

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Circle Ministry 2007-2008  
Session Plan

*To Meet My Heart's Yearning*

Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull for Circle Ministry at First Parish UU Cohasset, MA  
Adapted from the session plan developed by Barbara Bates  
and used by the First Unitarian Society in Newton, MA

**Note: See the Circle Ministry Session Sequence for process guidelines.**

**Gathering, Welcoming (2 minutes)**

**Chalice lighting (1 minute)**

**Opening words (1 minute)**

Albert Schweitzer was physician, philosopher, master organist, humanitarian, and an honorary member of the then Unitarian Church of the Larger Fellowship. His moral philosophy was reverence for life. With seasoned wisdom, he reminded us that:

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

**Check-in/Sharing (3-4 minutes@ - 30-40 minutes)**

**Discussion (60 minutes)**

[See Circle Ministry Session Sequence as a reminder of the structure of this segment.]

First response

Cross-conversation

Concluding statements

**Topic: To Meet My Heart's Yearning**

Dag Hammarskjöld, Swedish diplomat, long-time Secretary General of the United Nations, and philosopher of life, had this to say about how to greet each day:

“Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and to give back.”

Ministry is a commitment to listening and speaking with care and attention to what's important to us—a commitment to being present authentically to others, and to developing and sharing a deeper sense of meaning and spiritual community. It is more than a casual level of conversation; it involves a certain level of risk and of personal disclosure in a setting where members are diverse and hold widely divergent beliefs.

Circle Ministry calls us into right relationship with one another. This ministry is our shared calling, privilege, and blessing. In the words of Margaret Wheatley:

“We can reclaim conversation as our route back to each other, and as a path to a hopeful future.”

Take a few moments of silence and ponder your responses to these questions:

1. In signing up for Circle Ministry this year, what are you looking for? What has brought you here today/tonight?
2. Tell a story from your own life when your “light went out” and was rekindled by a spark from a caring person.

(Read through both 1 and 2 and choose for discussion the questions that best fit your group.)

What concluding thoughts would you like to share?

### **Feedback (15 minutes)**

Thank the group.... Ask what they liked and what variations they would hope for.

Explain that for the next session, we’ll consider the topic “Caring.”

Note that the session plan for this gathering is available for group members as we leave.

### **Closing (1 minute)**

As we close this gathering of our Circle Ministry, I offer you the words of Elizabeth Selle Jones,

We extinguish this flame  
but not the light of truth,  
the warmth of community,  
or the fire of commitment.  
These we will carry in our hearts until we are together again.