



### Our Small Group Conversation 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 [churchoffice@kentuu.org](mailto:churchoffice@kentuu.org). In order to find the best match for you, please include all information requested on the printed form.

**The due date is 10/5/2016.**

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*



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*Conversation is food for the soul.*

*~ Mexican Proverb*

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

**2016 - 2017**

*Small Group Conversation 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  
October 5, 2016**



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

## Why do churches offer

### Small Group Conversation 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 Conversation programs.

### How do Small Group Conversation programs work?

- Participants meet in small groups for conversation on set topics.
- Each small group has 8 to 12 members, including a facilitator, who guides the sessions and assures that everyone has a 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.
- This year we will be using Soul Matters packets for our groups, which introduces spiritual practice to the preparation and discussion. The packet will be posted on our website each month at:  
<http://www.kentuu.org/soul-matters-packet/>

### What do groups discuss?

Topics will reflect the themes we are exploring in our worship services that month. Topics this year include Healing, Story, Presence, Prophecy, Identity, Risk, Transformation and Embodiment. Participants will receive a packet prior to the group meeting with a suggested spiritual practice to try, readings, questions for reflection and links to books, films and magazines on the theme.

## What happens at a session?

Each participant of the group will have an opportunity to check in. Then, the facilitator will share readings from the Soul Matters packet, invite participants to share their experience with the suggested spiritual practice and then open conversation on the questions for reflection.

To enable all group participants to have a chance to share, 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 Conversation 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.”*

*“When the sessions began my perception was that I would be experiencing just another meeting. However, now that the meetings have finished, I can honestly say this is the first time I’ve regretted a regularly scheduled meeting coming to an end.”*



### Questions?

This year’s Small Group Conversation program is coordinated by our Commissioned Lay Leader, Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer. If you have questions feel free to contact Rev. Melissa at [minister@kentuu.org](mailto:minister@kentuu.org).