

INTERFAITH HANDBOOK



BOSTON AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A HISTORIC CHURCH FOR MODERN PEOPLE

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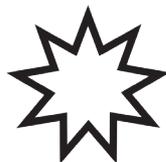
Introduction

The Interfaith Concerns Committee of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church presents this interfaith handbook to promote better understanding among the faiths living in the Tulsa area. It is our belief that when we know more about each other, including religion, lives are enriched and faiths are strengthened.

This handbook outlines 11 religions, with a brief description of the basic beliefs and answers to commonly asked questions. It is not intended to be a comprehensive study.

As people's lives cross paths with those from other faiths, may this handbook encourage respect, understanding and appreciation.

Symbol: The 9 pointed star represents the major religions of the world.



Baha'i

Basic Beliefs

The Baha'i faith teaches the oneness of God, the unity of humanity, and the essential harmony of religion. Baha'u'llah is the most recent of the divine Prophets whose teachings provide the basis for the advancement of civilization. Each house of worship has nine doors, representing nine world religions: Sabeian (Abraham), Judaism (Moses), Christianity (Jesus), Islam (Muhammad), Hindu (Krishna), Buddhism (Buddha), Zoroastrianism (Zoroaster), Bab'i (Bab), and Baha'i (Baha'u'llah).

Festivals/Holidays: There are nine Holy Days throughout the year which begins on March 20 or 21. Three of these days are the 1st, 9th, and 12th days of the 12-day Festival of Ridvan beginning on April 20 or 21.

Holy Places: Haifa and Akka in northern Israel.

Number in the World: 7.1 million

Number in Tulsa: 47

Sacred Texts: The writings of Baha'u'llah.

Places of Worship: Most Baha'i meetings occur in homes, or local Baha'i centers. Worldwide, there are now eight Baha'i Houses of Worship, about one per continent with the closest in Chicago. The Houses of Worship are meant to be surrounded by humanitarian institutions such as schools, hospitals, homes for the elderly, and universities.

Rituals: Three Baha'i admonitions are to commune with God: pray and read scripture morning and night, and recite the prayer for the dead at a funeral.

Food Restrictions: Alcohol and drugs are banned, and smoking is discouraged. Moderation is suggested in food and in everything else.

Role of Women: Women and men are equal in the sight of God. World unity depends on balance between feminine and masculine influences on society, resulting in the attainment of a permanent peace. This does not mean bringing women to power in masculine roles, but instead a more radical change, to make feminine qualities more valued. Women's education is stressed.

Quote: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

Symbol: The Dharma Wheel (Eight Spokes)



Buddhism

Basic Beliefs

The history of Buddhism began with the life of the Buddha in the 6th century BCE and continues to the present day. Buddha means the Awakened One. Buddhism is the way leading one to enlightenment or liberating one from all kinds of sufferings. In this sense, Buddhism lays its emphasis on individual efforts, not on any supernatural power. In other words, Buddhism offers an understanding into the nature and purpose of human suffering and a way to alleviate it once and for all.

By focusing on the nature of suffering that afflicts everyone, the Buddha showed the way to deal with it: the teaching of the Four Noble Truths, which are suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and finally the way leading to liberating all kinds of suffering, called The Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths are likened to a procedure for the treatment of disease. First, a description of the nature of the disease, second, an account of its etiology, third, a prognosis for cure, and fourth, a prescription of treatment. The doctrine of the Chain of Causation teaches the interconnectedness of all things.

Festivals/Holidays: The highpoint of the Buddhist calendar is in May, when the birth, Enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha are celebrated.

Number in the World: 360 million

Number in Tulsa: 0.1%

Sacred Texts: The Buddha's teaching was oral. He taught 45 years, adapting the teaching to suit the group he was addressing. The Sangha Chant is selected texts at ceremonies and sometimes lay people join in. The chanting is considered to be a sacred act.

Places of Worship: Temples take many different shapes. The best known are the pagodas of China and Japan. The Stupa is a stone structure built over what are thought to be the relics of the Buddha.

Rituals: Worshipers come to the Temple to pay homage to the Buddhas. Many perform several Mahayama rituals. Buddhists may chant, pray, meditate, eat vegetarian meals and celebrate Buddhist holidays.

Food Restrictions: Vegetarian is highly recommended as to show compassion to other beings.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Buddhists have an attitude of tolerance toward other religions.

Role of Women: Buddhism does not consider women as being inferior to men. Buddhism, while accepting the biological and physical differences between the two sexes, does consider men and women to be equally useful to the society.

Quote: "Not to do any evil; to cultivate good; to purify one's heart."
-Buddha

Symbol: The “OM” or “Aum” is symbolic of the sacred sound that represents the universe.



Hinduism

Basic Beliefs

Hindus believe in a one, all pervasive Supreme Being who is both imminent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality, called Brahman. They believe in the divinity of the four Vedas, the world’s most ancient scripture, and they venerate the Agama as equally revealed. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution. They believe in karma, the law of cause and effect, by which each individual creates his destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds. They believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all karmas have been resolved, and moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Hindus believe not a single soul will be deprived of this destiny. They believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds, and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments and personal devotionals create a communion with these devas and Gods. They believe that an enlightened master, or satguru, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification pilgrimage, self-inquiry, meditation and surrender in God. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice ahimsa, non-injury, in thought, word and deed. They believe that no religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine paths are facets of God’s Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.

Origin: With no historical founder, Hinduism is the world’s oldest religion with no known beginning.

Festivals/Holidays: Diwali, Holi, Krishna Janmashtami, Navaratri and Great Kumbh Mela.

Holy Places: Benares, on the Ganges River, is one of a thousand Sacred Pilgrimage Places in India.

Number in the World: 1 billion

Number in Tulsa: Roughly 500 families

Sacred Texts: Vedas are truths revealed to “seers” called rishis, who communicate them orally.

Places of Worship: Hindu Temple of Greater Tulsa,
16943 East 21st Street, Tulsa, OK 74134

Rituals: Trained priests perform puja at sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Puja, a prayer ritual, may also be performed individually.

Food Restrictions: Beef is forbidden since cows are held as sacred creatures.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Hindus honor all religious traditions, and believe there is no exclusive path.

Greeting: Namaste – “The divine within me bows down to the divine within you.”

Leaders: Mahatma Ghandi and Ramakrishna are the most well-known, but there are hundreds more.

Quote: “The greatest barrier to success is the fear of failure.”
-Lord Krishna

Symbol: Islam forbids symbols. The Arabic word for “Allah” is preferred by Muslims over the crescent moon and star.

The image shows the Arabic word 'Allah' written in a stylized, elegant calligraphic font. The letters are black with white outlines, and the word is positioned in the upper right corner of the page.

Islam

Basic Beliefs

Islam means “submission to God” and “service.” It is a continuation of the Abrahamic faiths and belief in a monotheistic God - Allah - as in, “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.” The prophets/messengers sent by God include Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the final prophet, Muhammad, chosen one of God. Islam is built on “five pillars” - five religious duties - as the foundation for submission to God. The Qur’an is the revelation that Muhammad received, and the fundamental source of faith for Muslims. The Qur’an in Arabic means “the Recitation,” and is the source of Islamic law. The Qur’an should be read and memorized in Arabic in order to thoroughly absorb the full revelation of the faith.

Origin: It is a continuation of the Abrahamic tradition. The stories of the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an are the stories of Islam.

Festivals/Holidays: Ramadan is a sacred month of the year when Muslims fast from dawn to sundown. ‘Id al Fitr (Eid), on the first day following Ramadan, and ‘Id al-Adha, at the time of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, are special holy days.

Holy Places: Kaaba and Al-Masjid al-Haram, Mecca, Saudi Arabia; Al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina, Saudi Arabia; Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem

Number in the World: 1.8 billion

Number in U.S.: 3.3 million

Number in Tulsa: 10,000

Sacred Texts: The Qur'an is Islam's primary scripture.

Places of Worship: Mosque; in Tulsa, Masjid al-Salam, 4620 South Irvington Avenue.

Rituals: The five pillars of Islam: Confession of faith; prayer, five times daily; almsgiving; fasting during Ramadan from dawn to sundown; and pilgrimage to Mecca.

Food Restrictions: Pork; any meats not properly blessed; alcohol.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Allah declares the only distinguishing factors between humans are righteousness and piety.

Greeting: "Peace be upon you;" for Ramadan, the greeting is "Ramadan Mubarak!"

Leaders: No living prophets after Mohammad (570-632 AD). Clergy called Imams (resident scholars).

Quote: "Good and Evil Deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better. Then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend."

-Qur'an 41:34

Symbol: Star of David



Judaism

Basic Beliefs

Jews believe God is one, God created the world, and it is innately good. Jews believe they are God's chosen people, and God makes covenants with his people. Today there are three main "streams" of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox, plus several smaller groups.

Origin: Jewish history goes back more than 5,000 years; however, most scholars date the beginning of the religion of the Israelites to Abraham, forefather of the faith, who is believed to have lived in the period between 2000-1800 BCE.

Festivals/Holidays: Shabbat (Sabbath) is considered the most important of all Jewish holidays. It is a weekly day of rest starting on Friday night one hour before sunset, and lasting 25 hours until sunset on Saturday night. Other holidays are: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (most solemn Day of Atonement devoted to self-examination), Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), Passover (marks the Hebrew exodus from Egypt), and Hanukkah (eight day festival of lights). Holidays begin at sundown the night before. In recent years, two more special days have been added: Yom Ha-Atzmaut (Israel Independence) and Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Day).

Number in the World: 14 million

Number in U.S.: 5.6 million

Sacred Texts: The Torah, which is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, contains the basic laws of Judaism and the history of the Jewish people until the death of Moses.

Places of Worship: Jewish worship and ritual is practiced in the home, as well as in the synagogue. In Tulsa: Temple Israel, 2004 East 22nd Street, and Congregation B'nai Emunah, 1719 South Owasso

Rituals: Some rituals are: Circumcision, adulthood (Bat-Mitzvah, Bar-mitzvah), marriage, dietary laws, daily prayers (morning, afternoon, and evening).

Food Restrictions: "Keeping Kosher" is the complicated code of dietary laws developed around commandments found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. The laws give specific humane methods of ritual slaughter, and forbid eating dairy foods with meat, shellfish, bottom-dwelling fish, pork, carnivores, and birds of prey.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: In everyday life, Judaism embraces religious and cultural pluralism.

Role of Women: Men and women have separate but equal obligations. Reform Jews committed to equality of women.

Leaders: Abraham. Rabbis are the leaders and teachers at the synagogues.

Quote: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."
-Deuteronomy 6:4

Symbol: The Native American Church insignia



Native American Church

Basic Beliefs

For the Native American, religion is inseparable from the fabric of an entire way of life. A combination of Christianity and traditional Native American beliefs is taught. The Great Spirit is addressed as their supreme being. Jesus plays a prominent role in their beliefs and is often equated with the spirit of the peyote plant. Morality is basically Christian. The need to abstain from alcohol and being faithful to marriage vows are stressed.

Origin: On October 10, 1918, the Native American Church (NAC) of Oklahoma was officially incorporated. The NAC is protected by The American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), Public Law No. 95-341, 92 Stat.469 passed August 11, 1978. American Indian Religious Freedom Act Amendments of 1994 provides for the traditional use of peyote by Indians for religious and other purposes.

Total Membership: 250,000

Sacred Texts: The Christian Bible and the Native American's oral tradition of storytelling, which records the history, culture, and beliefs of each nation.

Places of Worship: Church services are not regular but held by special request for a family to celebrate birthdays, Christian holidays, New Year's Day, Veterans Day, and other significant events. Many times services are held to seek guidance and direction, to give thanks, to ask for forgiveness and deliverance, and to pray for the sick. They begin at sundown on either a Friday or Saturday evening and end at sunrise.

Rituals: The ritual settings for NAC ceremonies or "meetings" is generally a tipi erected for the purpose of the service. A crescent-shaped altar is constructed of clean soil in the center of the tipi with the crescent opening to the east. The religious service consists of an all-night ceremony that includes a ritually maintained fire, rounds of individual singing, prayers, and the use of peyote as a holy sacrament. Individuals referred to as "roadmen," who are experienced in the ceremonies of the church and respected members of their communities, lead the services. The church services end with a feast for the whole community the following day. Vision Quest is a rite of passage by young men.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Oklevueha Native American Church welcomes all people, religions, and lifestyles.

Leaders: Quanah Parker (Comanche) was most associated with early history of peyotism. Mack Haag (Cheyenne), Chivato (Lipan), Jim Aton (Kiowa), John Wilson (Caddo-Delaware), and Jonathan Koshiway (Oto). Charlie Haag (grandson of Mack Haag) is the Oklahoma State Chairman for the NAC.

Quote: "The White Man goes into his church and talks about Jesus. The Indian goes into his tipi and talks with Jesus."
-Quanah Parker.

Symbol: The Orthodox cross, also known as the Suppedaneum cross, is a variation of the Christian cross.



Orthodox Christianity

Basic Beliefs

The Orthodox Christian Churches believe themselves to be the inheritors of the Church established by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and identify themselves as the indigenous Christian Communities of the Middle East, the Balkans, Northeast Africa and Russia. They believe in One God, worshiped in Trinity, and they mystically and liturgically experience a God who loves humankind and is manifest in the lives of the “Theotokos” (i.e. Mother of God) and Saints throughout the centuries.

Origin: For the first 1,000 years, all Christians shared a common biblical faith and experience. In the year 1054 A.D., Christianity split into basically two communities in what is called the Great Schism: the Roman Churches in the West; and the Orthodox Churches in the East. Some of the most fundamental differences have had to do with divergent world views and cultures. Historically, the Orthodox Church has emphasized mystical experience as opposed to structure and practicality, and has functioned in a way that gives power to the group.

Festivals/Holidays: Easter, use Julian calendar for date; Christmas, celebrated on January 7th in the Gregorian calendar.

Holy Places: Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem; Mount Athos (Holy Mountain), Greece

Number in the World: 350 million

Number in U.S.: 4 million

Sacred Texts: The Bible is the same as that of most Western churches, except that its old Testament is based not on the Hebrew, but on the ancient Jewish translation into Greek, called the Septuagint.

Places of Worship: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1222 S. Guthrie; St. Antony Antiochian Orthodox Church, 2645 East 6th Street; Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, 15710 S. Peoria, Bixby

Rituals: Orthodox Christians are both sense-oriented and ritual-oriented. Church buildings are full of icons, incense and sacred chant, to lift worshipers up and out of the ordinary. The 7 principal sacraments are: Baptism; Chrismation; The Eucharist; Priesthood; Penance; Anointing of the sick; and Marriage.

Food Restrictions: Four main fasting periods: Lent; Fast of the Apostles; Dormition Fast; and the Christmas Fast.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Active participant in the ecumenical movement since its beginnings. Their leaders have for decades demonstrated a deep commitment to dialogues of truth and love, valuing respect, honesty and cooperation among all religions.

Greeting: Easter: "Christ is Risen!" "Indeed He is Risen!"
Christmas: "Christ is born!" "Glorify Him!"

Role of Women: Proclaims equality between men and women, but they have different roles to perform within the context of the Church. Women are called to serve in every area, with the exception of the ordained priesthood.

Leaders: No central authority; communion of 15 separate autocephalous hierarchical churches. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is often referred to as the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians, but it is a title of honor rather than authority. Leaders in local congregations are priests.

Quote: "That they may all be one." (John 17:21)

Symbol: The empty cross representing the Risen Christ



Protestant Christianity

Basic Beliefs

The Reformation gave birth to Protestantism in October, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the church. The churches of the Reformation made changes in the traditional worship, emphasizing the central place of the sermon, participation of the laity in liturgy, and singing of congregational hymns. Protestantism may be defined as Christian movements identified by similar message, authority, organization, and styles of activity. The message proclaims salvation as a gift from God that brings reconciliation with God and among people on earth. The forms of organization focus on the local with group participation. The Protestant message of salvation believes that humans are sinners who have offended God the Creator by focusing selfishly on their own self interests. It says that God provides the remedy for sin in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Festivals/Holidays: Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, and Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus.

Number in the World: 875 million

Number in U.S.: 150 million

Number in Tulsa: 311,000

Sacred Texts: The Old and New Testaments of the Bible

Places of Worship: Usually worship is at a church building, but it varies with the denomination. Traditionally, worship had been at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays, but has expanded to more times depending on the different denominations.

Rituals: There are two sacraments: Baptism (by sprinkling of water or full immersion) and Holy Communion (bread and wine or grape juice, representing the body and blood of Jesus Christ) performed or led by the minister, pastor, or reverend. Personal prayer and corporate worship are important.

Food Restrictions: None

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Varies with the denomination

Greeting: Happy Easter, Merry Christmas, Peace be with you

Role of Women: It can vary with the denomination but female leadership has become common in most churches.

Leaders: Jesus Christ, ministers, lay people

Quote: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
-Jesus

Symbol: The cross holding the body of Jesus



Roman Catholicism

Basic Beliefs

Basis of the Church's mission: In all the ways of the Church's life and ministry to bear witness to "the mighty works" of its Lord, Jesus Christ, so that the God who is "rich in mercy" is made still more clearly manifest in all places and times. The Church exists for the saving of souls for Christ. Each person is called to communion with God. God created each person out of love and through love continues to hold each one in existence. One cannot live fully according to truth without fully acknowledging that love and entrusting one's whole being to the Creator. (Ref. Catechism of the Catholic Church)

Origin: The Church was created at Pentecost as the continuation of the presence of Jesus of Nazareth on earth. The ministry of the Church was begun by the disciples of Jesus and spread throughout the earth through their preaching and activity. Jesus had chosen Peter as the Rock upon which He would build His Church and Peter was recognized as the formal leader of the Church by the early followers of Jesus.

Festivals/Holidays: Major Feasts: The Resurrection of the Lord, The Nativity of the Lord, Pentecost. Minor feasts: Throughout the liturgical year, including saints feast days, commemoration of events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, and the liturgical periods of Advent and Lent, in preparation for Christmas and Easter, respectively.

Number in the World: 1.29 billion

Number in Tulsa: 60,767

Sacred Texts: The Holy Bible

Places of Worship: Oratories, Churches, Cathedrals, Basilicas, Holy Sites.

Rituals: The Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick. The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, through which divine life is dispensed to us.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: The Catholic Church operates charitable and educational organizations worldwide: hospitals, schools, relief agencies, adoption services, refugee centers and other charities are open to all without discrimination. Individual members are active in support of social justice and other civic organizations.

Role of Women: Following the model of Mary, the Mother of God and exemplary realization of the Church, women are called to bring Christ into the world through lives of faith, hope and charity. Women, while not holding priestly positions, fill positions of active ministry in all aspects of Church life.

Leaders: Jesus of Nazareth, the twelve and their followers, the Pope, priests and nuns

Quote: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

-Matthew 28.18-20

Symbols: The khanda, a central, double-edged sword, represents the belief in one God. The chakkar, a curccke, represents the infinite God, without beginning or end. The kirpans, two crossed swords, represent spiritual authority and political power.



Sikhism

Basic Beliefs

Sikhism is an independent, monotheistic religion. All humans can realize the divine within them through devotion to God, truthful living, and service to humanity. Ik Onkar is a common phrase meaning “One God.” All men and women are equal with the same rights and responsibilities. Meditation is encouraged to remember God. Sikhs are urged to work hard and be honest in all things, and give to the needy. The “Five Thieves” of ego, anger, greed, attachment, and lust are to be avoided. The Golden Temple is located in Amristar, in the Indian state of Punjab. The Langar (community kitchen), in this Temple, serves free food to 50,000 people a day(100,000 on holidays) irrespective of religion, creed, or social status.

Origin: Sikhism was founded in the Punjab region in India in the 15th century by Guru Nanak Dev. It is one of the youngest of the world religions.

Festivals/Holidays: Sikh New Year (Baisakhi) - April 13 or 14.
Nam Karan – Naming of a baby.

Number in the World: 30 million

Sacred Texts: The Sri Guru Granth Sahib containing hymns and teachings.

Places of Worship: Sikh place of worship is called gurdwara, meaning “doorway to God.” Men and women normally sit apart, but in smaller gatherings, together. Traditionally, there is no official clergy. Over time, priests have become commonplace.

Rituals: Sikhs who have taken amrit, a ritual analogous to baptism, wear The Five K’s:

1. Kesh or unshorn long hair which is protected by a dastar or turban. Women usually keep their hair long and uncovered.
2. A kangha is a small wooden comb meant to keep the hair combed twice a day.
3. A kara is an iron bangle to be worn on the hand used most.
4. A kachera is an undergarment for men and women.
5. A kirpan is a short dagger. Sikh men use the last name Singh, meaning lion. Women use the name Kaur, meaning princess.

Quote: “There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim.”
-Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1538)
on religious equality

Symbol: A flame within a chalice is a primary symbol of the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and the official logo of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and other Unitarian and UU churches and societies.



Unitarian Universalism

Basic Beliefs: Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a liberal religion and a communal faith born of the Jewish and Christian traditions. They believe that religious authority lies not in a book, person or institution, but in experience, conscience and reason. UU is non-creedal; it is a free faith believing that religious wisdom is ever-changing and revelation is continuous. They seek to act as a moral force in the world, believing that ethical living is the supreme witness of religion. They are united by 7 core Principles: the worthiness of every person; accepting others for who they are; growing through a personal search for truth; working for justice; and understanding that everything is inter-connected. Members can also be agnostic, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and atheist.

Origin: History stretches from European religious persecution to early American revolutionaries, from 19th century Transcendentalists and reformers to 20th century Humanists and 21st century visionaries. UUA grew out of the consolidation, in 1961, of the Universalists and the Unitarians, organized in 1793 and 1825, respectively.

Festivals/Holidays: Honor and celebrate a wide range of holidays, including unique UU traditions like the Flower Ceremony, as well as holidays from other faith traditions, such as Christmas.

Number in the U.S.: 154,965

Number in Tulsa: 2,250

Sacred Texts: While rooted in the Protestant Christian tradition, where the Bible is sacred text, Unitarians look to additional sources for religious and moral inspiration, recognizing wisdom in many of the scriptures of the world's religions.

Places of Worship:

Tulsa: All Souls Unitarian Church 2952 S. Peoria
(largest UU congregation in the world)
Church of the Restoration UU, 1314 N. Greenwood Ave.
Hope Unitarian Church, 8432 S. Sheridan Rd.
The Welcome Table Church, 5920 N. Owasso

Rituals: Rituals may include lighting of the chalice, Ingathering/Water Communion and life transition rituals. Ceremonies include marriage and civil union, baptism and child dedication, and memorial services.

Food Restrictions: None, but adopted a statement of conscience in 2016 on ethical eating.

Welcoming of Other Faiths: Local UU congregations work with interfaith and secular partners to answer the call for social justice and realize their dreams for a better world. They have a track record of standing on the side of love for civil rights, LGBTQ equality, immigration reform, environmental sustainability, reproductive justice, racial justice, and more.

Role of Women: Affirm the worth of all women and men. Today, more than half of UU clergy are women.

Leaders: Ministers are the spiritual and administrative leaders of local congregations, which are self-governing. Authority and responsibility are vested in the congregational membership to adopt its own bylaws, call its own ministers, elect its own officers, etc.

Tulsa Area Faiths at a Glance

FAITHS	SUPREME BEING	SACRED TEXTS	LEADERS
Baha'i	God	Writings of Baha'u'llah	Baha'u'llah Elected Leaders
Buddhism	108 different names	Dharma Vinaya Abhidhamma	Monks Lamas
Hinduism	Brahman	Vedas Brahmanas Upanishads	Sannyasis Guru
Islam	Allah	Qur'an	Imams
Judaism	Yahweh	Torah Talmud	Rabbis
Native American Church	Great Spirit	Bible and Oral Traditions	Quannah Parker
Orthodox Christianity	God	Old & New Testaments of the Bible	Patriarch; local leaders are priests
Protestant Christianity	God	Old & New Testaments of the Bible	Ministers & Lay People
Roman Catholicism	God	The Holy Bible	Pope, priests and nuns
Sikhism	God the True One	Guru Granth Sahib	Guru Gobind Singh
Unitarian Universalism	No shared creed; some believe in a God; some don't	Protestant roots where Bible is sacred; look to add'l religious sources	Ministers lead self-governing congregations

ORIGIN	HOLIDAYS	NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS	SYMBOLS
Baha'u'llah 1862 in Persia	Festival of Ridvan	Tulsa: 47 World: 7.1 mil	
Gautama 560- 480 B.C.E	Perahera Wesak	World: 360 mil Tulsa: 0.1%	
No historical founder, 3200 B.C.E.	Holi Festival, Diwali	World: 1 bil Tulsa: 500 families	
Mohammed 570-632 A.D.	Ramadan, Eid	World: 2.18 bil Tulsa: 10,000	
Abraham 1900 B.C.E.	Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover	World: 15 mil Tulsa: 0.1%	
NAC 1918	Christian Holidays	U.S.: 250,000	
Jesus Christ; Great Schism, 1054 A.D.	Easter, Christmas	World: 350 mil U.S.: 4 million	
Jesus Christ; Reformation 1517	Easter, Christmas	World: 875 mil U.S.: 150 mil Tulsa: 311,000	
Jesus Christ 1st century	Easter, Christmas	World: 1.29 bil Tulsa: 60,767	
Guru Nank Dev 15th Century	Sikh New Year Baisakhi	World: 30 mil	
Born of the Jewish Christian tradition; 1961 union of Unitari- ans & Universalists	Wide range of holi- days, including some from other traditions	U.S.: 154,965 Tulsa: 2,250	

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Interfaith Committee

The Boston Avenue United Methodist Church Interfaith Concerns Committee meets monthly and works to promote respect, cooperation, and understanding among differing faith groups. The committee works to support the Interfaith Dialogue Series of the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice (OCCJ), Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry (TMM) programs, the Open Tables ministry, and special interfaith activities connected with Boston Avenue UMC.

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*The committee chose to be photographed in front of the Interfaith Statue because it symbolizes the importance of meaningful dialogue between members of different faiths to the Boston Avenue congregation.



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