U.U. Small Group Ministry Quarterly

Vol. 2, No. 4, Spring, 2006

Published by the U.U. Small Group Ministry Network

The Language of Reverence: Sticks and stone will break my bones But names will never hurt me...

Rev. Calvin O. Dame, Manchester, ME

Most of us are familiar with this children's ditty and many of us, I expect, have engaged this bit of doggerel defensively in the hustle of the playground. I have two observations about it. On the one hand, it is a useful admonition to children and to the rest of us that we can rise above taunts, slurs and name calling. On the other hand, it struck me when I was a kid, and it strikes me now, that the opposite is also true: words are powerful, and they do, in fact, have the power to wound

I think this is a useful reminder when we turn our attention to what has come to be referred to in our association as the language of reverence. Our congregations are made up of a wide mix of people, some born into our faith, and the majority who arrive from a wide variety of other traditions. Some just wander in, looking for a religious community. But many fall into our arms (I am speaking figuratively here) with great relief, finding in our company salvation, in the very broadest sense, from repressive and hurtful religious upbringings. For many, we are a religious haven in a hostile religious landscape. Not surprisingly, many among us are sensitive to language that evokes for them religious perspectives that make them uncomfortable, or simply, religious language that does not reflect who they now find themselves to be.

The old saw about us is true enough, that UUs sing so poorly because we are busy reading ahead to see if we agree with the words! For many of us, religious language is a hot button.

In the years that I have been a minister, I have noticed a shift in our demographics. Fewer of those new to our congregations are refugees from other religious traditions. More newcomers are simply those who grew up unchurched, and are now looking to explore the religious dimensions of their lives. For many others of us, religious language is simply that, language, a tool for exploring the world.

So, it probably is no surprise that covenant groups from time to encounter conflict over language. The point of small groups is to create conditions in which participants are able to share what is in their hearts and to talk about the real questions of meaning in our lives. We need language to do that, and some language is hot. Words are powerful, words like God, Goddess, Jesus, divinity, sacred, prayer, heaven, church, spirit, eternal, salvation, theology. Even words like hymn or prelude can feel too church-y for some. These are words that make some uncomfortable, and at the same time, this is the vocabulary of spiritual discussion and exploration.

What to do? Well, it probably won't surprise anyone to (Continued on page 2)

Cultivating Reverence, Restraining Violence

M'ellen Kennedy, Starksboro, VT

"The cause of violence is not ignorance. It is self-interest.

Only reverence can restrain violence - reverence for
human life and the environment."

William Sloane Coffin

I had the honor of being present recently at the memorial service here in Vermont for Rev. William Sloane Coffin, that great liberal religious leader who gave his heart and voice to the cause of peace. As I listened to those who loved him speak of his life, what struck me most about the stories they shared, is how much Bill understood the power of language. He used the power of words with great precision and passion. He never spoke negatively of anyone, his friends and colleagues emphasized. Our words can harm or they can heal. We need to use them with care, and Bill Coffin actually lived this deep knowledge for us. That is perhaps why he was an inspiration for so many.

In Small Group Ministry we learn and practice the power of speaking and listening. It turns out that we're actually cultivating reverence, often quite unintentionally. Because, in the safety and spirit of the group, when we listen and speak in a meaningful way with others, often others very different than ourselves, we come to the shocking discovery that we are all human. We experience our common humanity. In a sense, we discover that there is no such thing as "self-interest" because we are each very much alike and we are all interconnected. When we witness the humanness and the mystery of each other's and our own life, we transcend the small "self" and enter the experience of reverence.

If Bill Coffin is right, then when we engage in the art of listening and speaking in our SMG groups, we are part of transforming this aching world from a less violent to a more peaceful place.

One thing about "reverence" and all the deeper meanings that live in us, is that they are, by definition, hard to articulate. So creating a language of reverence is an inherently challenging activity. And, as Bill Coffin has demonstrated for us with his life, cultivating reverence and cultivating a way of expressing it are what make for great lives -- like the Rev. William Sloane Coffin's and yours.

"Let parents bequeath to their children not riches, but the spirit of reverence." Plato

The UU Small Group Ministry Network (UUSGM Network)

Our Mission:

"To help create healthy congregations and a vital Unitarian Universalist movement by supporting Small Group Ministry."

The UU Small Group Ministry Network is a membership based Independent Affiliate Organization of the Unitarian Universalist Association (see uua.org). The purpose of the Network is to support small group ministry and related shared ministry models in Unitarian Universalist congregations through developing new resources, networking and training opportunities.

Joining the Network

For info on joining and benefits of membership, see the back page of this Quarterly, or visit www.smallgroupministry.net
Time to renew? Check your mailing label.

Board & Staff

Rev. Calvin Dame, President Elizabeth Barrett Susan Hollister, Treasurer Rev. Marti Keller Sue Stukey, Secretary Rev. Helen Zidowecki



Rev. Bob Hill Rev. Glenn Turner



Co-Coordinators
Peter Bowden
M'ellen Kennedy

We Welcome Your Gift to the Network

For the UU Small Group Ministry Network to accomplish our mission, we need adequate funding. We are funded primarily by our members. There is much work to be done to support Small Group Ministry in our congregations. And we want to do it! In order to take on the needed research and resource development projects we need your support. Your donation to the UUSGM Network is tax deductible. We thank our members for their support and welcome additional financial contributions.

For more info on making tax deductible donations, please contact Peter Bowden at 401-855-0037.

The UUSGM Quarterly Editor: M'ellen Kennedy

The UUSGM Quarterly provides information, explores issues and shares resources on Small Group Ministry or Covenant Groups. It is funded primarily by our members like you. Do you have a SGM experience to share, or a testimonial, or an exciting aspect of the SGM program in your congregation? Please send your submissions, your ideas and requests for topics to mellen@smallgroupministry.net.

Language of Reverence

By Rev. Calvin Dame (Continued from page 1)

hear that I think that Covenant Groups are the perfect place to explore these tensions and to uncover common ground. As a UU Small Group Ministry true believer, I see nothing but opportunity here! It will require thoughtfulness and intention, but what worthwhile and real work does not?

If the language were a problem in a group in which I was involved, here is the approach I would take:

- 1. Help the group to understand that there is a significant difference of opinion or perspective, and invite the group to set aside time to explore these differences.
- 2. Review with members the group's covenant to work respectfully, to listen and to learn. And if necessary, help the group forge a special covenant for this period of exploration.
- 3. With a commitment in hand, I would spend a session with the UUA Principles and Purposes document, and help the group see that a religious group encompassing different perspectives is exactly who we are. What holds us together is the practice of respect and tolerance.
- 4. Then, I would identify the words that are contentious and create sessions to explore, with extra attention to respect and tolerance, what these words mean to people and how we can find common ground to walk on together.

This may seem too simple, but I think that the tensions in our groups and in our movement over the language of reverence is fertile ground for the spiritual growth. I'd like to invite you to participate in this meaningful work with the groups in your congregation. Over time, SGM members in your congregation may want to engage the whole congregation in exploring this tension and looking for common ground. If you and your groups work on this, I invite You to write about your experience and share it with others through this Quarterly or the Covenant Group News. I also invite You to send in any sessions you create to put up on our website, www.smallgroupministry.net, so others can benefit from your experience.

The tension over words, the language of reverence, the vocabulary of spiritual exploration, runs through our movement, and the way that we make progress is by working together to uncover the common ground, to find the place where we can all stand together.

"Reverence for life is the highest court of appeal."

Albert Schweitzer

Field Test UU Principles and Parenting: Small Group Ministry

Now through May 31, 2006

Small Group Ministry Sessions are on line at www.hzmre.com This includes discussion of Small Group Ministry for parents and 12 session plans. If you use the session plans, or review the material, please send comments to Helen Zidowecki at hzmre@hzmre.com

"Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence." Henry David Thoreau

Covenant Groups – The CLF Way by Schera Chadwick, CLF member

Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) is a congregation of Unitarian Universalists found all over the world. It's a sort of "church by mail." Our members may be isolated by chance or by choice, but through the CLF we maintain a spiritual connection to our religion for ourselves and our children. Many of our members are active in local congregations as well as the CLF. The CLF also encourages the growth of small congregations and provides support for ministers and people of other faiths. For more info on CLF check out our website at www.uua.org/clf/.

Many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations have been adding Covenant Groups or Small Group Ministry to their programs - small groups that meet regularly to share in deep discussion of topics which are presented by a trained facilitator. The Church of the Larger Fellowship, decided in 2002 to explore the innovative possibility of creating Covenant Groups, which could "meet" via e-mail and function in much the same manner as the live, in-person groups meeting in UU churches. Under the able leadership of the CLF minister for lifespan learning, Lynn Ungar, a pilot group of covenant leaders hammered out the details of transforming an in-person format into a structure that could thrive in the world of e-mail. Instead of a group of people meeting together for two hours, our online groups take about three weeks for each session, allowing time for opening words, check-in, reflection and discussion on the session topic, evaluation of the session and a closing reading.

I was fortunate enough to learn about the CLF's plans for establishing electronic Covenant Groups in December of 2004, and joined the leaders' group in its final planning for the launch in January of 2005. Having had two years experience facilitating a local Covenant Group, I was familiar with the format and knew what to expect from an in-person session; but none of us knew how well the eversion would work.

Today, we're all proud to reflect that this creative effort of the CLF to provide additional linkages between its members has been quite successful. I asked the members of my Margaret Fuller Group to comment on what our electronic format offers them. Here are some of their remarks:

"Our messages seem almost like a scrapbook. And we've never seen the people or places."

"One of my needs is to be challenged. This medium is great because it is less threatening than direct conversation, and the time lag gives perspective to some questions and answers."

"I like the long distance Internet sharing because we can all communicate on our own time. We can write—or read—when we're awake early, or sleepless, or in different time zones."

"I came to this group out of a deep desire for a suspension of those Yankee rules about not sharing deeply or exposing vulnerable thoughts and feelings. I came out of a desire to hear and be heard. I came for intimacy, and with curiosity about the degree to which it is possible over this medium."

"I've shared more deeply with this group in a short time than I do with a face-to-face group. I like our variety, our responsiveness to one another, our connections at different points on different topics. I really wish you could all come over for a summer picnic."

"I rely on this group as a regular part of my spiritual practice now. Thank you all for being part of this beautiful covenant."

"I like the ordered, calm, and worshipful nature of this group. We may chat between and on the side (don't all UUs?), but this is truly one of my worship experiences. This is sacred time for me. ...I like knowing each person, our struggles, our commonalities, our differences, our dreams."

"I feel the spirit of fellowship in the voices of this group...
nice! And I do 'hear' you—imagining the tones of your
voices, the cadences in your laughter, I even imagine that I
hear the pauses as you take a breath and ponder a
response... feel those warm cups of tea/coffee as you read
and reflect."

"Even though we don't meet face-to-face, we develop a rapport with other members, acquiring with time a strong impression of each personality and their life situation. It has been a pleasure to participate in this creative CLF adventure, and to see how much satisfaction and warmth it can bring into lives scattered all over the globe."

Although our group members may be halfway around the world from each other, the sense of spiritual companionship that is the central purpose of covenant groups, comes through loud and clear.

Youth SGM Resource Available! "Small Group Ministry with Youth"

By the Rev. Helen Zidowecki. Commissioned by the UUSGM Network

The dynamic Small Group Ministry format can be and has been used effectively with Youth to create powerful group experiences. Drawing on her years of experience working directly with Youth, Helen Zidowecki has created a useful booklet for those wanting concrete help in how do this appropriately and well. This resource includes a session for facilitators, and discussion and session plans for The Five Steps to Building Community and Six Components of a Balanced Youth Program. A total of 25 session plans are included. The resource costs \$25 plus \$5 shipping and handling. All proceeds from this resource, in excess of development cost, go to support the ministry of the UUSGM Network. You can order the resource on-line at smallgroupministry.net or contact Peter Bowden at (401-855-0037).

Reports from Ferry Beach, 2005

The Board and Staff of the UU Small Group Ministry Network have already been preparing enthusiastically for the second ever, weeklong UU training on Small Group Ministry at the UU camp, Ferry Beach in Saco, Maine. Our week last year was great fun and very rewarding. We'd love to have You join us this summer. Details on the 2006 program and how to register are on the next page. Below are real reports from Summer 2005 attendees.

Elizabeth Cobblah, Maynard, MA

When SGM was in its first year at our church, First Parish of Stow and Acton Massachusetts, eight facilitators including our minister attended the SGM conference at Ferry Beach, Saco Maine with about 35 other UU facilitators, some from as far away as Arizona, Washington state and Louisiana. It was a thoroughly enjoyable, meaningful and engaging week spent within a sandy block from an ocean beach. Sense of community was strong. The spirit was pleasurable and supportive.

Workshops and conversations addressed many concerns we had as newly launched facilitators and helped us mark our channels. We got to know what we could relax about and what to pay attention to as facilitators. We got to know the importance of SGM in individual lives and in the organization of the church. We got to know the bare bone essentials of SGM and the flexibility within that structure. Our confidence rose as our understanding of self and community deepened.

The variety of workshops offered something to everyone. Sometimes it was difficult to choose between the one we wanted and the one we thought we needed but several workshops were repeated so we didn't feel we missed anything. The staff members – five ministers by training or by calling, covered different aspects of SGM so that they functioned smoothly together as the distinct fingers and thumb of a creative, caring hand delivering a strong program and clear message. Among the discussion and workshop topics I recall were life-spanning religious education, varieties of prayer and ritual, using the arts in SGM, right and left brain integration for spiritual growth, session-writing, SGM's impact on church function and emotional health.

Being part of a small group that met daily after lunch was valuable in giving us an SGM experience different from the one at home. It expanded our concept of the program and gave each person a mooring while at Ferry Beach.

The pace of the conference was ideal and included time for reflection, rest, beach-going etc between meetings and workshops. Many of us sensed that time moved very slowly while there. Though the content was full and rich, it could be savored. We all came away with vital kernels of understanding that have been sprouting and taking root in our lives and churches. An image of self as a vessel ready to receive, to carry and to offer, is one of many that has stayed with me. In addition, we all probably felt the duo, intimacy and ultimacy, a raison d'etre and an outcome of the program. Experiencing it, learning to cultivate it, being embraced by August warmth and fellowship at the ocean's edge were almost enough to sustain some of us for several years!

Marcia Lewton, Port Townsend, WA

Thinking ahead to the stimulation of a weeklong workshop on Small Group Ministry persuaded me to recruit my friend LaVaughn, get congregational backing and sign up. But when the time came to fly from one coast to the other and settle into a dormitory, I got grouchy. I'm too old to go to camp! How can I pack four pillows into an airline bag?

Then came an e-mail from a friend who loved her stay at Ferry Beach. She instructed me to give the table an extra bang when singing the Quillen Shinn song. Camp songs? Table banging? Oh dear. And I'd have to eat what was put in front of me. Gizzards and tripe, no doubt.

It didn't get any better after I arrived. I'd survived the trip, but now it was time to test out Ferry Beach. **The weather was much hotter than usual and people were splashing around in the ocean.** I took off a shoe and tentatively placed one tender white foot on the burning sand, then quickly withdrew it back into the shoe. The Atlantic, pah. They can have it. I'll take my cool Puget Sound beaches any day.

This couldn't be any worse than a week in the hospital, and I'd lived through that. I could do it. You know how all this had to turn out. No, I didn't pack up and leave. I couldn't leave LaVaughn there to face it alone. Besides, she had the rental car. So I settled in.

After a meal or two I had to admit that the food was better than hospital food, quite a bit better. Enough variety that anyone could make appealing choices. No gizzards. And enough activity that I could take seconds and still lose a little weight, what with our dorm room being on the third floor.

But I still hadn't found out what these folks were going to teach us. We'd have to do a lot of that weird stuff UUs do instead of pray, no doubt. The place was crawling with ministers. No telling what they'd demand. What if we had to sing hymns?

Fortunately there was a schedule of workshops and events to choose from. Coming from a congregation with Small Group Ministry already in place, I was able to find classes that added information and skills, while folks new to the program could go into it from the beginning.

In addition to plenary sessions and workshops, we formed our own Small Groups, which were conducted just like the ones we would be attending back home. There were informal porch talks covering whatever participants wanted to bring up. Braver souls than I could join in an early morning dip in the ocean and attend chapel, if they still felt up to it.

As the week wore on, I began liking people I didn't think I could possibly stand. Small Group Ministry will do that to you. Participants from all over the country brought suggestions on how they dealt with some of the

(Continued on page 6)

Small Group Ministry Network Institute August 12 – August 18, 2006 Ferry Beach, UU Conference Center Saco, Maine



The Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network is delighted to offer an opportunity for teams and individuals from congregations of all sizes to learn and practice Small Group Ministry (SGM) with experienced practitioners and leaders. The week will include presentations, hands-on workshops, small group ministry experience, sharing, networking, music and art. Topics will include:

- Starting SGM from scratch in a congregation
- □ Expanding and enhancing existing SGM programs
- Exploring SGM in Lifespan Religious Education
- Preparing and supporting facilitators in their important work
- □ Revitalizing congregations with SGM
- □ Creating effective SGM sessions
- □ Helping ministers work comfortably and constructively with SGM
- □ Using art, music, movement and alternative approaches in SGM
- □ Exploring SGM as related to Social Justice and Faith in Action
- Sharing materials that participants bring from their congregations
- □ Taking home a vision and action plan for SGM

Mornings will include presentations, discussion and workshops; evenings will have further optional programs and related activities. Afternoons are for relaxing on the beach, lounging on the porch, exploring the environs through organized outings, and other activities. **Participants will have the unique and uplifting opportunity of meeting daily in a hands-on small group.** The conference will be especially effective for groups representing their congregations and all are welcome.

Instructors include: Rev. Calvin O. Dame, Rev. Helen Zidowecki, Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, MDiv, Peter Bowden, Elizabeth Barrett, Rev. Marti Keller and others.

Imagine enjoying the beach, worshipping among the pines, making new friends, sensing our history, and participating in rejuvenating our Unitarian Universalist movement with Small Group Ministry – all in a week this summer!

Comments From Last Year's Ferry Beach Participants:

"Outstanding presenters. It went beyond my expectations. Great conference and facility."

"It offered experiences I did not expect – surpassed my expectations. Small groups were wonderful.

I'm taking back a deeper sense of what is possible for how we relate with each other,
for our program, and what transformation might look like for our church community."

"The staff of this workshop have such amazing gifts, knowledge and excitement, that I want to see all this more widely shared!"

"I'll go back with ideas on how to design and implement the SGM program in my congregation, solid concepts and practical experience gleaned from others."

"Thank you, thank you. It was a powerful experience for me personally and I'm looking forward to sharing what I've learned with my congregation. Thank you for all the work and care you took in putting together a meaningful and practical conference."

"I'm bringing home more organization for our SGM program, and inspiration and tools to make it better."

To register and for more information, visit www.ferrybeach.org

Regional Conferences On Small Group Ministry

The UU Small Group Ministry Network offers regional conferences in the U.S. and Canada. We work with local congregations and Districts to tailor workshops to the needs of SGM students and enthusiasts in the specific area. The feedback from our conference participants has been excellent (see Fall 2005 UUSGM Quarterly). If your district, congregation, or region could benefit from a conference on small group ministry, please contact us at conferences@smallgroupministry.net. A regional conference can help those wanting to learn the basics to launch a new program. It can also provide advanced training for those with existing programs. We also offer workshops for individual congregations wanting to consult with our board and staff to develop new programs and invigorate existing programs. The UUSGM Network is planning and exploring the possibility of various conferences for the next church year.

Pacific Northwest Fall 2006
Pacific Southwest Fall 2006
Heartland District Spring 2006

Rindge, NH December 8-10, 2006

Worship and Shared Ministry Leadership Module weekend for the New Hampshire/Vermont District sponsored by the Church Leadership Committee. Small Group Ministry as a shared ministry model will be included in this course. M'ellen Kennedy will be one of the instructors. For more info contact mellen@smallgroupministry.org

Ferry Beach 2005

By Marcia Lewton (Continued from page 4) persistent issues. The teachers were inspiring. After all, they were still enthusiastic even after years in the program.

We had free time for part of each day. People kindly overlooked my bad attitude and accepted me into groups exploring nearby areas of Maine and taking walks on the beach (adequately shod, of course). There was time to further my friendship with LaVaughn and to have deep conversation with some amazing UUs. We all contributed wine for pre-dinner Social Hours.

At the end came our opportunity to get even for all that hymn singing. The last evening together included a Talent Show, and LaVaughn and I got to sing extremely rude parodies of some least-favorite UU hymns. Ahhh, sweet revenge!

When we got back home, new groups were being formed and training would be necessary. We were immediately pressed to deliver the knowledge we'd acquired to the other SGM facilitators. But we were ready: we'd been through boot camp!

"By having a reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive." Albert Schweitzer

Covenant Groups at General Assembly (CG at GA) To Register for CG at GA 2006, See the article on the facing page

A Review of CG at GA by Erica Baron, Newton Centre, MA

I love attending General Assembly. There's so much to do, to see, and to learn. But all the wonderful things that go on at GA can get overwhelming. It is really great to have a place to slow down, process, and reconnect. The Covenant Group I belonged to at the Fort Worth GA was this haven for me. We met everyday, and talked about our lives, our spiritual histories, and our experiences at GA. At first I was a bit hesitant about adding another event to my already full days, but after one or two meetings, I really came to look forward to them.

The Covenant Group was the only place at GA where I got to know people on a deeper level, who had just been strangers. It was the only place where I got to share myself and my experience in a meaningful way. And while I had many friends and fellow seminarians in the crowds at the Convention Center, it was also great to have another five people who I could say hello to in passing or sit with in workshops. In fact, my group leader and I started seeing each other everywhere we went, which was really fun. I would definitely recommend GA Covenant Groups to others. Participating in my group gave me a new group of friends, a chance to slow down and connect in a deeper way than is possible in workshops, a consistent time to look forward to everyday, and some really amazing conversations.

Comments on CG at GA by Marv Pulliam, Manhattan Beach, CA

What impressed me about the Covenant Group I participated in at GA was the diversity of the group-in terms of age, where people came from, and personal background. We had a special experience in our group and got into personal sharing rather quickly, after all. Maybe it is easier to share one's innermost feelings with strangers. Most of the group members were experiencing covenant groups for the first time. We used the proposed covenant and the openings and closings that were provided by the organizers, which was quite helpful to me as a facilitator. All participants attended all sessions, so they were voting with their feet. They expressed an interest in pursuing Covenant Groups at their respective congregations upon their return home.

After GA, I went to St. Louis to visit my family. One of the members from my GA Covenant Group, was Rich, a member of Eliot Unitarian Chapel, in the St. Louis area. I attended a service at Eliot Chapel with my niece, and had the opportunity to meet Rich there and have a chat during coffee hour. My GA Covenant Group experience has given me connections with UU s far and wide. It's a small world, after all.

Small Group Ministry at General Assembly & CENTER Day 2006

St. Louis, MO, June 21-25, 2006

To register and for more info, visit uua.org

Once a year representatives and members of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and organizations gather for our General Assembly (GA). This year, GA will be in St. Louis, and will feature opportunities for Small Group Ministry (SGM) or Covenant Groups.

è Let us know if you're planning an SGM event at GA and we'll publicize your SGM event in the Summer/GA Issue of this Quarterly.

UUSGM Network Booth An Opportunity to Help Out & Learn More about SGM

The UU Small Group Ministry Network will have a booth in the Exhibit Hall again this year. This is an invitation for a few enthusiastic SGM folks to help us staff the booth. It's a great opportunity to hear about what's going on in our movement with SGM and to spread the good news of the power of SGM. If you'd like to help staff the booth, please contact M'ellen Kennedy at 802-453-5469 or mellen@smallgroupminsitry.net. We'd love to have You join us. Thanks in advance!

Experience Covenant Groups at General Assembly 2006

General Assembly 2006 in St. Louis will offer dedicated time and space for Covenant Groups to meet. Covenant Groups at GA 2004 in Long Beach and GA 2005 in Fort Worth earned rave reviews from participants, proving to be a highlight of the GA experience for many. To learn more, read the reviews by two of last year's participants on the previous page.

Whether you are an experienced GA attendee or a first-timer, whether you are a member of a Covenant Group in your congregation or Covenant Groups are new to you, this program offers the opportunity to enhance your experience at General Assembly 2006 in St. Louis. If you have facilitated a Covenant Group (or Small Group Ministry by whatever name) in your home congregation for one year or more, you are invited to apply to be a GA Covenant Group facilitator. Facilitator Training will be provided by staff and board of the UU Small Group Ministry Network.

Registration forms for GA Covenant Group members and facilitators, with details about group meeting times and logistics, are available on-line. If you would like to participate, please register on-line. There will be no on-site registration in St. Louis.

www.uua.org/cde/sgm/CovenantGroup.pdf. For more information, contact the Rev. Connie Grant, GA Covenant Group Coordinator, at GACovenantGroups@aol.com.

The UU Small Group Ministry
Network Is Offering the
Following Workshops:

Introduction to Small Group Ministry

Small Group Ministry (SGM) or Covenant Groups are being used successfully in hundreds of congregations to build community and encourage deeper spiritual exploration. This workshop will provide an introduction to SGM, how and why it works, and to the essential components of a healthy SGM program. Presenters will be Staff and Board of the UU Small Group Ministry Network. Tentative Time Slot: Friday, 6/23, 11AM –12:15 PM

Strengthening Existing Small Group Ministry Programs

Small Group Ministry or Covenant Groups, are transforming our congregations by encouraging deeper spiritual growth and the development of friendships. This workshop will focus on the leverage points for strengthening or revitalizing an existing program. We will explore how to maintain a healthy program and avoid and overcome common pitfalls. Presenters will be Staff and Board of the UU Small Group Ministry Network. Tentative Time Slot: Friday, 6/23, 4-5:15 PM, Repeated Saturday, 6/24 8:30-9:45 AM

Small Group Ministry At CENTER Day in St. Louis, MO, June 19-21, 2006 For more info, visit uuma.org

The UUSGM Network will be offering the following workshop for religious professionals at CENTER Day

The Possibilities and Perplexities of Small Group Ministry

June 20, 1:30-2:45 PM

More than half of our congregations have tried Small Group Ministry (SGM) or Covenant Groups as a way of meeting the needs for intimacy and spiritual growth. Groups hold the promise for revitalizing our churches. Yet many of us are encountering challenges and frustrations as we use this approach. This session will provide a candid review of SGM and explore ways to successfully run programs to prevent and avoid some of the common pitfalls. We'll explore the hidden, cultural biases that can limit program effectiveness. We'll invite sharing with colleagues on their views of and experiences with SGM.

Presenters will be Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, MDiv, Rev. Helen Zidowecki.

UUSGM Network Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the UU Small Group Ministry Network will be held at GA in St. Louis. Details on the Meeting will be in an upcoming Issue of this Quarterly.

Time To Renew? Check Your Mailing Label! Do You Want to Subscribe to this Quarterly? Become a Member of

The UU Small Group Ministry Network!

Individual: \$35US Annually (1 copy of Quarterly)

Congregation: \$60US Annually (6 copies of Quarterly)

New & Existing Members: To make our larger efforts to support this ministry possible, such as research and development of resources, we need your donations above your annual membership fee.

Additional Donation:	\$100 \$250 \$500	\$
	Total Enclosed:	\$
Name		
Address		
Congregation		
Phone		
Email		
Comments		

Please complete the form above and mail with your check made out to "UU SGM Network" to the UU SGM Network, Attn: Peter Bowden, 155 Evarts Street, Newport, RI 02840 You can also join and renew on-line: smallgroupministry.net

We Welcome Your Gift to the Network.

UU Small Group Ministry Network 155 Evarts Street Newport, RI 02840

The Benefits of Network Membership:

- 1. Experiencing the joy of helping our grassroots Small Group Ministry movement flourish!
- 2. Getting the SGM Quarterly mailed to your home or congregation four times each year.
- 3. Accessing great members-only resources through our website.
- 4. Receiving registration discounts when you attend UU SGM Network sponsored events.
- Receiving assistance when you plan and offer a regional small group ministry event.
- 6. Participating as a voting member in the UUSGM Network Annual Meeting at General Assembly.

The UUSGM Quarterly Editor: M'ellen Kennedy

è Feature Articles in Future Issues

Summer 2006 How SGM Impacts the Congregation Fall 2007 What topic would you like to see covered?

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