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## Keep up with General Assembly news

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By [Christopher L. Walton](#)  
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For extended coverage of [GA events and workshops](#), including audio and [video](#) of major programs, please see the [General Assembly section](#) at UUA.org.

On this year's [agenda](#):

- The "[Youth and Young Adult Empowerment Resolution](#)," a business resolution on Friday morning's agenda, was developed by young UUs [dismayed](#) by announcements earlier this year that the UUA would discontinue funding for [YRUU](#) and [C\\*UUYAN](#), the two continental organizations that serve UU youth (ages 14–20) and young adults (ages 18–35). The UUA has been reviewing its approach to youth ministry for several years, and is at work on [developing a new model](#). The UUA Board of Trustees placed a revised Youth and Young Adult Empowerment Resolution on the General Assembly agenda.
- Delegates will select one new four-year "[Congregational Study Action Issue](#)" (CSAI) during Saturday morning's plenary session. The Study Action Issue selected this year will evolve into a "Statement of Conscience" at the 2012 General Assembly. Delegates will choose between "ethical eating" and "nuclear disarmament," two topics that at least 25 percent of UUA congregations approved placing on the agenda through the annual Congregational Poll.

The 2006–2010 CSAI, "[Peacemaking](#)," will be the focus of several General Assembly events this year, but a draft Statement of Conscience won't be distributed until next year.

- Delegates can choose to debate and vote on up to six social-justice "Actions of Immediate Witness," which are resolutions submitted by petition at the General

Assembly. For the first time this year, the Commission on Social Witness is helping petitioners find supporters even before GA begins: A webpage provides [summaries and contact information for ten proposed resolutions](#) ranging from holding the Bush administration accountable for “high crimes and misdemeanors” to calling for an end to male circumcision. Actions of Immediate Witness will be presented during Saturday morning’s plenary session; delegates will vote on the resolutions during both Sunday plenaries.

- The Assembly will consider [two bylaw amendments](#). One acknowledges the merger of the Northeast District and the New Hampshire–Vermont District into a single Northern New England District. The other amendment reflects changes to the rules of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

In less formal business, Unitarian Universalists will also reflect on the goals and future direction of the Association. The two ministers who have entered the race for the 2009 election of a new UUA president, the Rev. Dr. [Laurel Hallman](#) and the Rev. [Peter Morales](#), will discuss their visions for the Association in an election forum Saturday evening.

Congregational leaders will also be invited to participate in “**appreciative inquiry**” workshops focused on clarifying the UUA’s priorities. Moderator Gini Courter, the chair of the General Assembly and the UUA Board of Trustees, [explained](#) in the Tentative Agenda that “we will gather to talk about our values and our hopes for our liberal faith, to set priorities for our Association of congregations.” She added: “All the information generated in **Appreciative Inquiry** will be used by the UUA Board of Trustees in the fall of 2008, when the UUA Board and district presidents will work together to craft ends (what the Association should do, for whom, and at what cost) for our Association.”

The board’s interest in “ends” is part of its effort to [adopt a policy-governance model](#) for the UUA. Last year’s General Assembly used “[open space technology](#)” to facilitate conversations about denominational priorities, to mixed reviews.

The UUA anticipates [lower than usual attendance](#) at this General Assembly, due partly to concerns about security requirements at the convention center, but also to the rising cost of travel and the worsening economy. The convention center is inside the Port of Fort Lauderdale, which requires a photo ID for admittance in compliance with federal security regulations—a requirement that some Unitarian Universalists regarded as unacceptable government interference with their freedom to worship and freedom to assemble. In response, several GA events will focus on civil liberties.

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The *UU World* team at GA includes news editor **Jane Greer**, managing editor **Kenneth Sutton**, assistant editor **Sonja L. Cohen**, and contributing editors **Donald Skinner** and **Kimberly French**. If you have a General Assembly news tip, write to Jane Greer ([jgreer@uua.org](mailto:jgreer@uua.org)).

