

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry Plan for Facilitators

Changed by the Church?

Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, Rev. Dr. Stephan Papa, November 2005

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

“We gather to affirm the potential we all share: for building community, for undertaking constructive change, for engaging in mature growth, for achieving greater humanity than we have known. May our meeting together be a time of reflection on possibilities untried.” Adapted from Harold Babcock

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings:

“Church is not just about providing ecclesiastical services; hopefully it does things not just for you, but to you. Religion is not just about giving and getting; it is not just about services rendered, it is about change.” From *Consumer Religion* by Rev. Stephan Papa

“There are some people who are just not interested in churches, especially so far as adult men and women are concerned. They believe, or seem to believe, that adult men and women are not capable of change and growth. I know that to be false, for through the years I have seen the growing process going on. I have seen people come newly awake to larger ideas and more significant purposes for their lives. I have seen in people a growing dissatisfaction with their own personal isolation and a new desire to become part of the community allied with groups dedicated to better ways of life for all people. I have seen people become newly concerned with the ideas that battle in our turbulent era, and, becoming more informed through reading, through study, through discussion, make their lives count joyously and rewardingly in the furtherance of those ideas. I have seen people suddenly discover the joy and satisfaction to be found in worship, which is the community coming together periodically to clarify its ideals and strengthen its purposes. The church futile? Not when it does this for people—and I know it does.” From Dr. Tracy Pullman

“Let us reflect for a few moments in silence, each of us alone with the deepest and most vulnerable part of ourselves. As Unitarian Universalists we believe that each individual is free to determine what is finally good and right and true. And that freedom carries with it the responsibility for each of us to honestly and vigorously seek out life’s deeper meanings. So let us remind ourselves that the liberal religious quest is neither trivial nor inconsequential, but of primary concern if we are to live well and fully. Therefore, let us reflect upon the ways in which each of us feels called upon to change and grow. And let us resolve that in the days and weeks to come we may live closer to that ideal. Let us reflect for a few moments in silence upon the possibilities for our lives.” From Doug Gallager

Focus Questions:

What brought you to Unitarian Universalism, to the Main Line Unitarian Church?

How has your life/thinking changed since you came to UU/MLUC?

Has the church transformed your life in any way?

What would help you grow more in this Small Group Ministry and in MLUC?

What could you do to help others grow more here in this Small Group Ministry and in MLUC?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

“We extinguish the chalice, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we take with us until we are together again.”