

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Small Group Ministry Session  
**Small World Shaped by our Decisions over a Lifetime**  
By Kathleen Thomson, UU Fellowship of La Crosse, Wisconsin, May 18, 2017

**Opening Words:**

With this topic, we contemplate the very large and the very small: an evocative description of our Universe, and a rational description of the small worlds each of us has created over a lifetime of decision-making.

**Check In:**

Share a bit about yourself, or something intended to be meaningful to these friends with whom we gather today.

**Topic and Quotes:**

Excerpts from "Dwellings" by *Linda Hogan*, 1995.

"To dream of the universe is to know that we are small and brief as insects, born in a flash of rain and gone a moment later. We are delicate and our world is fragile."

"It was the transgression of Galileo to tell us that we were not the center of the universe, and now, even in our own time, the news of our small being here is treacherous enough that early in the space program, the photographs of Earth were classified as secret documents by the government."

"It was thought, and rightfully so, that the image of our small blue Earth would forever change how we see ourselves in context with the world we inhabit."

"When we saw, the deep and swirling white turbulence of our Earth reflected to us, says photographer Steven Meyers, we also saw 'the visual evidence of creative and destructive forces moving around its surface, we saw for the first time the deep blackness of that which surrounds it, we sensed directly, and probably for the first time our incredibly profound isolation, and the special fact of our being here.'"

"It was a world whose intricately linked together ecosystems could not survive the continuing blows of exploitation."

**Discussion Questions:**

Who we are, where we live, what we do are generally shaped by a lifetime of decision-making. Our small worlds that we create by our decision making are dynamic and change over time depending on experience, circumstances, values, etc.

The following questions attempt to elicit thoughts of how our own decisions have shaped our world as we live it and view it.

1. Can you identify what was the most important decision that you have made over a lifetime and why?

2. How do you make decisions? What or who do you tend to rely upon for input? After deciding, do you set the matter aside as a done deal or do you tend to review and raise further questions?
3. In your childhood and youth, were you encouraged or discouraged to make decisions at home, in school or another environment? Were there people in your life who tried to influence your decisions?
4. As an adult, do you remember a decision that was especially difficult or trying? Are there some decisions that you have reversed due to insight, data, or different circumstances?
5. Can you recall what was the most heartwarming decision that you have made?
6. Can you remember a decision (or decisions) that others made in your behalf that you felt were particularly onerous or restrictive?