

**Covenant Circles in Action,**  
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at UU Congregation of Green Valley, in Amado, AZ

For the past two years, facilitators of our UUC covenant circles have written brief reports of their meetings which provide helpful insights into what actually goes on in a covenant circle, where the emphasis is always on sharing personal thoughts and experiences about an assigned worthwhile topic, coupled with attentive listening by other members of the group that allows the speaker to talk without interruptions from the listeners.

These reports contain useful material for inclusion in training sessions for facilitators.

Following are some excerpts from a fairly large number of reports that were generated over the years from our various covenant circle meetings: (Session topics are in bold caps.)

? Following the candle lighting and some shared readings, we did an “On Our Hearts” segment of bringing up special things affecting our recent lives, before getting onto the topic. On the topic of **RESILIENCE**, we were guided first into thinking about how we would react if suddenly told that we would never walk again. This prompted responses about undone things wished completed, about ways of adapting selves and living environments, as well as perhaps “fighting or denying the message” and taking positive steps to prove the prognosis wrong. We then had a couple of rounds about stories of resilience (or not) in our lives.

? This was our eighth and last meeting. It was with mixed sadness and laughter that we discussed our **MINISTRY**, and although some felt they had none, it was pointed out by the leader of the session, that we all ministered to each other by our attentive listening and by attending each session so faithfully – it was rare to not have all eight of us there. We have enjoyed the sessions and the 3-5 p.m. timeframe. One member so hated to see the end that he invited us all to his house after the last meeting, and we had a lovely party of food, sharing, and gifts.

? I am amazed by the depth of sharing that is happening in our group, which reveals how deep the trust has grown since our first session. It is interesting to note that many, in discussing **BOUNDARIES**, linked them back to what they had learned about them in childhood and, in some cases, discovered them only as a result of this session on boundaries today.

? It felt to me that we had a very good deep-sharing, deep-listening time in a great variety of ways as we looked at **TRUST** (or the lack thereof). I believe it was done well, and respectfully, without what would be called cross-talk or interruption of the speaker. Topics ranged from childhood to recent, from semi-humorous to sad and difficult.

? Our eight members shared thoughts on the topic of **HOSPITALITY AND THE STRANGER**. I think we did quite well in responding to this topic with descriptions of personal experiences in being the stranger and/or meeting the stranger. At the conclusion of our sharing time, we had a

few minutes of open discussion, and we all agreed that it was a difficult topic but that it was a good challenge for us.

? Some considered the topic – **CALLING** – more of a struggle than usual, seemingly related to

uncertainty about what constituted a “calling” – whether it had to be clear and strong and possibly career-oriented or whether it could be any of various pulls that led to decisions and turning points.

? Once again, members expressed gratitude for the deepening intimacy and connections that small groups like this foster. It is clearly very meaningful to many and a great way to get better acquainted.