

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY/COVENANT CIRCLES

PURPOSE

The purpose of our Covenant Circles is to provide members a safe place for deep listening and reflection as we share our lives and values in support of one another in our personal and spiritual journeys, as well as to serve our congregation and the larger community.

INFORMATION ABOUT COVENANT CIRCLES

Covenant Circles provide a way to connect with others in our congregation who wish to explore their values and ideas of spirituality in a small group setting. They provide opportunities to explore our individual stories of faith and spiritual topics of interest and thus develop a deeper connection with one another and strengthen the fabric of our congregation. The hallmark of Covenant Circles is the emphasis on attentive, sympathetic listening to one another. These are not discussion, rather **listening** groups.

Covenant Circles are made up of six to ten members which are formed according to a mutual meeting time. Each group covenants (promises) together to attend meetings faithfully, listen to one another without judgment, respect confidentiality, and commit to some form of service for the congregation and the wider community.

Covenant Circles meet twice a month for two hours, during which time the meeting follows a standard format which consists of the following: Candle lighting, check-in, silence, introduction of topic, sharing thoughts on the chosen topic, closing thoughts and/or activities, closing song, and extinguishing the candle. During the sharing time, each person takes a few minutes to reflect on his/her personal experiences and thoughts related to the topic, without interruption or comment from any other group members.

There are many possibilities for topics for the sharing time in Covenant Circles, such as: What Am I Living For, Balance, My Bucket List, Loss and Grief, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Sharing our Passions, Sustainable Living, Success and Failure.

Covenant Circles meet twice a month for varying lengths of time from short introductory sessions to four months, six months, or a year or more.

Covenant Circles are a form of small group ministry in which we enact our third UU principle, "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth." In addition, each Covenant Circle participates in some form of ministry (service) to the church and to the larger community.