

MEMBERSHIP:

Groups are open to all members and active friends of UUFSC.

MEETING TIMES & PLACES:

Each group meets often enough for group members to create meaningful connections: at least once a month. Groups meet for about two hours, long enough to follow the format and engage in deep listening. Groups are encouraged to meet in members' homes. By sharing our homes with others, we share our stories and a little bit about who we are. However, since some groups may have special needs, UUFSC is also occasionally available as a meeting place.

COMMITMENT:

Participants are expected to make a commitment from October 2011 through May 2012, to attend all meetings, if at all possible. Members are in a Fellowship Circle for each other, as well as themselves, so attendance is vital.

SIGNING UP:

To sign up for a Fellowship Circle, Please fill out all the information on the registration form and mail to:

UUFSC

attn: Fellowship Circle Coordinator

PO Box 1000, Salida, CA 95368

NOTE:

You can fold the form with a piece of tape and use it as a self-mailer.

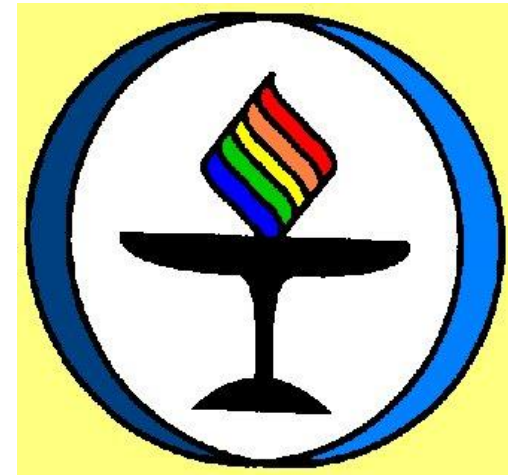
QUESTIONS?

Contact Coleen Sparkman

209-576-1403

or e-mail at: admin@stanuu.org

Fellowship Circles



A Covenant Group Ministry

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Stanislaus County

Covenant Group Ministry programs exist in many Unitarian Universalist congregations as a way for people to have an opportunity to explore their deepest understanding of life within their community of faith. Here at UUFSC, Fellowship Circles also serve as small communities of listening, caring and exploration in the midst of our growing congregation.

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLES

Our Covenant Group Ministry is designed to provide spiritual enrichment.

Fellowship Circles are groups of 6-10 people who meet regularly to build relationships and to share their responses to life's questions. They offer opportunities for Intimacy and Ultimacy - James Luther Adams' description of the quest of religion. Every Fellowship Circle has one or two trained facilitators who also meet monthly in their own Fellowship Circle with our minister.

WHAT MAKES FELLOWSHIP CIRCLES DIFFERENT?

We believe that meaningful personal and spiritual growth arises when people share their lives with each other, especially through sincere listening. Several characteristics of Fellowship Circles foster such an experience:

SIZE:

Fellowship Circles consist of 6 to 10 people, large enough to promote group interaction but small enough to allow intimacy and equal participation. Once started, a group is not "closed" but welcomes new members as long as the group has no more than 10 people.

FORMAT:

Each Fellowship Circle gathering is structured to help us set aside everyday distractions and make connections with one another. The simple format includes:

- ⊕ Opening Words & Lighting of the Chalice
- ⊕ Check-in
- ⊕ Focus of the meeting (i.e. topic for meeting)
- ⊕ Check-out
- ⊕ Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice

COVENANT:

Making connections with other people is easier when we understand how they like to be treated. In the first few meetings of a Fellowship Circle, members develop a covenant - a set of promises - describing the ways they commit to interact with one another. Members also contribute to the ongoing activities of the group - choosing the readings, hosting the gatherings, and reminding members of meeting times and places. Having clear expectations for communication and sharing responsibility for group activities ensures that all members benefit from the Fellowship Circle experience.

SERVICE:

Once or twice during the year, each group engages in service to the congregation and/or the larger community. Serving together as a group gives members a chance to get to know each other in a different way, to understand how values and actions shape each other and to perform service as a group of Unitarian Universalists, rather than as individuals. For example, a circle might choose to volunteer to take on our Sunday morning volunteer roles, to join one of our work parties together, to serve dinner at a homeless shelter or work on a Habitat for Humanity crew. Or a circle may develop their own project. In addition to these formal service projects, Fellowship Circle members may offer services to each other in times of need, such as bringing meals or providing transportation.

FOCUS OR CONTENT:

The focus of each meeting is a question that serves as a springboard for reflection on deeper issues of who we are and what gives meaning to our lives. Whatever the question, the particular topic of the session is always secondary to the needs of the group and opportunities for deepening relationships among group members.

COVENANT GROUP MINISTRY AND THE UU CHURCH

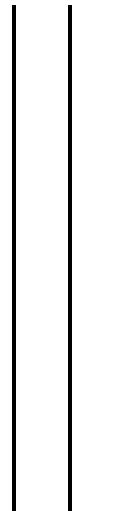
The very nature of the covenant group process affirms the worth and dignity of each of its members. It's about justice, equity and compassion in its invitation to all, even people who are not now guests at anyone's table. It's all about acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth. It is the setting for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. The right of conscience is always underscored. It is democratic to the core. Depending on the topics discussed, it might also foster respect for the interdependent web. Moreover, the living traditions we draw from are incorporated in our readings and focus questions - a rich treasure trove from which to draw. The covenant group ministry can lead to a fuller flowering of our Principles and Purposes.



*Adapted from Rev. Glenn Turner,
Northeast District Minister*



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County is a vibrant, diverse community for all ages, where opportunities exist for religious, intellectual and spiritual growth. We value justice, service and respect for our world and welcome individuals who seek fellowship, healing and a caring connection.



UUWSC
Attn: Fellowship Circle Coordinator
PO Box 1000
Salida, CA 95368

Registration Form

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

I can offer my home as a meeting location. Yes No

I have transportation problems and need _____

I will need childcare to participate in a group. Yes No

My children are _____ years old.

I have the following special need(s) that may affect my participation in a group (i.e. pet or other allergies, access issues):

Fellowship Circle participants commit to meeting October 2011 through May 2012.

SCHEDULING PREFERENCES:

(Please circle at least two or three choices)

Weekdays: am pm evening

Saturdays: am pm evening

Sundays: pm evening