

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Chalice Group Session Fall 2009

### **THREE UU WAYS TO TALK ABOUT GOD**

Based on a sermon by Rev. Megan Foley, Sugarloaf Congregation of Unitarian  
Universalists (SCUU), Germantown, MD, Fall 2009

#### **OPENING WORDS and CHALICE LIGHTING**

God is not God's name. God is OUR name for that which is  
greater than all of us, but which resides in each of us.

- Forrest Church

#### **CHECK – IN**

**COVENANT** (Optional) Facilitator may take this time to develop, discuss and/or  
review the Chalice Group's covenant.

#### **READING**

Words from Rev. Megan Foley's sermon "Three UU Ways to Talk about God"  
(Oct. 18, 2009)

Most UUs who came to us then came because they rejected the religion they grew up in – whether because the religion couldn't tolerate their questions, or because it seemed to focus on separation and disdain between people rather than love and community, or because the religion forced belief in things that we couldn't believe in because they didn't make sense to us, at least not the way they were being taught.

...we Unitarian Universalists also come to our congregations because we're interested in a free search for our own spiritual truths, and our own free searches often lead us to believe, to know, that there is a sacred center to our existence that is mysterious, that is hard to pin down, but is powerful and very, very real. Even our most hardened UU atheists believe in the enduring power of love, of community, of human connection, or they wouldn't be in our pews on Sundays.

...unfortunately, our Unitarian Universalist congregations often fall short right here, at this juncture in our searches for the holy in-between the desire to learn and the Finding Out. UU congregations welcome and encourage the search, in my opinion, but don't encourage the finding near enough – the finding of our own truths that each of us needs to feel spiritually settled. And when we do find our answers, we aren't really invited to share them in our communities, for fear that we will be seen as imposing our beliefs on others – something that we UUs have covenanted with each other not to do. And so our findings often go unexplored. This is a truth about our UU culture that needs to be named.

Rev. Megan goes on to offer three ways to talk about God:

The first is from the Bible in the book of John and is also carved in stone at the Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington, DC:

**God is love and he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.**

The second is a sign commonly displayed in Ethical Societies including the Washington Ethical Society in Washington, DC which recently voted to associate with the Unitarian Universalist Association:

**Where people meet to seek the highest is holy ground.**

The third is from a 2007 movie called "You Kill Me" in which a character named Tom is trying to explain the concept of a higher power as used in Alcoholics Anonymous and says:

**It's gotta be big. It's gotta be good. And it's gotta be NOT YOU."**

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

What are your beliefs about God?

What answers have you found on your spiritual journey?

Do any (or all) of the three ways to talk about God mentioned in the readings speak to you? How?

Do you feel comfortable talking about God and the answers you have found?

What experiences have you had talking about them with others?

Do you enjoy hearing others talk about their "answers?"

### **COMMUNING (Sharing & Listening without cross conversation)**

### **DIALOGUE (Sharing & Listening with cross conversation)**

### **CHECK-OUT**

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you'd like to call particular attention to?

### **CLOSING AND CHALICE EXTINGUISHING**

What is important ...theologically is for us human beings to know where we stand in the order of things. We are creatures with vast potential, that is for sure, potential we're nowhere close to realizing - but we are also small parts of a system whose outer boundaries we can't fathom... And so whether we see God in a traditional sense, or we define God as Love, or as holy space, it is this final, humble way of talking about God that is most important to me, in the end.

Rev. Megan Foley