

## ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT, AGENDA, REPORT

### Sharing the Vision of Small Group Ministry

Join UU SGM Network Annual Meeting Conference Call

Sunday, October 6, 2013, at 7:00-8:00pm ET

Call in number: 213-342-3000, Participant Code 168366#

For questions or agenda items, contact [Office@smallgroupministry.net](mailto:Office@smallgroupministry.net)

1. Opening Reading: Rekindling the Chalice of Small Group Ministry
2. Introductions: Joining our voices (Please give congregational location and name, and your name.)
3. Highlights from the year: Sharing connections, successes and challenges
4. Visioning for the future – This next year and beyond
5. Board participation as a ministry: See the Invitation to Board participation.
6. Board meetings as collaborations

The Annual Report will be a resource for the Annual Meeting.

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SMALL GROUP MINISTRY NETWORK ANNUAL REPORT: June 2012-September 2013

The time and methodology of the Annual Meeting has changed in the last two years. Traditionally, the Network Annual Meetings were held at GA, usually in one of our Program slots. Changes in GA structure deleted the ability of organizations to hold annual meetings connected with programs, and we met at alternate times. In 2012 we planned a conference call Annual Meeting as most of our Board was not at GA. The connection of the Annual Meeting with GA eliminated the potential of participating for a number of our members. *Hence, we passed a bylaws change that allows the Board to set the Annual meeting, separate from GA.*

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Members and non-members are welcome, but only Network members may vote. *Members at the Annual Meeting are those whose membership is current, and those in the renewal period up to 3 months after membership expiration. Our Membership Count as of September 30 will be announced at the meeting.*

Current projects are updating the membership database and defining the membership renewal process as follows:

1. PayPal renewals are sent automatically.
2. A month before due date, an e-mail reminder is sent to the contact person for congregations.
3. If renewal is not received within 2 months of the date due, an e-mail will be sent notifying the lapsed member that their ability to access the Member Section will terminate at the end of third month after expiration, and can be re-activated ONLY with membership renewal.
4. Members are encouraged to send an initial or updated Profile when submitting membership forms.

### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR:**

The year started with the **Board Retreat** in September 2012 at Murray Grove, with an updated Board Manual. Along with planning the activities for the year, we identified our Network as *Stewards of Small Group Ministry: Past, Present, Future.*

**General Assembly 2013:** We generally have two major activities at GA: a workshop and a booth. We submitted an application for a workshop and worked with Young Adult Ministry on an application.

Neither applications were accepted. This was the first year since 2004 that our Small Group Ministry Network has not been involved in a workshop. See Future Consideration:

In *CGN July/August*: The UU Small Group Ministry Network has had a GA booth almost every year since its beginning in 2004. The Network Board staffs the booth and has always had lots of visitors and wonderful interaction at the booth. We've finished GA feeling exhausted, but sure we've provided a service to people and their small group ministry programs.

In the beginning, people stopped by to ask what small group ministry was. In the middle years, they brought their problems, both with individual groups and their programs, often complaining that their minister didn't support the program. *This year, many of our visitors were ministers and they stopped by to tell us how much success they're having with small group ministry. The majority of visitors said they use the Network website extensively, thanked us profusely, and said they felt guilty that their congregation wasn't a member of the Network. Others thanked us for providing the SGM Institute and giving them what they needed to start a wonderful program.*

Popular topics this year included small group ministry as part of campus ministry and ways to use theme-based ministry in a SGM program.

### **SGM Institute, July 22-26, 2013 at Murray Grove (See "Institute Notations" in CGN July/August 2013)**

We did several specific things this year:

--The registration was handled *on line* by the Central East Regional Group. This allowed payment via credit cards.

--The Institute Packet was the modules that had been field-tested for the Institute 2011 and edited. These will be available in the Members Section of the Website. Jan Carlsson-Bull and Michelle Collins joined Susan Hollister, Diana Dorroh and Helen Zidowecki on the Institute faculty. We invited participants to lead sections, and would encourage more of this.

--We planned for commuters and for evening session involving surrounding congregations. Unfortunately, we evening sessions did not draw additional participants.

The attendance was 15, including faculty. In fact, the last 4 institutes have had under 20 participants, including leaders. See Future Considerations.

**Networking Grant.** We received a grant of \$5,000 from the UU Funding Program to increase the level of networking around Small Group Ministry, in the following areas:

Resources: We have edited included "*Implementing Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry: For Starting, Restarting, and Enhancing Small Group Ministry and Covenant Groups*" onto the website. The Modules connected with *Implementing* at Institute 2013 will be available via Members Section of the website. We are still working on a feedback mechanism for these items, in addition to e-mail to [office@smallgroupministry.net](mailto:office@smallgroupministry.net).

Members Sections: We are setting up a section of the website for members to submit information about their programs, with information so that they may contact each other. This will be up by early October. The ongoing communication section will be developed within input from participants. In addition, the Resource Section includes the Modules for workshops, and is an opportunity for members to share policies, procedures, and other resources. A second type of Members Section is still in planning: separate sections for ministers, lay coordinators, and religious educators. Hopefully, this will be accomplished by December.

Social Media: We established the Small Group Ministry Network Face Book section. Thanks to Diana Dorroh and Susan Hollister for greeting new subscribers. As of this writing, there are 86 subscribers,

not based on Network membership, but increasing the number of people and congregations that have connections with Network.

Sustainable membership: We are working on expanding benefits to membership, including increasing interactions via the Members Section. We also hope that increased awareness of what our Network has to offer will encourage membership for both resources and to assist with the ongoing work.

We will be asking for a short-term extension of the grant, as the Membership Sections are taking longer to implement than originally planned. A major expenditure is the additional time for the webmaster technical time. The Grant report is available on request from [office@smallgroupministry.net](mailto:office@smallgroupministry.net).

**Publications** –We changed the *SGM Quarterly* to the *SGM Journal* and decreased editions to two. We also changed the *CGN* to bi-monthly. A team of three publishes the bi-monthly *Covenant Group News* and bi-annual *SGM Journal*. *CG News* is a news and announcements venue while the *Journal* features articles by and for ministers, coordinators, facilitators, and participants. We want to involve Network members in production of both periodicals. In June 2013 we created the Online Store for the purchase of publications. We have updated the website Home page about monthly, with connections to Face Book and Blog.

## **INFLUENCES OF NETWORK**

### **Extent to which congregations connect with the Network**

We are reviewing congregations that have connection with Network via membership, articles, session plans, FB and attendance at Institutes. (Some data will be available at the Annual Meeting). We are also surveying congregations by district, such as via websites, to see what additional congregations have small group ministry in place. This will provide data on the visible extent of UU Small Group Ministry.

### **Network Connections with other groups:**

Three references to the UU SGM Network have advanced the work of small group ministry.

1. *UUA Interconnections* collaboration with Don Skinner, Editor, September 2013, was the third article, with previous articles in 1999 and 2001. Also Interconnections Tipsheet entries focus on SGM, the Network, CGNews:[ <http://tipsheet.blogs.uua.org/tag/small-group-ministry/>] Don asked about creating a comprehensive history of UU SGM, which we have been keeping.

2.The Network is included in the 99 Valuable Tools for Leading a Congregation (#36), from Online Seminary Schools (<http://www.onlineseminarschools.org/leadership/>) The feature gives direct links to our Network website online Resources and Session Plans. This is an interfaith resource!

3.Consolidation social media sources is in process and will focus our SGM Network Facebook as a primary social media source for Small Group Ministry. The UU SGM Lab (Facebook) was started by Peter Bowden, who is suggesting that its members join our network. The UUA Covenant Group Ministry e-list has been rather dormant until the last few days. We are going to consider suggesting that subscribers change to our Facebook.

## **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

- Delineating the Network structure needed, or distinguishing Board structure and functions of the Network. This includes increased involvement participation on the Board. See Invitation to participate
- Workshop at GA (Application due Nov. 1). --Do we want to submit an application for a workshop at GA? If so are there emerging topics, such as Small Group Ministry in Differing Settings, etc.
- Institute: Format (length of time, a week versus a long weekend, etc.), location and frequency.