

# **Program Description of the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Covenant Circles**

Approved by Minister: March 21, 2023

## **Introduction**

Covenant Circles is a ministry of the Fellowship under the supervision and guidance of the Senior Minister unless delegated to another minister or the Director of Religious Education. Covenant Circles collaborates and coordinates with Program Council committees. Covenant Circle Coordinator(s) participate in GUUF's Program Council meetings at the invitation of the Council.

## **Mission**

Through small groups, we create safe and loving spaces in which members can deepen relationships, grow spiritually, and help to create a better and more peaceful world through service to each other, the congregation, the wider community, and the world. Covenant Circle participation is open to members and non-members of GUUF, although members are prioritized in placement.

## **Goals for Covenant Circles**

### **1) To help members deepen and grow spiritually:**

Covenant Circles support members in their journeys toward spiritual growth and self-knowledge. In small groups, individuals share and reflect on their own ideas and experience, and benefit from hearing those of others. In Covenant Circles, there are opportunities for experiencing meaningful relationships, deepening understandings, and personal transformation.

### **2) To engage in social and environmental justice work:**

Covenant Circles develop people's skills at listening, understanding, and speaking their own truth in a group united by a mutually created covenant of trust. These skills contribute to the development of peace, justice, and covenantal behavior in the congregation and the wider community.

### **3) To Create Beloved Community:**

Covenant Circles create and nurture beloved community by providing an intentionally welcoming and safe environment where all may feel valued and supported. We foster a climate of purposeful inclusion of all, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, financial means, education, or political persuasion. The skills, tools, and resources developed through Covenant Circle participation and facilitation, particularly the growing capacity for deep listening among an increasing number of congregation members, translate into the cornerstones we need personally, congregationally, and beyond as we build the Beloved Community.

### **Qualifications for Covenant Circles Coordinators**

The leadership for the Covenant Circles ministry is comprised of a Coordinator or Co- Coordinators who are stewards of the ministry. The Coordinator(s) is appointed by the Senior Minister, unless that function is delegated to another minister or the Director of Religious Education for a term of one (1) year, coinciding with the fiscal year of the Fellowship, with no specified limit on the number of consecutive terms a person may serve. Coordinators must be members of the Fellowship.

### **Qualifications of Facilitators**

Each individual Covenant Circle is led by a facilitator (or co-facilitators). The Coordinator selects the Facilitators. Facilitators must be Members of the Fellowship and have experience as a Participant in a Covenant Circle.

### **Overall Responsibilities**

To coordinate and oversee an active Covenant Circles ministry at GUUF per the mission and goals stated above.

### **Functions**

1. Consult with the Senior Minister on all aspects of the Covenant Circles ministry.
2. Recruit, coach and mentor facilitators of each Covenant Circle.
3. Design and lead annual and ongoing facilitator training and support meetings.
4. Review the program on an ongoing basis and adjust the program as needed to meet the needs of the facilitators and participants.
5. Communicate information about Covenant Circles to the congregation, welcoming new members and connecting them to circles.
6. Document practices and procedures of the Covenant Circle ministry in a Facilitator Guide or Handbook.
7. Write sessions to be used for Covenant Circle meetings and share them with Facilitators.
8. Collaborate and coordinate with other GUUF initiatives; participate in Program Council.
9. Coordinate input and support from the Minister for the development of facilitators of covenant circles.
10. Request any budget needs in consultation with the minister.