

**Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website**

**SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

***Stewardship***

**Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, Ursula Siebeneich, Virginia Jarocho-Ernst, May 2005**

**Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:**

That's what I consider true generosity. You give your all, and yet you always feel as if it costs you nothing.  
~ Simone De Beauvoir

**Check-in/Personal Sharing (approximately 30 minutes)**

**Focus Reading:**

“...and cornfields that the old men worked by hand because the profit of having turkeys and wild quail was worth more to them than the profit of a land without them. In wild things, in the land as it was, the old men took comfort. Where there was wildness, there was possibility, chance, genuine life of promise and risk and perplexing uncertainty....the land yielded little that anyone but the old men considered important or of value. From it they harvested solitude, contentment, peace of mind, a way of life instead of merely a living.

....Their life in the mountains became a compromise, a balance of giving and taking.”

“...Durham informed Emerson and Albert that their thousand acres were an ‘agricultural disgrace.’ Totally worthless, an eyesore and embarrassment to Oglala County. ‘You don’t even own a tractor, for chrissakes,’ he said. He went on, greatly troubled, genuinely concerned. Why hadn’t the place been logged, he demanded to know, or planted in something profitable? Why weren’t there beef cattle grazing everywhere? How come the stream hadn’t been dammed? Where was their sense of pride, ambition, profit?”

“Albert smiled broadly, as did Emerson. They had expected good news but nothing this good, so greatly uplifting. They had spent years and years trying to circumvent the tenets of modern technological farming and had often wondered at the degree of their success. When Wayne Durham told them he had never seen a less modern, less successful, more deplorable neglect of land that was dying to be cleared and plowed from highway to highway, they beamed with incalculable pride. In those days, making and keeping a small farm an unprofitable venture took skill and determination and intelligence. Both were happy to see that their hard work and sacrifice had paid off. Having the state of Arkansas proclaim them an agricultural failure only boosted their courage and resolve. Evidently they were doing something right.”

~ Harry Middleton, The Earth is Enough: Growing Up in a World of Flyfishing, Trout, & Old Men

“Remember, it is all a gift. Remember, there was a time when you weren't so well off too!”

~ author unknown

“We are living in a time of great abundance, perhaps the greatest ever. Why do we act like it is a time of scarcity? Are we ruled by fear rather than love?” ~Ken Neher

“Like fire, money itself is neither good nor evil. It is neutral, its character determined by the eye of the perceiver, the hand of the user.” ~Jerrold Mundis, Making Peace With Money

**Focus Questions:**

What do you value and protect?

What do you feel responsible toward as a steward, for yourself and others?

What is the relationship between its past and its future? Is it held in trust for the future?

How do you take responsibility for what you value?

What time, talents, and treasure do you invest for its future?

Do you have a role model for generosity and stewardship?

**Checkout/Likes and Wishes:**

**Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:**

Stewardship is everything – a call, a gift, a lifestyle. We, the women and men of today, are stewards of...the ongoing creation. ~ Rosemary Williams

Giving is worship. Nothing could be more simple. ~ Mark Vincent

The only gift is a portion of thyself. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson