass evacuations.

The General Assembly condemns the criminalization of the poor because of their poverty. The case of City of Grants Pass v. Johnson is now before the United States Supreme Court. Unitarian Universalists are asked to stay in solidarity with migrants and other displaced people who need humanitarian services.

Individuals should not be abused or abandoned because of gender identity or sexual orientation. The General Assembly supports amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQI plus people. Federal money should be withheld from emergency services programs that permit unlawful discrimination.

Climate change has created new problems for working people outdoors. Workers should be honored for their service during a difficult season. All workers need adequate protection, compensation and representation. The General Assembly supports the organization of democratic labor unions. Congregations are asked to celebrate Labor Day events each year with appropriate events.
* **Resources:** National Unitarian Universalist organizations that are helpful for congregations involved in humanitarian work include the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, EqUUAl Access, the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry, Unitarian Universalist Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education, the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, and the Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community. Welcoming Congregations advocate for LGBTQI plus persons and others. BLUU, DRUMM, and Allies for Racial Equity uplift care, spiritual growth, and liberation, in a multiracial and multicultural faith.

In Florida, the organizations that have been helpful in developing this Action of Immediate Witness include the NAACP and the Urban League, Disability Florida, Interfaith Tampa, the Florida Public Health Association, the AARP and senior citizen centers, and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. Unitarian Universalist congregations are active in Florida’s Gay Pride events at the start of the 2024 hurricane season

# [**Proposed AIW - Solidarity with Palestinians**](https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-solidarity-with-palestinians/1510)

**Primary Proposer: Rev. DL Helfer of Westminster Unitarian Church**
**Additional Proposers: Lena Gardner, Rev. Katie Romano Griffin, and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi** <https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-solidarity-with-palestinians/1510>

Our Unitarian Universalist faith draws on the moral imperative of radical love, and despite all odds, calls us to uphold a world where liberation is real and we all thrive.

Our faith community has long recognized the horrors of violent antisemitism against generations of Jewish people, and we reaffirm our commitment to their safety. Our support for Jewish well-being was never meant to undermine the rights and lands of Palestinian people. We seek a world where our Palestinian and Jewish kin are safe.

We decry Palestinians’ actions of October 7 and also Israel’s brutal response to those actions. We further acknowledge that we cannot possibly contextualize all that led to this point but note that Israel’s occupation and repression of Gaza has been decades long.

Unitarian and/or Universalist congregations and communities around the world have issued calls for peace, justice, and reparations in the Palestinian territories for decades. In 1948, 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced, and at least 280,000 were displaced in 1967 when additional Palestinian lands were violently occupied against international law. [UUA General Assembly resolutions 1](https://www.uua.org/international-justice/uua-statements-palestine/israel) in 1982 and 2002 called for ending the occupation of Palestinian lands and a [1982 UUA Board of Trustees resolution](https://www.uua.org/action/statements/justice-middle-east) declared that “criticism of the policies of the government of Israel should not be equated with or confused with anti-Semitism.”

A growing number of Unitarian Universalist communities and individuals are calling for ending unconditional military aid to the State of Israel and affirming solidarity with Palestinian safety, support, and self-determination, including Black Lives of UU, Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, UU College of Social Justice, Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East, Unitarian Universalist Association senior leadership, and thousands of UU religious professionals, lay leaders, and congregants. With the U.S. providing Israel the highest amount of military aid in the world, UUs in this country bear a responsibility to speak out against these policies.

In recent years, major human rights organizations published reports documenting the [apartheid policies and practices of the State of Israel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MknerYjob0w#new_tab).

Since October 7th, Israel has subjected Gaza to indiscriminate bombings with US-made weapons, resulting in civilian casualties, including journalists, aid workers delivering food and medical supplies, and healthcare workers. As of May 25, 2024, over 40,000 have been killed, including over 8,000 children, counting identified Palestinians and bodies under rubble, 20,000 orphaned, and nearly 80,000 wounded, including thousands of amputees. Israel has blocked necessary aid delivery, depriving Palestinians of food, water, and medicines and causing famine with starvation deaths in the hundreds and 1.6 million in danger. The targeted and widespread destruction of medical, cultural, agricultural, educational, and religious sites constitutes [ethnic cleansing 1](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/ethnic-cleansing.shtml).

The Israeli military’s deliberate targeting of Gaza’s hospitals and healthcare infrastructure, along with the killing of health workers and the withholding of food and water, is causing a humanitarian crisis that threatens the survival and well-being of the Palestinian population. The International Court of Justice has labeled these actions as plausible genocide and has urged countries that are parties to the Genocide Convention to halt any actions that could contribute to this grave situation.

The persecution of the Palestinians is also connected to a global commitment to profits over human lives and parallels greed-fueled conflicts in Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ethiopia. While we call for the liberation of Palestinians, we also call for the liberation for all persecuted people across the globe. At the core of our Unitarian Universalist faith is the belief that life is sacred. Amidst global efforts to tamp down on speaking up for the lives of Palestinians, Congolese, and all oppressed people, we must find our courage to live and speak our beliefs into the broken, breaking world.

Solidarity with Palestinians faces escalating repression in the United States. Thousands of students are staging peaceful protests against the massacres, with universities enabling police forces to conduct hundreds of arrests. These demonstrations are also met with attacks on free speech, providing a pretext for both state and paramilitary violence. A bill declaring criticism of Israel to be antisemitic, [based on a controversial definition 3](https://religionnews.com/2024/05/14/1200-jewish-professors-call-on-senate-to-reject-controversial-antisemitism-definition/), has been approved by the House, and the Senate is expected to affirm it as well.

[Over 325 groups have signed the Apartheid-Free Communities solidarity initiative 4](https://apartheid-free.org/about/) of the American Friends Service Committee, including four major denominations: Alliance of Baptists, Disciples of Christ, the South Central Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and the United Church Of Christ. Unitarian Universalist signatories include Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, The Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East. Now is the time for the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations to declare support for this movement.

**Resolved:** We, the delegates of the 2024 General Assembly, call on our UU communities to be in solidarity with Palestinians by engaging in the following actions based on the guidance of Palestinian and impacted partner organizations:

1. **Witnessing**
* Call for the liberation of Palestine and an end to the apartheid; declare our moral outrage and shared horror at Israel’s massacre, mass incarceration, torture, destruction of the land poisoning soil for future generations, and decimation of systems of care for healthy reproduction.
* Call for an exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners.
1. **Educating:**
* Hold teach-ins about Palestine and Israel that include sacred spaces for spiritual processing.
1. **Organizing and Advocating:**
* Encourage the UUA and UU congregations and organizations to sign, amplify, and carry out the Apartheid-Free Communities Pledge.
* Support boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel and corporate enablers until it ends its policies and practices of apartheid, military occupation, settler colonialism, and genocide. • Protect the freedom and safety of solidarity activists by supporting protests and opposing legislation and policy that restrict First Amendment rights.

[References, Resources, and Endorsements 20](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G-2ZOgILjcg4ZhySzilAgQq8A0SdS8K_DZNbm-V7s8A/edit#heading=h.icv070l7tah)

# [**Proposed AIW - Centering Love Amidst the Ongoing Impact of COVID-19**](https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-centering-love-amidst-the-ongoing-impact-of-covid-19/1511)  <https://discuss.uua.org/t/proposed-aiw-centering-love-amidst-the-ongoing-impact-of-covid-19/1511>

**Primary Proposer: Meghan Garvey of the First Unitarian Church of Rochester**
**Additional Proposers: CB Beal, Rev. AJ van Tine & Rev. Sarah Caine**

Whereas, the emergency declaration for COVID-19 was terminated in 2023 without sufficient strategies in place to manage the persistent challenges of the virus, exacerbating its disproportionate impact on marginalized groups (i.e., disabled, BIPOC, transgender, uninsured and underinsured, incarcerated, older adults and youth, especially those of intersecting identities); and

Whereas, the current U.S. governmental approach to COVID-19 management still jeopardizes the lives of higher-risk individuals and leaves many unknowingly susceptible to the long-term impact of COVID 19 infections; and

Whereas, the aforementioned governmental approach is creating a continuously growing void in COVID-19 information and management, exemplified by the discontinuation of reliable data collection processes, research funding, and vital public health interventions (i.e., dependable testing, access to vaccines and treatment, prevention education); and

Whereas, the current political climate increasingly fosters disregard and even hostility towards individuals still exercising COVID caution, resulting in growing social and legal pressures to remove masks from public life and forcing higher-risk individuals to choose between essential participation in public life or avoiding COVID-19 infections; and

Whereas, our faith proclamations of love and justice call us to confront the ongoing disregard for those most vulnerable in our world and meet it with liberating counter-cultural norms in our communities; and

Whereas, in the current political, economic, and environmental climate, the importance of inclusion and living into communal interdependence is of the utmost life-saving importance; and

Whereas, in the absence of an appropriate governmental response to the ongoing risks of COVID-19, grassroots organizations and nonprofit organizations are leading efforts for the continuation of protective measures in the U.S.;

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2024 General Assembly calls for:

Congregational & Member Organization Action:

• To recommit to making our spaces a sanctuary for people disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 through:

* Shifting away from an individual risk assessment approach and using instead a love-centered collective care model through re-normalizing high-quality masking (N95/KN95/KF94 quality) in all congregational/member group activities and updating air filtration based on the science outlined in ASHRAE 241 Control of Infectious Aerosols. Exceptions to any masking requirements should be extended to people for whom mask-wearing is inaccessible.
* Implementing protocols to ensure that congregational/member group participants and staff are able to refrain from attending in-person events while they are experiencing symptoms of acute illness or have been recently ill, and that staff have ample time to recover from acute illness.
* Committing to communally examine and process the impact of the pandemic on our communities, as well as any urgency we’ve had to relinquish COVID-19 protocols for the sake of returning to “normal.” Unitarian Universalists hold a sacred tradition of questioning the status quo, and it is in that tradition that we must reflect on what “normal” we long to sustain. Given the lessons our communities learned living into the 2021 Action of Immediate Witness “The COVID-19 Pandemic: Justice. Healing. Courage”, particularly how we learned to include those who were already experiencing isolation and exclusion from our communities in a 2019 version of “normal,” we are called to reflect upon any barriers keeping us from holding onto the pandemic practices which so effectively countered isolation and fostered radical inclusion.

• To identify and work to form partnerships with local disability organizations working on COVID-19 justice, and community-organized “mask blocs” by:

* Offering tangible support for local mask blocs. Support might include offering event space, plate offerings for supplies, storage for their supplies, or hosting their community stands.
* -Following the lead of local disability organizations and mask blocs to respond to local community and legislative challenges to COVID caution.

Unitarian Universalist Association Action:

• To create channels of support for congregations and member organizations implementing the above standards of community care while modeling them in UUA-sponsored events and meetings.

• To work to form active partnerships with organizations leading the way in COVID-19 policy advocacy so that Unitarian Universalists can get involved in this work with accountability to the most-directly-impacted populations. This advocacy may address, but not be limited to:

* Contesting the criminalization of masking
* Improving hospital-based and community-based data collection processes
* Masking requirements in healthcare and carceral settings
* Reinstating evidence-based infection isolation guidelines
* Adequate funding for public health education, testing, and treatment programs
* Funding for installation of air purifiers and improved ventilation in public spaces consistent with ASHRAE 241 Control of Infectious Aerosols
* Funding for Long COVID research and resources