

# Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

## Small Group Ministry

### Legacy

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, January 2020

#### **Opening Words and Chalice Lighting**

We light this chalice to honor the memory of those who have come before us,  
kindling flames of wisdom in dark times,  
willing to challenge orthodoxy even at great personal risk,  
giving us a legacy of freedom and a love of truth,  
A legacy that warms our hearts and lights our paths. — *Paul Sprecher*

**Check-in/Sharing:** This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

#### **Topic: Legacy**

Legacy, by definition, is a legal term that identifies the material goods that we pass on to our heirs: money, property, assets. A broader interpretation encompasses much more: values, traditions, stories, lessons learned, all the intangibles that come from the lives we have lived. When we consider our legacy, let us think not just about death and distribution of property, but about life and the choices we make.

Our personal legacy is the part of ourselves left in the hearts and minds of those we leave behind. As we learn from our past, go through life in the present, and foster our potential future, our experiences create our unique legacy. We each will leave behind a unique legacy. The question is: what legacy will you leave? Do you hope to be remembered in a positive way? Most of us do. So then we must ask ourselves: Are we living our lives to reflect the legacy we want to leave behind?

“We have this amount of time. It's the tiniest grain of sand of time we're allowed on this earth, and what do we leave behind? I think that question has gnawed at me as long as I've been conscious. ... What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” — *Lin-Manuel Miranda*

“If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.” — *Benjamin Franklin*

“Your story is the greatest legacy that you will leave to your friends. It’s the longest-lasting legacy you will leave to your heirs.” — *Steve Saint*

“When it's all over, it's not who you were. . . it's whether you made a difference.” - *Robert Joseph Dole*

“When you make loving others the story of your life, there’s never a final chapter, because the legacy continues. You lend your light to one person, and he or she shines it on to another and another and another.” — *Oprah Winfrey*

“The only measure of your worth and your deeds will be the love you leave behind when you’re gone.” — *Fred Small*

**Possible Questions for Discussion:**

- What would you like your family and friends to remember about you when you are gone?
- Could you share any stories of people whose lives you have touched?
- How will people you have never met, those who come after you, know something about you? How do you want to leave behind information about your life?
- What could you do now to work on your legacy? Are there any relationships you might want to change or things you would like to accomplish?
- Could you describe any cherished possessions that you want to pass on to others?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

**Wrapping Up:** How did you like this topic and session?

**Closing Words**

“But what is stopping you? The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today.” — *Anonymous*

Adapted from: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Vero Beach, FL., September 2015