



For the Good of All*

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Written by *Candy M. Kern-Fuller, September 19, 2018*

**Inspired by the Sermon "For the Good of All" delivered by the Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper on September 16, 2018 at the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Greenville, South Carolina.*

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.*

Personal Check In: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Words:

Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.
To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom,
To serve human need,
To the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the Divine.
Thus do we covenant with each other and with God.

~Arranged by L. Griswold Williams, Reading #471, *Singing the Living Tradition*

Discussion Questions:

1. How is a "covenant" different from a "creed"? (*From the Sermon "For the Good of All" delivered by the Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper on September 16, 2018 at the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Greenville, South Carolina.*)
 - a. If you were previously in a creedal faith, do you think everyone REALLY believed exactly the same way?
 - b. Do you believe that bonds of affection are stronger when we freely choose those with whom we are in relationship?
2. Where else in your life do covenants exist?

(Taken from <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/river/workshop7/175897.shtml>)

- a. Are those covenants implicit or explicit?
- b. Are there areas of your life where no covenant exists now, but where you might adopt one?
- c. How do you come back into right relationship when there is a misunderstanding or breach?
- d. Have you ever considered writing a family covenant and, if so, what might it include?

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

Readings

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

~UUA Bylaws ARTICLE II, Section C-2.1

“Our way of liberal religion is a different approach. We are a people of covenant, not of creed -- a people of promise, not of beliefs. We are not bound together by what we believe. We are bound together simply by the power of promising to be bound together.

What do Unitarian Universalists believe? We believe that your religion isn't about what you believe. Religion is about three things:

1. Religion is about the way you live: the ethics and values that guide your life.
2. Religion is about community: the people with whom you choose to join in faith community, and the rituals, songs, and stories that affirm and strengthen community connection.
3. Religion is about experience: the moments of transcendence, awe, mystery, wonder, beauty, interconnection and oneness.”

~Rev. Meredith Garmon, November 12, 2013 *reprinted from*

<http://www.liberalpulpit.org/2013/11/covenant-not-creed.html>

“The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities.”

~Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove

“A covenant is a promise – a promise that continues to hold us, no matter how many times we break it. A covenant is not a contract. If one of the parties to a contract breaks the contract, the other party doesn't have to continue to keep its side of the bargain. A contract is all about the quid pro quo, the tit for tat. A contract says, ‘I will provide some benefit, good, service, or money to you in exchange for some benefit, good, service or money from you.’ A covenant is less about what we DO for each other and more about who we ARE together.”

~Rev. Meredith Garmon, November 12, 2013 *reprinted from*

<http://www.liberalpulpit.org/2013/11/covenant-not-creed.html>

Sharing - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)

Open Discussion -This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing Words:

“We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”
Last sentence of the **Declaration of Independence**, July 4, 1776

Announcements Plans

Check out: As we close today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice



The Seven Principles Wheel Image By [Ian W. Riddell](#), [Kimberley Debus](#)