

**Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene (UUCE)
Small Group Connection Circles (SGCC)**

**Small Group Connection Circles (SGCC) Covenant of Right Relationship
Group Agreements and Guidelines to Meet Our Needs and Support Our Values**

Within the group

Trust and Safety

- Confidentiality: keep what is shared in the group within the group. The facilitator is considered to be a “mandatory reporter” to appropriate authorities for suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable people or other risks for people’s safety.
- Follow the meeting format. It provides a safe and predictable environment.

Empathy and Understanding

- Speak from personal experience and use “I statements.”
- Refrain from giving advice or trying to fix problems, either yours or someone else’s.

Learning and Contribution

- Remember we are all learners and teachers.

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Practice respectful listening and sharing of “air time” by listening to each person’s check-in and sharing of the topic without interruption or cross talk.
- The facilitator and group members will call the group back to the covenant when needed.
- Respect the right to pass. A person may choose to talk later, or to sit/share in silence.
- Begin and end on time.
- Have a strong commitment to attend every session.
- Let the facilitator know when you will not attend.

From the group to the church

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Affirm and promote the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UUCE mission statement.
- Do a service project for the church or the larger community.

From the church to the group

Nurturance and Support

- Provide the organizational and logistical support to maintain the Small Group Connection Circles program.

[The above covenant was revised August 21, 2021,
by the Small Group Connection Circles Steering Committee 2021-22:
Dick Loescher (Chair), Kat Johnson, Bonnie Koenig, Jennifer Tucker]

Why a covenant? This covenant is an essential part of the Small Group Connection Circles program. Groups can revisit the covenant if they flounder or need to refocus. This is how we hold each other to our religious principles, how we agree to act with one another.

UUCE's Congregational Covenant (Approved by the UUCE Board of Trustees, April 2023)

As a beloved community empowered by love:

- We covenant to embrace the next person who is always arriving, open to the change they will bring.
- We covenant to trust others in their identity and truth and work to be trustworthy.
- We covenant to speak our truth bravely and gently as we commune in love and peace.
- We covenant to make efforts to understand the views of others, and make amends when intentions and impact collide.
- We covenant to expand our connections with the larger community, with humility and empathy.
- We covenant to remember that how we are with each other is the foundation upon which we build the beloved community.

UUCE Mission Statement

Empowered by love, we transform ourselves and serve our world.

UUCE Aspirations

As a people of faith, grounded in our principles, we cultivate lives of meaning, reverence, and depth; we create sanctuary where all hands are held; together we work toward justice, healing, and sustainability.

Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

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.
(The above 7 principles were revised in 1984.)
8. Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions. (8th Principle was added to the UUCE bylaws by vote of the congregation at the Annual Meeting on June 13, 2021.)

Optional Meeting Strategies for SGCC Groups

Use a talking stick or object to indicate who is talking and when they are done. Indicate when one is done speaking with a gesture or phrase such as "I am finished." Use a timer or clock to indicate when the allotted time for sharing is reached. Save time for response and dialog after all have shared. Consider a time of silence, perhaps up to 30 seconds or so or three breaths, after each person has shared to allow for reflection.