

**From the Small
Group Ministry
Frequently
Asked Questions
(FAQ)**

1.2 In what way is the small group ministry to be ministry?

The SGM is ministry in that:

1. It enables us to discover what we really value, and encourages us to express those values in our actions...transforming our society.
2. Its primary emphasis is to care for people—to serve them, encourage them to spiritual growth, and meet their needs for affirmation and acceptance.
3. It creates an open, supportive, nurturing environment that promotes and facilitates spiritual growth and mutual, interactive care for one another.
4. It offers opportunities to search and grow at our own pace and in our own way through telling our stories, learning, loving one another, and contributing ourselves and our resources.
5. It offers an open chair, recognizing that everybody needs a place to experience community. Excitement and enthusiasm arise as lives change and new people enter into meaningful relationship in a community in which everybody is cared for.
6. It provides a quality of caring and intimacy that many people long for.
7. Although its leaders are not trained to be professional counselors, it provides opportunities for members to be referred to sources of the appropriate care they require.
8. In the small groups we can identify and use our spiritual gifts.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF
SAN JOSE

**Ministry ... the
expression of our values
in our lives**

“Gathered in small groups with leaders who are consistently being supported by small groups of other leaders and our ministers, we can begin to step into a lay ministry built on sharing our stories that provides immense opportunity for spiritual deepening and connection to one another. And using an open structure that welcomes every person as a valued participant, we can live out our Unitarian Universalist values and principles in a valley that desperately needs them. We can, as ordinary but caring lay people, minister and be ministered to as we’ve never known before.”

Preliminaries “Likes and Wishes”

Opening/ Chalice Lighting Each day we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back.
Hymnal #455
By Dag Hammerskjold

Singing Spirit of Life, come unto me.
Hymnal #123
Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.
Blow in the wind; rise in the sea;
Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.
Roots hold me close; wings set me free;
Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

Responsive Reading How far can reach a smile, how high a helping hand can lift?
Hymnal #84
How far is far enough to give?
Is there a way to learn just how a kindness speaks or where it goes?
Should love be caught to hold?
If we then think our small amount of help would not go far – and so don’t give, would we still live?

Sitting in Silence

Sharing/ Deep Listening Please share your responses to the questions you answered prior to the session.

Singing Love will guide us, peace has tried us,
Hymnal #131
hope inside us will lead the way.
On the road from greed to giving,
Love will guide us through the hard night.

If you cannot sing like angels,
If you cannot speak before thousands,
You can give from deep within you.
You can change the world with your love.

Likes and Wishes Now, at the conclusion of four gatherings together, reflect on your experience in this group, and express your likes and wishes. For example, you might consider what has touched you during these gatherings? What difference, however small, has gathering in this group made in your life?...in your spiritual awareness? What “ministry” took place? What might enhance the experience for you?

Singing Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

Closing/ Extinguishing the Chalice We clasp the hands of those that go before us,
Hymnal #646
By Wendell Berry
And the hands of those who come after us.
We enter the little circle of each other’s arms
And the larger circle of lovers whose hands are joined in a dance.
And the larger circle of all creatures,
Passing in and out of life, who move also in a dance.
To a music so subtle and vast that no ears hear it...
except in fragments.