

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Small Group Ministry Program  
**Sustainability**  
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

We drink from wells we did not dig. We have been warmed by fires we did not build. We light this chalice in thanksgiving for those who passed their light to us.

-Robert Schaibly, 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

Sustainability is the key to our survival on this planet and will also determine success on all levels.

-Shari Arison, Israeli businesswoman

-Buy, buy, says the sign in the shop window; Why, why, says the junk in the yard.

-Paul McCartney, English singer, songwriter, and member of the Beatles

Big companies are reliant on institutional investors on a punishing schedule which leads to ruthless behaviour. This form of capitalism with this structure and incentives will never deliver sustainability.

-Tim Jackson, British ecological economist and professor of sustainable development at the University of Surrey

If we each take responsibility in shifting our own behavior, we can trigger the type of change that is necessary to achieve sustainability for our race or this planet. We change our planet, our environment, our humanity every day, every year, every decade, and every millennia.

-Yehuda Berg, American Jewish author

Gardening and making your own soap and home-birthing your babies are fine, but these are inherently limited actions. If we want to see genuine food safety, if we want to see sustainable products, if we want to see a better women's health system, and if we want these things for everyone, not just the privileged few with the time and education to DIY it, then we need large social changes.

-Emily Mather, *Homeward Bound: Why Women are Embracing the New Domesticity*

-When we destroy something created by man we call it vandalism, but when we destroy something created by nature we call it progress.

-Ed Begley, Jr., American environmentalist and actor

The first rule of sustainability is to align with natural forces, or at least not try to defy them.

-Paul Hawken, American author, environmentalist, and entrepreneur

Sustainability is no longer about doing less harm. It's about doing more good.

-Jochen Zeitz, German businessman

Building a world where we meet our own needs without denying future generations a healthy society is not impossible, as some would assert. The question is where societies choose to put their creative efforts.

-Christopher Flavin, Worldwatch Institute President

**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. In what ways do you attempt to live in a sustainable manner?
2. What challenges do you encounter in attempting to live sustainably?
3. What unsustainable practices would you most like to see changed?

**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)

As we leave this community of the spirit, may we remember the difficult lesson that each day offers more things than we can do. May we do what needs to be done, postpone what does not, and be at peace with what we can be and do. Therefore, may we learn to separate that which matters most, and that which matters least of all.

-Adapted from Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert, Unitarian Universalist minister

**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