

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Sanctuary Where All Hands Are Held
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, February 2016

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

Come into this place of refuge.

Come into this circle of hope, holiness, and health.

Come into this sanctuary of sharing.

Come in and feel secure and comfortable,

Come in, knowing that you will be able to explore and learn and discover.

Come in, feeling that you will be heard and will be able to hear.

-Rev. Helen Zidowecki, Unitarian Universalist minister

CHECK-IN (up to 20 to 30 minutes total with up to 2 to 3 minutes per person)

TOPIC AND SHARING (up to 70 minutes for readings, questions and requests, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, optional open discussion at the end if the group agrees, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

READINGS

A sanctuary, in its original meaning, is a sacred place, such as a shrine. By the use of such places as a safe haven, by extension the term has come to be used for any place of safety. This secondary use can be categorized into human sanctuary, a safe place for humans, such as a political sanctuary; and non-human sanctuary, such as an animal or plant sanctuary.

-From Wikipedia

Sanctuary, on a personal level, is where we perform the job of taking care of our soul.

-Christopher Forrest McDowell, Author

Connect with your inner self. A beautiful sanctuary exists within you. A place of total calm. A connection to stillness. A temple of sacredness, peace, beauty, love. Once you are truly at this infinite inner place, your true home, you will be at home anywhere, at anytime, with anyone. A place where INFINITE possibility exists.

-Angie Karan Krezos, Author

It is in the home that we form our attitudes, our deeply held beliefs. It is in the home that hope is fostered or destroyed. Our homes are to be more than sanctuaries; they should also be places where God's Spirit can dwell, where the storm stops at the door, where love reigns and peace dwells.

-Thomas S. Monson, LDS Church leader

Family life itself, that safest, most traditional, most approved of female choices, is not a sanctuary: It is, perpetually, a dangerous place.

-Margaret Drabble, English novelist

Sit with me, and I'll not be alone. Hold my hand, and I'll not feel alone. Cry with me, and I'll no longer suffer alone.

-Richelle E. Goodrich, *Making Wishes: Quotes, Thoughts, & a Little Poetry for Every Day of the Year*

QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS (Please respond to any of the questions, requests, and readings you feel moved by. It is not necessary to respond to all of them.)

1. Share your experience of sanctuary, safe community, or what you imagine that might be like.
2. What can you do to create a safe environment for yourself and others?
3. What has interfered with sanctuary or safety for you?
4. Is physical touch a sanctuary for you?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (up to 5-10 minutes). Alternatively, this agenda item can be done after the check-in, if the group decides to do that.

- Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.
- Consider discussing the service project.
- Other

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and **WISHES** (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)/**CHECK-OUT** (a few words or phrases from each person who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

Grateful for the opportunity to share this time and space together, we prepare to go now our separate ways, ...renewed by the energy of each other's company, ...invigorated by the opportunity to communicate compassionately. As we have grown while were together, may we also grow while we are apart, may we be strengthened by the inspiration of the connection which we forged together today. And may we remain so strengthened, until we meet again.

-Adapted from Vid Axel, communications consultant

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring the SGM Facilitator Training Manual, paper and writing implements, the session plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee 2015-2016 (Bonnie Koenig; Dick Loescher, chair; Connie Newman).

February 8, 2016