

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Small Group Ministry

What Food Means to Me

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, December 2019

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

For what shall we give thanks?

for the tables round which we gather;

for the food we enjoy with friends,

seasoned with love and memory;" - *Laura Horton-Ludwig*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention briefly any major issues or events on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: What Food Means to Me

Much of our culture is built around the production, preparation and consumption of food. These rituals and traditions with food tie us to our families and communities. At different times of our lives, societal influences and/or emotional triggers may affect our eating habits. Our need for food and its importance to us can lead us to eat too little, too much or the wrong kind of food.

Let us share and discuss some significant experiences around food in our lives and what food has meant to us.

"When practiced to its fullest, mindful eating turns a simple meal into a spiritual experience, giving us a deep appreciation of all that went into the meal's creation as well as a deep understanding of the relationship between the food on our table, our own health, and our planet's health." - *Thich Nhat Hanh*

"Moderation. Small helpings. Sample a little bit of everything. These are the secrets of happiness and good health." - *Julia Child*

"Don't allow a love problem or work problem to become an eating problem. Stop trying to stuff your feelings down with food." - *Karen Salmansohn*

“There are a lot of great things about food, but it's something that's an eternal struggle in our contemporary society, where and how food is made, where it's coming from, how much to consume. There are so many layers to it.” - *Jami Attenberg*

“The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison.” - *Ann Wigmore*

Food, glorious food!
We're anxious to try it
Three banquets a day --
Our favourite diet! - *Lionel Bart, from Oliver!*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What did you eat growing up, and what sort of family rituals surrounded meals? How have food and rituals surrounding its consumption changed as you've grown?
- How does food tie you to the larger community or to other cultures?
- Could you share any experiences and feelings associated with growing food, cooking or baking?
- Have you found any eating habits that have been helpful or harmful for you? What made these habits helpful or harmful?
- Are you an emotional eater? If yes, are there other things you can do to nurture yourself other than eating?
- Has your relationship with food changed over time? If so, in what way?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share.)

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

“The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not.” - *Mark Twain*