



Chalice Circles

A Small Group Ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church Bloomington, Indiana

The Vision

Small group ministry gives participants an opportunity to get to know others while developing a deeper self knowledge by sharing their lives in small, facilitated groups. The spirit of community radiates outward, fostering a sense of kinship and increasing connection to the congregation as a whole and to the larger community.

How Will Chalice Circles Work?

Chalice Circles meet regularly to nurture group members' interior lives, to build community, and to practice shared ministry. Circle facilitators also meet monthly in their own Chalice Circle with one or more ministers.

Size (In 2022-23, the maximum Circle size is ten.)

Chalice Circles consist of seven to ten people, large enough to promote group interaction, but small enough to allow intimacy and equal participation. Circles are always open to new members as long as the circle has no more than ten people. To join a Chalice Circle after registration ends, contact a member of the Executive Team (listed below).

Elements of a Chalice Circle Gathering

Each Chalice Circle session plan is designed to permit us to connect with one another more deeply and to focus on the topic of the meeting. The format always includes:

- Opening Words and Chalice Lighting
- Check-in
- Focus of the Meeting
- Check-out
- Closing Words and Extinguishing the Chalice

Covenant

Making connections with others is easier when we understand how they would like to be treated. During the first few meetings of a Chalice Circle, members will develop a covenant that defines the ways they commit to interact with one another. Having clear expectations for communication and shared responsibility for group activities ensures that all members benefit from the Chalice Circle experience.

Service Projects

Twice a year each circle will engage in service to the congregation or to the larger community. Serving together as a group gives members an opportunity to connect in a different way, to understand others' values and actions, and to develop synergy as a group of Unitarian Universalists, rather than as individuals. A list of service projects is available to facilitators and groups. During this year, we may or may not be able to work together because of COVID restrictions.

Focus and Approach for Chalice Circles

The focus of each meeting is a topic that serves as a springboard into reflection on deeper issues of who we are and what gives our lives meaning. At the core of each session is deep listening. Questions are posed and each person responds in turn. The other participants provide the speaker with rapt attention. They don't ask questions; they don't give advice – they listen deeply.

Shared Ministry

Chalice Circles encourage attentive listening, rational thought, empathy, and compassion --- **knowing others more deeply and with consideration**. The positive qualities developed by group members will spread into the wider congregation and community as circle members engage with others with their new-found skills.

Commitment

Participants are expected to commit to attend all meetings, if possible, beginning in October through May. Since members participate in Chalice Circles not only for themselves, but to care for one another, attendance is vital.

Membership

Circles are open to youth over 14 and all members and friends of the church.

Registration

Registration is open throughout the year as long as space is available in circles. Initial registration takes place online in September, the month before Circles begin in October.

Questions?

Chalice Circle Executive Team:

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Chalice art courtesy of George Milburn, UU Church of Sarasota, FL.

Chalice Circle Brochure 2021.docx