

# Religious Humanism

## Key Philosophical Points:

- Religious humanists rejects supernatural explanations for the world, including God or gods, often identifying as either atheist or agnostic.
- Religious humanism upholds the intellect, trusting in the guidance of reason and the findings of science.
- Religious humanism suggests people can live ethically and improve human life without depending on God or possible afterlife for motivation.
- John Dietrich, white minister who served from 1916-1938 at First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis, is considered by some to be the “Father of Religious Humanism.”
- The “religious” in religious humanism (as opposed to secular humanism) suggests that religious *rituals, beloved community, and some sacred purpose greater than ourselves* can be a part of humanism.
- Frederick May Eliot, white minister here at Unity Church (1917-1937) and distant relation to Louisa May Alcott, served as president of the American Unitarian Association. Eliot kept the debate between humanists and theists from splitting the Unitarian denomination.
- Some humanists have created organizations outside Unitarianism, such as the *American Humanist Association* and *Ethical Culture*.



*John Dietrich*



*Frederick May Eliot*

## UU Statistics:

- 46% of Unitarian Universalists reported in 1998 that they regarded themselves as humanist. (from 1997 *Unitarian Universalism Needs and Aspirations Survey*)
- From Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-family/unitarians-and-other-liberal-faiths-in-the-other-faiths-tradition/>:

### Unitarian Universalists and Other Liberal Faiths

Survey year	Believe in God; absolutely certain	Believe in God; fairly certain	Believe in God; not too/not at all certain	Believe in God; don't know	Do not believe in God	Other/don't know if they believe in God	Sample Size
2014	41%	25%	8%	1%	19%	5%	425
2007	49%	24%	8%	< 1%	10%	9%	297