

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry
Where is Home?
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA, January 2022

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

We light our chalice in gratitude for
The Joy we experience when we come together
The Insights we receive from one another
The Challenges we encourage one another to meet
And the Satisfaction we receive from listening to one another
and sharing our ideas and beliefs.

Check-In / Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Please brainstorm potential future SGM topics. Please register for SGM for 2022 at fpc-stow-acton.org/sgm.

Topic: Where is Home (for You)?

According to census data, Americans move an average of 11.7 times in their lifetime, as we navigate the changes that come with stages of life. Many of us move from our original family home, to new family / found family homes, to downsized homes, to assisted living or care homes.

Home is not just a location, a place where we keep our stuff; as the adage goes, 'home is where the heart is'. We can derive deep pleasure from our homes. Our home and our roots are often part of our identity. Home is not simply where the heart is, but the mind, too.

While the actual homes and housemates we have had sometimes form our ideal emotional home, often we have found aspects of what we personally need in a home in special places, people or even inside our own minds.

Feeling at home may be a matter of feeling settled, comfortable, and secure. Conversely, feeling settled and comfortable in any setting could be simply making oneself at home.

"Home is much more than a building or a piece of ground. It's an emotion, a deep-rooted sense of welcome and permanence and belonging. It's the safe, intensely personal realm where you can permit yourself to throw off everything that isn't fundamentally, essentially you." – Dwight Young

"The first thing we ask someone when we meet them, after their name, is where they are from, or the much more interestingly-phrased 'where's

home for you?’ We ask, not just to place a pushpin for them in our mental map of acquaintances, but because we recognize that the answer tells us something important about them.” – Julie Beck

“The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” — Maya Angelou

“Home is a place of *belonging*. It’s where you can be yourself and be loved for it. But home is also a place of *becoming*. It’s a place that challenges us to grow and share our God-given gifts with the world ... Home is a place of belonging and becoming—where you can be who you truly are, and become who you’re truly meant to be.” – Sheridan Voysey

“Joy does not mean that you fully disconnect from other vital emotions, such as being reflective or feeling sad. It means that joy is your home, and other emotions are places to visit. After visiting, come back to your home to calm your anxieties!” – Gurdeep Pandher

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- What does “home” mean for you? Could you describe any people or places and what aspects of “home” you have found with them?
- In what ways can “home” be a state of mind for you, a place you can access anywhere you are, even in solitude?
- Could you share any memories of how you felt in your childhood home?
- Has the meaning, the actuality, or experience of “home” changed for you over time? If so, how?
- If you were to create your own home, how would you make it the kind of home you would want?
- Share a move or change of living situation that has been critical in your life or for someone close to you. What impact did that have on you at the time or throughout your life?

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

Closing Words

“Never make your home in a place. Make a home for yourself inside your own head. You’ll find what you need to furnish it – memory, friends you can trust, love of learning, and other such things. That way it will go with you wherever you may journey.” - Tad Williams, American author

Go in love. ~ Go in peace. ~ Go home....