

## **ORGANIZATION, RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEETINGS**

1. The overall responsibility for coordinating, advising, supporting, developing facilitator training and communicating with the congregation on the Small Group program is assigned to the Co-Leaders of SGM.
2. A Coordinating Council will assist and advise the Co-Leaders in meeting their responsibilities to the Small Group Program. The members of the council are the facilitators and co-facilitators for the Small Groups. The council will meet the second Sunday of every even month 10 minutes after the service in the UUCV Boardroom. The meeting will last 75 minutes and will include a status/update for each small group provided by facilitators and a discussion on the activities and plans that apply to the small group community as a whole. The agenda will be developed by the Co-leaders and provided to all facilitators prior to the meeting for comment and additions.
3. Facilitators and Co-facilitators are responsible for:
  - Maintaining a current list of their group members and notifying the UUCV administrative assistant of changes.
  - Ensuring the guiding principles of small group meetings are supported within their groups. The three key principles are Personal Growth, Spiritual Growth and Deep Listening. Facilitators are welcome to provide suggestions to include in the agenda.

## **COVENANTS**

1. The members of a covenant group, early in the group's formation stage, create and agree to abide by a set of covenants. These covenants are a key part of what distinguishes a covenant group from other kinds of gatherings. The primary covenant will be about how the members agree to be in relationship with each other over time. Together, the group establishes a

community in which justice, democracy and human dignity are embodied. Thus, the members agree to abide by a set of ground rules for right relationship.

2. A third covenant is an agreement to engage in service to the congregation and larger world on a regular basis. This covenant helps to reinforce the group's connection to the larger organization of which it is a part. It helps group members develop and maintain an external focus, providing opportunities for members to put their values into practice.

### **DEEP LISTENING**

Deep listening is a skill that must be developed and practiced. This skill, which each member of a small group must learn, requires an understanding of the need to develop a safe space for each member of a small group. Members need to feel they can share intimately with their small group without being subject to judgment, positive or negative. This requires each member of a small group to set aside their concerns, thoughts, and opinions to listen closely to each member as they share their thoughts and experiences. Deep listening includes the following:

- Listen without thinking of a reply and without offering one.
- Listen without indicating judgments through words or body language.
- Members can request clarifications after all have had the opportunity to share.
- Empathize without appearing to agree or disagree.

“Listening to another or even to ourselves is a skill that is at its best, at its deepest when we can develop the ability to suspend our thoughts, our feelings, our experience and open fully to hear, feel and experience the other or the unknown in ourselves. And in the space that is created by this suspension of self, the act of receiving what another expresses can become the gift of revelation as their story opens closed off places of our own.” Wendy Gebb

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The main online resource for UU SMGs is:

[www.smallgroupministry.net](http://www.smallgroupministry.net)

This website has access to an extensive list of small group sessions. Additionally, the site provides access to free resources such as the *Online Resource Directory* (which includes things like “10 things they did not tell you about being a small group facilitator”