

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
"Call of Religious Community"
Covenant Group Curriculum, River of Grass Unitarian Universalist
Congregation, Davie, FL

Opening Meditation/Music/Silence/Chalice Lighting (whichever one(s) you choose to do)

Opening Words:

"A few years ago, Robert Randall wrote a little book about why people come to religious communities. He says the "yearnings" which bring us to religious congregations fall into four major groups. We come to church or temple or mosque, looking

- 1) to be Understood,
- 2) to Understand,
- 3) to Belong, and
- 4) to find Hope.

- Linda Hoddy

Check-in/Sharing

Topic/Readings:

Facilitator: Please read this quote aloud and ask the folks assembled to reflect for a moment on what role religious community plays in their lives. How has the meaning of church/congregational life changed for them over time? What differences does the community of faith make in their lives? N.B. Spong uses the word "ecclesia", which has its roots in the original Greek word for "church", but in a broader sense means "a regularly gathering assembly of people."

"The ecclesia of the future will exhibit a renewed dedication to the search for truth. It will never claim that it already possesses truth by divine revelation. It will seek to enliven people by honoring their questions...

The ecclesia will also be a center of caring. It will help people to walk through the difficult times of life without being alone. We may not be able to take the sting out of life, but we can take the loneliness out of that sting—and that is no small accomplishment.

The new ecclesia will also offer opportunities for people to grow into a new being—a being not bounded by tribal claims, superiority claims, gender claims, or even religious claims. Those who once called themselves Catholic and Protestant, orthodox and heretic, liberal and evangelical, Jew and Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu, will all find a place in the ecclesia of the future.

There we will walk together into the meaning of God—the joy, the wonder, the mystery of God—a God not bounded by our formulas, our creeds, our liturgies, or even our Bible, but still real, infinitely real."

-Bishop John Shelby Spong

Likes and Wishes/Feedback

Closing Words:

“The central task of religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of each of our individual lives. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice {and with compassion}. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see that all must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.”

- Mark Morrison-Reed

Amen. May you live in blessing.