



### Our Small Group Ministries provide opportunities to:

- Meet new people and deepen relationships with those you already know
- Engage substantial questions that go beyond small talk
- Explore ideas and feelings in a supportive and caring group
- Deepen your experience of participation in this religious community
- Learn more about your own spirituality and that of others in your group

### Groups work best when:

- Participants commit to attend the gatherings every month
- Participants come with open minds and hearts
- Participants create a warm and supportive environment conducive to exploration
- Participants openly share their own thoughts and feelings and listen generously to others

### Sign Up Now!

Fill out the sign-up form in this brochure and drop it in the collection plate, put it in the marked box in Fessenden Hall, mail or email it to the church office at [uukent@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uukent@sbcglobal.net). In order to find the best match for you, please include all information requested on the printed form.

**The due date is 9/22/13.**

Groups will have their first gathering in October.



Covenant groups are a transformational practice through which we, with others, can discover our own underlying assumptions about reality and examine our ways of being.

*Robert Hill*



**UU CHURCH OF KENT**

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*Conversation is food for the soul.*

*~ Mexican Proverb*

## **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AT THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF KENT**

*2013-2014*

*Small Group Ministry involves participants meeting regularly for conversation in defined small groups. It provides a way for individuals to get to know each other, explore important questions and ideas, and deepen their connections to the church.*

*Turn the page to learn about our two options, Chalice Groups and Food for Thought Groups!*

**Deadline to sign up:  
September 22, 2013**



**Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent  
[www.kentuu.org](http://www.kentuu.org)**

## Why do churches offer Small Group Ministry programs?

People most often say they attend a church because they want to explore spiritual questions and/or they would like to connect with a community of like-minded souls. While Sunday morning services can promote spiritual growth and work on church committees provides some opportunities to meet others, neither is an ideal setting for having deep conversation about spiritual matters or developing close ties with others. These are the twin goals of Small Group Ministry programs.

## How does Small Group Ministry work?

- Participants meet in small groups for conversation on set topics.
- Each small group has 8 to 12 members, including a facilitator, who structures the sessions and assures that everyone has the chance to participate in conversation.
- Participation in each group will be predetermined and will remain consistent throughout the program year. This allows participants to create new connections and deepen existing ones.
- Assignment to groups is based on availability of participants.
- Some groups are open to any member or friend of the congregation while others target specific groups (see signup sheet).

## What do groups discuss?

Topics each month will reflect the themes we are exploring in our worship services that month. Examples of past topics include Transformation, Gratitude, Justice, Creativity, Grace, and Family. Our monthly themes for this Fall are:

- October – *Nature's Bounty*
- November – *Meeting in the Middle*
- December – *Seeking Inspiration*

## What happens at a session?

Each participant of the group will have an opportunity to check in. Then, the facilitator will share short readings and introduce a few questions on a single topic as the focus of that session's conversation.

To enable all group participants to have a chance to share their reflections on a question, the facilitator will ensure that each person has an opportunity to speak once before anyone speaks twice. There are also opportunities for dialogue.

At the first session, the group will discuss any "ground rules" they wish to set for their group.

Although the Small Group Ministry experience is personal and uplifting, it is not intended to be therapy. Participants are urged to contact the Rev. Carvill-Ziemer any time they have personal concerns they would like to discuss.

## Here at the UU Church of Kent, two types of groups are offered: *Food for Thought Groups and Chalice Groups*

Both groups offer opportunities to share our stories, ideas, and feelings, while building relationships.

**Food for Thought Groups** meet monthly to have conversation over a shared meal. The potluck meal is hosted by one group participant with everyone bringing a dish.

**Chalice Groups** also meet once a month but do not involve a shared meal. Participants come for conversation, which is typically more structured than in Food for Thought Groups.

## Opportunities for a group service project

Toward the end of the church year most groups choose to do a small service project for the church, typically something they can do together that takes about 2 hours. The decision to do a project, and what to do, is made by the group.



## Former participants have said:

*"Facilitating and participating in a small group was the most powerful spiritual experience I've had in my 8 years as a member of the congregation."*

*"I discovered new things about people I thought I knew."*

*"The service project was great. It helped the group become closer. It allowed us to give something back to the church. We can see the results of our efforts."*

*"Fitting in one more thing was tough but I never missed a meeting and I always left feeling energized."*

*"Creating sacred space allows magic to happen between people."*



## Questions?

The Small Group Ministry program is coordinated by the Adult Religious Exploration Committee. If you have questions feel free to contact:

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