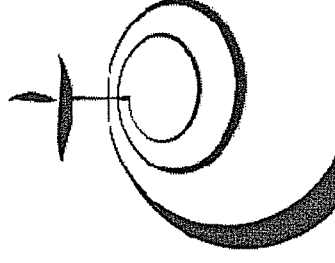


1. It enables us to discover what we really value, and encourages us to express those values in our actions...transforming our society.
2. Its primary emphasis is to care for people—to serve them, encourage them to spiritual growth, and meet their needs for affirmation and acceptance.
3. It creates an 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.
9. It provides support for individual and group service in the church and in the wider community.



## COVENANT GROUP MINISTRY

Unitarian Universalist  
Association of Tacoma

**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

Hymnal #455

By Dag

Hammerskjold

Each day we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back.

## Singing

Hymnal #123

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

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

Hymnal #84

How far can reach a smile, how high a helping hand can lift?

*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

For those who have gone before, for those who dwell among us, and for those yet to come, we offer our thanks.

## Sharing/ Deep

### Listening

Please share your responses to the questions you answered prior to the session. What effect do your core values have on your life? Where do they come from? Do you recall a time when you violated or betrayed your values? Was there a time you remained true to them in a difficult situation?

## Discussion

This is a time to supportively respond to (but not to fix) something someone else said, or to relate additional thoughts that may have arisen.

## Singing

Hymnal #131

Love will guide us, peace has tried us,  
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? Where would you like to go from here?

## Next meeting

The Leadership Group stands ready to assist your group as you decide, together, where to go next.

## Closing/

### Extinguishing

### the Chalice

Hymnal #646

By Wendell

Berry

We clasp the hands of those that go before us,

*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.*

### Preparation for Session Five – the Opened Book

Before everyone leaves, explore possibilities for the next gathering. What will it be? You have opened a book that has no beginning and no end, and is too heavy to lift. Turn a page with the other members of your group. Share what you see written there with each other and with the rest of us. You are not alone.

### Preparation for Session Five – the Opened Book

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## Notes to the Leader for Session 4 – Ministry...the expression of our values in our lives

### Ministry...

The topic of this session can be misunderstood. Remember that ministry is not a function of the clergy. It is a function of any person whose values and truth find their way into the person's daily life. Ministry is the practical aspect of our spirituality. But also be open to people's rejection of the word. For some, the identification of ministry with clergy or religiosity will be strong and quite negative. This is where they are, and it is OK.

### Session Preparation

The depth of this session will be enhanced with thorough preparation. So please distribute the preparation for this session at the end of the prior session. Have extra copies available at the gathering in case people forget their copies.

### Preliminaries

"Likes and Wishes" -- In this session we are introducing a new form of expression called "Likes and Wishes." The purpose is to provide an opportunity for thoughtful feedback regarding the small group gatherings. In this session the feedback is for all of the four sessions so far. You should discuss this aspect of the session before the opening so that the session can flow without too much interruption. It may be helpful to review "ministry" printed on the back of the program, prior to this feedback, so that the group can remember again what they might expect from the small group experience. You should also review an example and some basic rules:

1. This is a positive format for feedback using a brief go around the group; e.g. "I like how we approached the topic this evening, but I wish we had moved through the sharing a little more quickly."
2. We won't do this at every meeting.
3. Be sure to provide feedback about how the gathering was for you, not about the people present.
4. Keep it short and to the point -- one or two sentences.
5. It is OK to have likes without wishes, or to pass if you wish.
6. Respect other people's likes and wishes, and avoid "defending against" them.

You and your co-leader can reflect later on the feedback that was given by the group. We encourage you to share useful information at the next leadership gathering. If you want immediate help with an issue that comes up, call a member of the Leadership Group.

### Preparation for the Next Session

Before everyone leaves, distribute copies of the Preparation for Session Five – the Opened Book.