

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
What Do You Want--Longings, Hopes, Dreams?
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, April 2012

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 gather in mutual humanity, in the knowledge that there is more to any of us than others know-and that there is less to any of us than we would prefer. We all bleed sometimes. We all have dreams. We all dance with our strengths and our weaknesses, trying "to find the better parts of ourselves" and share them with the world. We come to this place of religious community, that we all might do these things better in the presence of thoughtful companions, than alone.

-Rev. Dennis McCarty

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, 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

We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been — a place half-remembered and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community. Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us ...

-Starhawk

Loving-kindness mantra

I long to be as safe, as peaceful, and as healthy as possible, and I long to be kind to myself. I long for you and all people to be as safe, as peaceful, and as healthy as possible, and I long for you to be kind to yourselves.

-Adapted from Kristin Neff, Ph.D., in the book Self-Compassion.

To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime.

-Erich Fromm

The grand essentials for happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.

-Chalmers

Your aspirations are your possibilities.

-Samuel Johnson

It is good to dream, but it is better to dream and work. Faith is mighty, but action with faith is mightier.

-Thomas Robert Gaines

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.)

1. What are some of your longings, hopes, and dreams for yourself or others?
2. What have you done or could you do to realize your longings, hopes, and dreams? What prevents you? Are some unrealizable?
3. How do your communities support your longings, hopes, and dreams?
4. If someone asked what they could give you that would be most special to you, how would you reply, and why?

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)

- 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 who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

Blessed be the longing that brought you here and quickens your soul with wonder. May you have the courage to listen to the voice of desire which disturbs you when you have settled for something safe. May your dreams gradually reveal the destination of your desire.

-John O'Donohue

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 lesson plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Laura Adams; Dick Loescher, chair; Sandy Moses; Leora White) and Rev. Alicia Forsey 1/23/12