

APPENDIX A

Foothills Unitarian Church

Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values

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Core Theological Foundation

Our religious practice flows directly from fundamental convictions established through 130 years of faithful witness:

Sacred Axiom: Every person possesses inviolable worth regardless of any human-constructed category, making radical inclusion, protection of the vulnerable, and resistance to oppression religious imperatives binding on our covenantal community.

Religious Authority: Our faith draws from sacred sources commanding love of stranger, celebration of diversity, and resistance to unjust authority—including Jewish/Christian teachings, humanist ethics, earth-centered traditions, and progressive revelation through lived experience.

Covenantal Practice: Through democratic processes spanning decades—Welcoming Congregation (1998), Sanctuary vote (2017), Eighth Principle (2021)—this congregation has formally covenanted to an ongoing practice of our faith within and beyond our walls as a binding religious commitment.

Theological Articulation of Essential Religious Practices

Bodily Autonomy as Sacred Trust

Our theological understanding holds that each person's body is sacred territory. This sacred trust cannot be violated by governmental interference without violating fundamental religious principles:

- **Reproductive Justice:** We hold as religious doctrine that reproductive decisions—including abortion healthcare—are sacred acts of moral agency exercised in covenant with the divine. Government restriction of reproductive choice violates our religious belief that individuals possess sacred authority over their own spiritual and physical being.
- **Gender-Affirming Care:** Our theology affirms that authentic gender identity reflects divine creativity and that gender-affirming healthcare constitutes essential care supporting spiritual wholeness. Denying such care violates our religious conviction that suppressing authentic identity damages the sacred self.
- **Healthcare Privacy:** We believe healthcare decisions constitute sacred dialogue between individual conscience, divine calling, and trusted healers. Government intrusion into this holy space violates the sanctity of personal spiritual discernment.
- **Comprehensive Sexuality Education:** Our faith requires providing comprehensive, inclusive sexuality education as essential religious practice that honors the sacred nature of human sexuality and relationships. We hold as religious doctrine that young people deserve honest, medically accurate information about their bodies, relationships, and sexuality as part of their spiritual formation and development into whole, healthy individuals. Restricting such education violates our theological commitment to truth-telling and our religious obligation to support youth in understanding their sacred embodiment.
- **Parental Religious Authority:** Our faith affirms parents' sacred responsibility and religious authority to access healthcare for their children based on theological conviction and spiritual discernment, free from governmental interference in family covenant relationships.

Radical Hospitality as Imperative

Our theology commands unconditional welcome of the stranger as fundamental religious practice rooted in sacred text and progressive revelation:

- Sanctuary Ministry: We hold as religious doctrine that providing sanctuary to those fleeing persecution fulfills our covenant obligation to "love the stranger as yourself." Our sanctuary practice constitutes essential not optional charity.
- Immigration Accompaniment: Our faith requires active resistance to systems that dehumanize immigrants, understanding such accompaniment as fulfillment of our religious calling to protect divine image in every person.
- Civil Disobedience: When immigration enforcement conflicts with our religious obligation to provide sanctuary, our theology invites faithful disobedience as expression of our sacred values.

Sacred Relationships as Divine Celebration

Our theological understanding affirms that love in all its authentic expressions reflects inherent dignity, divine creativity and demands religious celebration:

- Marriage Equality: We hold as religious doctrine that sacred relationships honor inherent worth and dignity regardless of gender identity, or relationship structures. Our faith compels us to consecrate and recognize all relationship structures that embody mutual love, commitment, and spiritual growth.
- LGBTQ+ Affirmation: Our theology celebrates diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as beautiful manifestations of divine creativity. Suppressing such authenticity violates our religious belief in the sacred nature of authentic self-expression.
- Ceremonial Authority: Our ministerial practice includes religious freedom to perform blessing ceremonies for all couples whose relationships embody love, commitment, and spiritual partnership, exercising our congregational authority to define sacred relationships within our faith community.

Religious Authority and Constitutional Protection

Mission Clarity: Through active community discernment, we articulate our evolving understanding of mission through theologically grounded statements that reflect our ongoing revelation of divine will and calling. Our congregation exists to serve our religious mission of creating beloved community through radical inclusion, protection of the vulnerable, and liberation of the oppressed—a mission that deepens and expands as our theological understanding grows through lived experience, spiritual practice, and prophetic witness. Every space, every activity, every interaction serves this sacred purpose as theological reality revealed through our covenant community's discernment process, not political statement or secular social work.

These theological convictions constitute a partial accounting of the ongoing revelation of our religious practice. They are central to our congregational identity, ministerial authority, and theological integrity. Through our religious authority as a covenant congregation, we declare these practices essential expressions of our faith and protected under constitutional rights to free exercise of our religious values.