

Reading

From Elizabeth
Tarbox's Life
Tides

When I see you with worry on your brow and shadows in your eyes, and I say to you, "What's up?" remind me gently that I was not there when you made that journey to the center of your soul. Tell me as kindly as you can that I am sleeping when night clutches at you and you are driven to a place in your heart which is ever night. Do not let me say, "Don't worry," when worry is all you know and it feels as if worry is all you'll ever know.

For none of us ever really walks in another's shoes or knows the innermost rooms of a person's heart. None of us truly knows the lonely places of another's journey or the causes of the lines around another's eyes. Therefore, let us be gentle with one another. Let us listen more than we speak and accept more than we judge. Let our open, outstretched hands reach and touch that we may walk along together for a little while in friendship and in trust.

COVENANT GROUP MINISTRY

Unitarian Universalist
Association of Tacoma

Covenant Group Ministry vs Therapy

Covenant Group Ministry is not:

- A class, debate, lecture, or sermon
- A therapy or support group (a therapy group focuses on advice giving and personal problem solving)
- An advice-giving opportunity
- Confidential

Covenant Group Ministry is:

- A process to create gatherings that invite intimacy, allow for serious engagement with religious and spiritual topics, and lead toward expression of our principles and values in action.
- A group of members sharing life stories in response to thought provoking UU oriented themes and the insights we draw from them.
- A process of limited confidentiality: what is learned, generally, in the groups should spread in a positive way outwards into the congregation and community. A specific request can be made for an item that a member wants to keep confidential. Respect and trust within the group otherwise determine ways and extent of sharing the experience.

Sharing Our Histories

Preliminaries	Review covenant group ministry vs. therapy on the back. Consider a quick review of the covenant.	Closing Song Hymnal #212 Sarah's Circle (sung to the tune of "Jacob's Ladder")	We are dancing Sarah's circle (3 times) Sisters, brothers, all
Opening/ Chalice Lighting	We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of service.		Here we seek and find our history (3 times) Sisters, brothers, all
Unison Reading By Kathleen McTigue, adapted	We come together this day to remind one another To rest for a moment on the forming edge of our lives, To resist the headlong tumble into the next moment, Until we claim for ourselves awareness and gratitude For the all the moments which have come before, Taking the time to look into one another's faces And see there communion: the reflection of our own eyes. This place of laughter and silence, memory and hope Is hallowed by our presence together.	Responsive Reading Hymnal #670 By Edwin Muir	On and on the circle's moving (3 times) Sisters, brothers, all
Check-in	Going around the circle, take a minute to share your joys or concerns.		Friend, I have lost the way. <i>The way leads on.</i> Is there another way? <i>The way is one.</i> I must retrace the track. <i>It's lost and gone.</i> Back, I must travel back! <i>None goes there, none.</i> Then I'll make here a place -- <i>The road runs on - -</i> Stand still and set my face -- <i>The road leaps on.</i>
Sitting in Silence	Santayana said that those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it. We look to our individual pasts to understand where we've come from, where we are now, and where we are going. Let us now enter this time of silence to center ourselves here and now, in this moment, on the forming edge of our lives.		Stay here, forever stay. <i>None stays here, none.</i> I cannot find the way. <i>The way leads on.</i> Oh, places I have passed! <i>That journey's done.</i> And what will come at last? <i>The way leads on.</i>
Reading From Elizabeth Tarbox's <u>Life Tides</u>	(Shown on back page.)	Next Meeting	Pass out the preparation sheet for the next meeting.
Sharing/ Deep Listening	What brought you to Unitarian Universalism? To the San Jose congregation? To the small group ministries program? Share the pictorial presentation of your life, if you prepared one.	Closing Ritual	Stand and join hands or link arms. As we go around the circle share briefly, in a word or short phrase, what you will take away with you from today's session.
Discussion	A time to respond to something someone said, or to relate additional thoughts.	Extinguishing the Chalice	We extinguish this chalice but not the warmth of love, the light of truth, or the energy of service; these we take with us.

Notes to the Leader for Session 2 – Sharing Our Histories

Session Preparation

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

Prior to the meeting, prepare the list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses that were gathered during Session 1. Please distribute the list when the group meets for Session 2.

Preliminaries

“Ministry vs. Therapy” -- During the “Preliminaries” section this week, highlight the fact that the Covenant Group Ministry meetings are intended to be ministry, rather than therapy.

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Covenant Group Ministry is:

- A process to create gatherings that invite intimacy, allow for serious engagement with religious and spiritual topics, and lead toward expression of our principles and values in action. The intention is to obtain a balance of the personal and the thought provoking.
- A group of members sharing life stories in response to thought provoking UU oriented themes and the insights we draw from them.
- Generally structured around worship, intimate connection with one another, radical listening, exploring a theme together, and openness to what comes next.
- A collection of supporting materials including meeting outlines, openings, songs, readings, questions to prompt discussion, closings, and ceremonies for group transitions (beginning, bringing in new group members, sending members forth, birthing new groups, transitioning leadership, and ending groups).

Other Notes

The Elizabeth Tarbox reading for Session 2 is intended to be read by one person. It is printed on the back of the order of service.

Preparation for the Next Session

Before everyone leaves, distribute copies of the Preparation for the next session.

Preparation for Session 3 – Those Who Have Touched Our Lives

On our journey through life, many people have loved us, inspired us, believed in us, and helped us. Let's take time to remember some of their lessons and their gifts.

Think of one or two individuals who have touched your life in an important and positive way. The people could be living or dead, fictional or real, people you've met or simply heard about. The following are questions you might consider while thinking about them.

1. How did they teach you, help you, love you, inspire you, challenge you, or believe in you?
2. What values have they demonstrated that you admire?
3. Do their actions continue to have an influence in your life? Why?
4. Consider bringing a memento, photo, a drawing or other work of art, or a brief reading that you associate with the individuals you've chosen. Why does this remind you of that person?

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