

## **UUCA Small Groups Policy**

Small Group Ministry is a program of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis. Groups must adhere to the all covenants, bylaws, principles, and values of UUCA.

### **I. The Purpose of Small Group Ministry** is to

- A. build relationships within the group and with the congregation
- B. Adult faith formation through engagement with the Soul matters themes and materials.
- C. Service to the church and the greater community surrounding UUCA.

### **II. Facilitators**

- A. Each group must have a facilitator who is a member of the UUCA. Groups are open to non-members but leadership positions have to have made a commitment to the church.
- B. Facilitators are to report to the Membership Coordinator or designated Small Group Ministry Coordinator. All covenant/small groups fall under the Membership portfolio as they are the mechanism for community engagement and increase membership sustainability.
- C. Facilitators must undergo training with the Small group Coordinator. This either through a group led meeting or one-on-one.
- D. Facilitators are asked to be a part of the Facilitators Group which meets quarterly, offers support, resources, and information to help the groups function to the best of their ability.
- E. Small Group Ministry is not group therapy. Facilitators are asked to re-direct meetings when psychological or pastoral counseling is taking place within a meeting. Facilitators should contact the Membership coordinator or a Minister for support. SGM facilitators and members are not to offer therapeutic treatment to any members.

F. Facilitators are in charge of emails and communications both within the group and to the Membership Coordinator/Small Group Ministry Coordinator. If a group utilizes the soul matters packets

### **III. Group Dynamics**

- A. Size: Groups are to be 5-12 members. Once a group reaches 12, a new group should be formed in a timely matter. This allows for newcomers to have the ability to join a group within a timely manner.
- B. Covenant: Each Group must formulate a covenant that establishes how the group will be together, time, commitment, confidentiality, and expectations of the group. Also is a way to bring each other back into right relations
- C. Location: Groups can meet either at the church or in member homes.
- D. Time: Groups may meet at any time except during Sunday Morning Church Worship/Activities. Any group that meets on church property may be asked to move in the event of special occasions or church activities.
- E. Non-Meeting Interaction: Designated meetings are part of UUCA programing however group members are encouraged to meet outside of meeting times. Members must adhere to the covenant, refrain from exclusion of other members, and retain confidentiality of information that was shared during SGM meeting time.

### **IV. Meeting Procedures:**

- A. Groups may covenant how they want their meetings to run. The following format is highly suggested but not mandatory
  1. Chalice Lighting
  2. Check-in
  3. Uninterrupted share on the theme/timed share/no feedback
  4. Mediation/Prayer/reflection

5. Sharing on Questions or Feedback time or Open discussion (no time keeping but ensure all members get a chance to share)
6. Business/housekeeping
7. Extinguish the Chalice

B. Meetings should start on time and end on time to be respectful of members schedule.

C. Food is not a requirement for SGM, if a group decides to have a potluck, it is an optional choice and no member is required to bring something. We do not want time, lifestyle, economics, work, etc to be a hindrance to small group participation.

**V. 8th Principle Commitment:** UUCA has made a commitment to the work of dismantling oppression of all kinds, particularly white supremacy. SGM meetings are to look at soul matter themes, group procedures, dynamics, and relationships through the lens of building the beloved community. Groups will do this by

- A. Welcoming People of all identities, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, races, class, and abilities.
- B. Avoid marginalization of those who hold minority identities
- C. Avoid placing the burden of explaining "isms" to the one person who holds a differing identity in the room.
- D. Ensure that Differing voices are heard, this may mean offering more time for someone to share from their experience if they so choose.
- E. Due to redlining and discriminatory housing policies SGM does not limit group membership to location. Neighborhood groups are based on town/area but are not closed to anyone who would like to join.

**VI. Service:** All SGM groups are asked to formulate 2 service projects a year. This is one project within the church and one in the community.

A. Church projects: church clean up, social hour goodies, hosting a middle hour, doing a church drive, auction item.

B. Community projects: homeless drive, lighthouse dinner, social justice activity, writing letters to legislators, activism, ACT, nursing home visit, Items for schools, etc.