



Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Exploring What Calls You

Greenville UU Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan

Written by Denise Frick April 2018, revised September 2021

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.*

Personal Check In: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Words:

When we listen at the heart level, we will always, always be guided forward in a way that serves us. Who I am now is shaped by having followed those persistent whispers. ~ Amy Kessel

There are many things in life that will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart... pursue those.

~ Michael Nolan

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. When did you feel the satisfaction of responding to a calling in the past? Share how that went for you.
2. What do you want to pursue in the future that is in harmony with your gifts and needs?
3. In what ways do you practice your calling at work/service, in social activities, or in your relationships with family and friends?
4. What calls in your life have you been unable to follow?

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings- see below

Sharing - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share responses to one or more of the session questions.

(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)

Open Discussion -This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing reading:

Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive. ~ Howard Thurman

Announcements/Plans

Check out: As we close today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Readings:

When we arrive on earth, we are provided no map for our life journey. Only gradually, as our identity forms and we get an inkling of who we are, do possibilities begin to emerge that call us. It is one of the weightiest decisions: to decide what to do with your life. The challenge is to find a way of life that will be in harmony with your gifts and needs.

~ John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

It takes great courage to faithfully follow what we know to be true. ~ Sara E. Anderson

Calling, and its related word, vocation (which comes from the Latin *vocare*, to call), have pretentious overtones to many. People are reluctant to use these words because they imply a divine sanction that doesn't seem appropriate – or people think they will be teased for using that terminology. Some of the reluctance is appropriate. There is hardly anything more dangerous than an inflated ego, combined with the sense that one is especially chosen to do God's will. ...In spite of abuses of this word called, which range from the tedious to the horrific, it's just too useful to do without. Most people at times sense that they are supposed to be doing something in their lives beyond what is easy or comfortable, and find that, when they do it, their sense of fulfillment is its own reward. That's a vocation, a calling.

~ Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins, *Soul to Soul*

Vocation happens when our deep gladness meets the world's deep need.

~ Frederick Beuchner

I've come to believe that each of us has a personal calling that's as unique as a fingerprint – and that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service, working hard, and also allowing the energy of the universe to lead you.

~ Oprah Winfrey

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life? ~ Mary Oliver, Poet

You are meant for more than a life of comfort. You are meant for a life of meaning. Staying within the walls that others build for you may make you feel safe, but its emptiness will breed despair. In the meantime, the fires of life will never stop calling for you. ~ Valarie Kaur

Calling

When you heard that voice and
knew finally it called for you
and what it was saying – where
were you? Were you in the shower,
wet and soapy, or chopping cabbage
late for dinner? Were you planting radish
seeds or seeking one lost sock? Maybe
wiping handprints off a window
or coaxing words into a sentence.
Or coming upon a hyacinth or one last No.
Where were you when you heard that ancient

~Rev. Nancy Shaffer, UU Minister, 1950 – 2012, *Instructions in Joy*

voice, and did Yes get born right then
and did you weep? Had it called you since
before you even were, and when you
knew that, did your joy escape all holding?
Where were you when you heard that
calling voice, and how, in that moment,
did you mark it? How, ever after,
are you changed?
Tell us, please, all you can about the voice.
Teach us how to listen, how to hear.
Teach us all you can of saying Yes.