

Small Group Ministry: ORDER OF SERVICE

Service: The Unspoken Principle

Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, Maine, October 22, 2023

Ingathering Music	Morgan Lee, Pianist
Welcome	Marty Peters, Worship Assoc
Inviting the Silence	Marty Peters
Prelude	Morgan Lee
Opening Words and Chalice Lighting: Service as Service	Linda Findlay, Marty Peters
Sharing/Check-in and Joys and Sorrows	Helen Zidowecki, Marty Peters
Music in Small Group Ministry	Judy Gallant
Music: Choir: "Connected" by Brian Tate	Bridget Convey, Morgan Lee
Small Group Ministry: Service at UCC	Linda Findlay
Service Collage Presentations by Small Groups	
First presentation	Priscilla Jenkins, Paul Matondo
Second presentation	Stefanie Barley
Singing: #360 Here We Have Gathered, Alicia Carpenter	Morgan Lee
Third presentation	Derek Goodwin
Fourth presentation	Marilyn Dunn
Fifth presentation	Jean Sizelove
Offering #402 "From You I Receive"	Marty Peters, SGM
From you I receive, to you I give, Together we share, and from this we live.	
Closing Words in UNISON	Helen Zidowecki
What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us. What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal. - Albert Pine SGM Session: Service, Cambridge	
Extinguishing the Flames	Marty Peters
Postlude	Morgan Lee
Announcements	Marty Peters

Please see the Insert in this Order of Service for more information on Small Group Ministry. (at the end of the script)

Small Group Ministry
Service: The Unspoken Principle (Scripted)
Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, Maine, October 22, 2023

Service team:

Technology:

Musician:

John Seksay

*Morgan Lee, Pianist
Bridget Convey, Choir Director*

Marty Peters

Worship Associate:

Worship Leaders: Small Group Ministry Committee (*Linda Findlay, Rev. Helen Zidowecki, July Gallant*) and *Participants*

Ingathering Music

Morgan

Welcome

Marty

Inviting the Silence

Marty

Prelude

Morgan

Opening Words: Service as Service and Chalice/Candle Lighting

Linda

So far, the service is the familiar format. Here is where we digress a bit.

Small Group Ministry would like to offer the Sunday Service this morning around the topic of ‘service’ by using the format of a Small Group Ministry Session Plan.

In a Small Group Ministry session, lighting the Chalice or candle is usually done as part of opening words, which is how we will do it this morning, followed by lighting the special altar candles by the Marty Peters.

Our opening words are from the earliest Small Group Ministry writings here at UUCC:

“Service is both a path and an outcome of spiritual growth” UUCC Small Group Ministry offers opportunities to deepen the spiritual resources by fostering the spiritual growth of our members as we serve our community and beyond in ways large and small, immediate and longer term.

The important thing is moving together beyond ourselves to experience our connection with the larger world.

Lighting the Chalice (in silence)

Marty

Lighting of special altar candles

Marty

The fourth Sunday of the month the Social Justice Committee requested that we when we light the candle for the victims of gun violence.

Sharing/Check-in and Joys and Sorrows:

Helen, Marty

A focus of Small Group Ministry is bonding, finding connections within the community. Sharing or Check-in occurs in our Small Group Ministry sessions with a group of about 5-10 people who meet once or twice a month for about 2 hours. About an hour of this is devoted to sharing, talking while others listen and, in turn, listening while others share, without additional comment.

Joys and Sorrows in an hour church service is a sharing, although more focused and shorter time. Small Group Ministry Sharing and Joys and Sorrows are similar in two ways:

1) First, sharing of ourselves and listening is a service of connection with others, bonding and offering intimacy. 2) Second, service continues when we follow-up with others later, offering connection and support, such as at Fellowship Time, and other outreach. This follow-up enriches the service.

Marty will lead us in the Joys and Sorrow with brief sharing this morning.

Music in Small Group Ministry

Judy

Music has not usually been part of our Small Group Ministry sessions here at UUCC. Some other churches include music in their Small Group Ministry sessions. Our music by the choir this morning expresses the power of connection. It also suggests that we may increase the depth of a topic by including music in some way as part of Small Group Ministry. May we feel connected through the music of the Choir this morning.

Music “*Connected*” *Brian Tate*

Choir

Morgan, Bridget

Topic/Activity: Small Group Ministry Service at UUCC

Linda

Along with sharing, Small Group Ministry sessions focus on a topic, such as Service this morning. Joint activities are a way to learn about each other’s interests, increase the connections within the congregation, and give from the abundance of our groups. Our service supports the congregational functions and enhances connection with the wider UU world as faith in action.

To reflect on Service.....

Service as connection – Connecting with people in places of need.

Service is ongoing –Providing an immediate service (a ride) or long-term (providing CLYNK bags)

Service as hospitality – preparing meals for individuals or groups, greeting and welcoming, and supporting life activities (shopping).

Service is sustainability – committing to facilities and community support

Service as connection—engaging with the church community to do service, as well as our specific Small Group Ministry events.

Service is for/to each other in our groups, including ourselves

The insert in the order of service gives general information about Small Group Ministry and how to become involved. Side two of the insert has several quotes about service that will introduce the groups. The five groups will present a Collage of Service activities that they have done. Two groups will present, followed by our hymn, followed by three other group presentations. We also invite you to take a SGM brochure from the table in the hall. (Hold up brochure.)

Service Collage Presentations by Small Groups

First Presentation: Hannah Faulkner, Priscilla Jenkins, Paul Matondo

The call to service is a yearning for the heart to live and move beyond ourselves. Love, compassion and gratitude lead many to a life of service. Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, Spiritual Literacy

Hannah “Our small group, which meets monthly via Zoom on Sunday evenings, consists of five people: Marilyn Gordon, Priscilla Jenkins, Paul Matondo, Rachel Small and me. The service that our small group provides is a monthly international Unitarian-Universalist conversational gathering via Zoom. From our church sanctuary Priscilla Jenkins will now interview Paul Matondo, who speaks with us from thousands of miles away across the Atlantic Ocean in the country of Ghana, on the continent of Africa.”

Priscilla: Our UUCC is extending its reach across the Atlantic Ocean to the country of Ghana. Right now I am communicating on Zoom with our member Paul M. Matondo. Perhaps we are beginning to participate in a worldwide UU network—what do you think, Paul? What are your hopes for this?

Paul: I'm very happy to come to your service this week. For almost two years down the line I have been making a livestream connection with the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine. I came to Unitarian Universalism in general because of my interest in the history of the Internet. I was in awe of the inventor of the web, Timothy Berners-Lee, a computer scientist who worked with physicists to discover the smallest particles in the universe. The biographer said that he was a UU.

When I looked up Unitarian Universalism in a Wikipedia article **hyperlink**, I was blown away. I said, I am a UU--I have been a UU for so many years! I attempted to find a UU church in Ghana. There were none. Then I got in touch with UUs in Europe, who were in touch with the UUA. The UUA led me to Maine and to UUCC. I wanted to be in Maine because of Maine's record of being best in terms of environmental protection among the 50 states in the U. S.

I zoomed into Augusta, the capital city. The name "Augustine" in my background connects with Unitarian Universalism in Augusta, Maine, I wanted to find a congregation which has an affixed name fully connecting Unitarian and Universalist. During lockdown, all UU's moved to online meetings. UUCC has a protocol to get on livestream. Anyone can get a zoom link and comment directly. This was in the early days of lockdown. I found the Zoom service and the coffee fellowship with Rev. Carie Johnson, where I talked with Catherine Palmer and Lynn Smith.

Priscilla: Paul, do you want to explain how you and I decided to join Hannah's Small Group?

Paul: Yes, I was on Boxcast that day. The UUCC asked the Small Group Ministries to give a summary of their activities I didn't know much about the Small Group concept and how I could join from 1,000 miles away. Catherine Palmer suggested that I talk with PJ, who could be of some help. I said, Let me know which group you will join so that I can join the same group!

Second Presentation : *Stefanie Barley,*

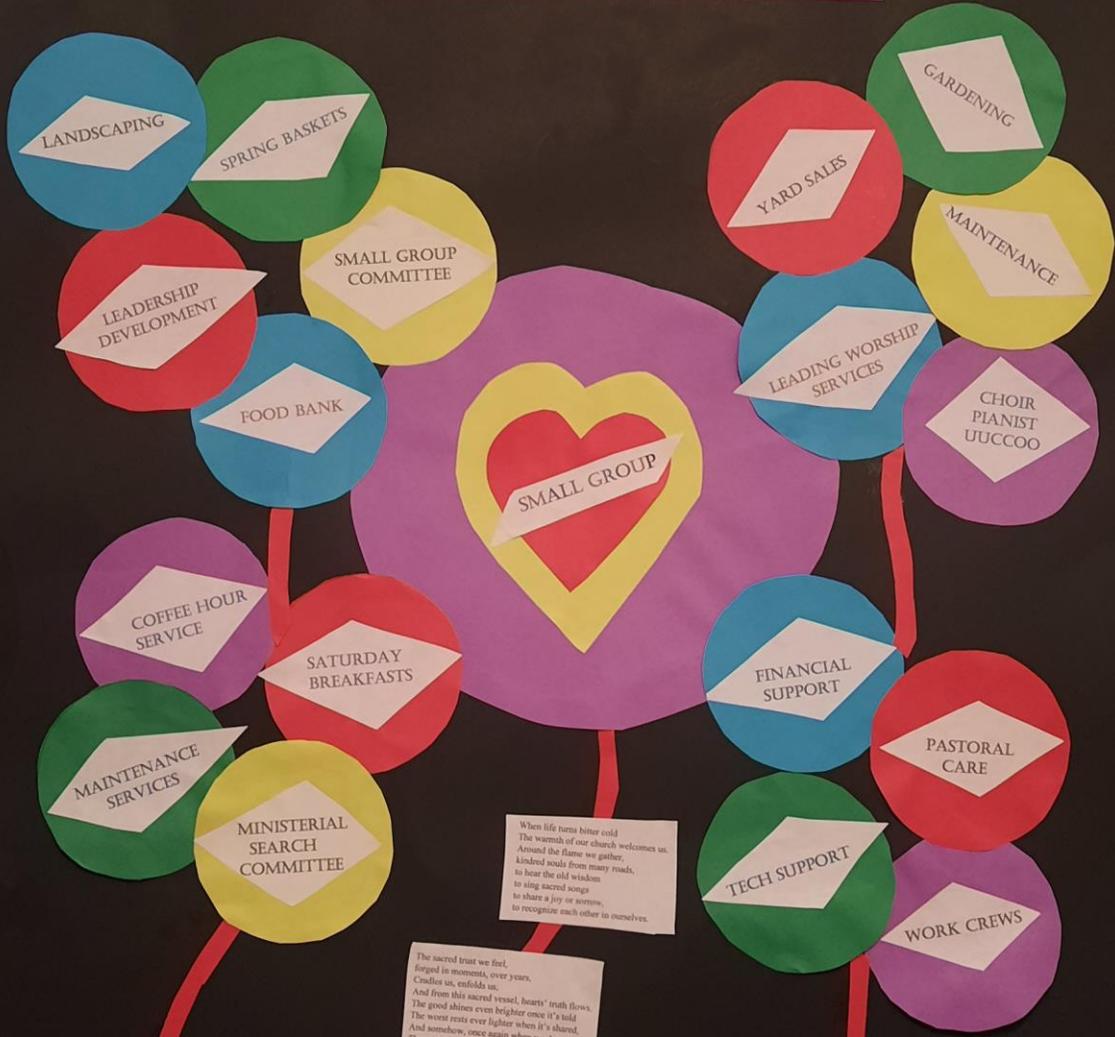
Stefanie. In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us. *Flora Edwards*

This poem from our Wednesday morning SGM group, written by Martha Pelletier, based on group conversation which presented ideas for Small Group Ministry Service, December 2022.

When life turns bitter cold The warmth of our church welcomes us. Around the flame we gather, kindred souls from many roads, to hear the old wisdom to sing sacred songs to share a joy or sorrow, to recognize each other in ourselves.	Yet some have ventured further, deeper still Into the recessed room of Small Group Ministry. Within this space, a holy flame now beckons A few souls gather, gently leaning in.... To sparking joy To smoldering grief To the daily fare and foibles We call life.	The sacred trust we feel, forged in moments, over years, Cradles us, enfolds us, And from this sacred vessel, hearts' truth flows. The good shines even brighter once it's told The worst rests ever lighter when it's shared, And somehow, once again when we depart, The world's a softer place And so's my heart.
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Stefanie, Martha, Nancee, Judy, Angie, Ken, Carolyn
Following is a collage of service activities of the Wednesday Group.

"IN HELPING OTHERS, WE SHALL HELP OURSELVES, FOR WHATEVER GOOD WE GIVE OUT COMPLETES THE CIRCLE AND COMES BACK TO US." --FLORA EDWARDS



When life turns bitter cold
The warmth of our church welcomes us.
Around the flame we gather,
Kindred souls from many roads,
to hear the old wisdom
to sing sacred songs
to share a joy or sorrow,
to recognize each other in ourselves.

The sacred trust we first
forged in moments, over years,
Cradles us, enfolds us,
And from this sacred vessel, hearts' truth flows
The good shines even brighter once it's told
The worst rests ever lighter when it's shared,
And somewhere, once again when we depart,
The world's a softer place
And so's my heart.

Yet some have ventured further, deeper still
into the recessed room of Small Group Ministry
Within this space, a holy flame now beckons
A few souls gather, leaning in...
To sparking joy
To smoldering grief
To the daily fare and fables
We call life.

P.S. Our Small Group promises to organize the church kitchen.

Third Presentation: *Derek Goodwin* Ellis McKeen Men's Group for Service 10/22/2023

Derek. (Read by Kevin Kane) Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. -*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Our group is named the Ellis McKeen Men's Group in honor and memory of one of our founding members. At the time of its founding in 2009, few men were participating in Small Group Ministry, and the men's group has been flourishing since its founding. Ellis was a gentle, generous and very funny participant who freely shared with us the wisdom and experience of a lifetime.

We currently have 9 active members and meetings have been well attended even during Covid. We have one member who is always remote as he moved away and no longer participated until the pandemic forced us onto Zoom, and he is now a regular attendee as we have embraced the hybrid model, using the OWL in the Fellowship Room. Another member moved during the pandemic and usually participates via Zoom. Zoom also allows us to meet when inclement weather would have caused a cancelation in the past.

The way that our group operates is that we take turns selecting a topic to discuss. The topic is often found in the UU SGM session library, but sometimes we make up our own topic. Sometimes it is politics, other times it may be a lesson in meditation, or philosophy. The person presenting the topic also acts as the moderator of the group for the session. We share leadership equally regarding the presentation of topics. We make it a point to refrain from gossip and Church politics. We often spend a good portion of the meeting on the check-in, sometimes as much time as for the topic. In this way we get to know each other on a more personal basis. We support each other in times of personal strife.

Some of our service as a group in the last few years has been to host a Fellowship Hour. One member takes it upon himself to get us to donate to the Augusta Warming Center each year. We put together a garden basket for the Spring sale this year [note that Dennis makes the teacup bird feeders many of which have been sold for Church fundraisers and he considers it a donation from our group; and some members volunteered time during that sale and other sales the church has hosted. Our members put in service time individually as well, both inside and outside of the church. Some have helped host the Saturday breakfasts for the unhoused. There is a strong interest in the natural world in our group and several members volunteer for the Land Trust and other conservation organizations.

Some comments made by members of our group:

I think the SGM has been a men's group with an interest in ethical, moral and philosophical issues.

I think our group offers others an example of how a good small group works

Fourth Presentation: *Marilyn Dunn*

Marilyn Dunn: "Members of our groups may already be active in the congregation. People provide service both individually and with various groups within the community, as well as with a small group. Small Group Ministry provides services and supports services provided by others."

In the old days, maybe 10 years ago our group would get together in physical space to do a service project such as paint the garage or provide hospitality for the northeast gathering of UU's.

Coordinating a common time and space to do that now seems impossible.

Four group members are still working full time, two teach night school, two still have children home who are involved in sports or running around looking at colleges, and there's one snowbird. The only time we seem to have in common is our zoom meeting every other Sunday evening.

Because our schedules and commitments conflict and service projects can't be done by zoom, our service projects as a group are done as "drop off project". For instance when we did a gift basket for Easter instructions were " drop off your contribution for the gift basket at the church and I will assemble it. "

How many of you attended Fellowship Lunch last week, show of hands please. . I coordinate Fellowship Lunch and the first one is the hardest to organize so my small group cooked the food for that Luncheon as a service project. In addition four of our eight members were in attendance to set up and serve. Those unable to attend drop off their contribution in fridge or freezer. Our snow-bird even mailed a check to buy the bread from Black Crow bakery. This is not ideal but allows all members to participate even if they are traveling that weekend. Remember the mantra of contributing talent, time and money. We can still contribute as a group without gathering in the same place and time. We will do a coffee hour next week with the same "come if you can, drop off if you can't" policy.

While our group project is done as a drop off, I've often asked Individuals in my group to lend me a hand with Building and Grounds Projects and the yard sales and they have help tremendously.

While most of my volunteer hours are given to this church ; I must credit others in our group for giving their time to the wider community by serving on school boards, town councils, the library, and Augusta historical society.

Service is an action that demonstrates commitment to something. Whether you help build community, by hosting coffee hour at the church or join your town's conservation committee battling invasives.

Service is an action that connects you to what you value.

Fifth Presentation: *Nance Caldwell, Jean Sizelove*

Nance Caldwell: Groups that just talk all the time, well, they just talk all the time. Groups need to get up and do something together, where members roll up their sleeves, rub elbows, get to know each other in a different way, and gain the satisfaction of making a contribution together.

Jean Sizelove: Several years ago we were looking for a service project. Our group members are avid readers. Several had worked in libraries. Several are published authors. And some just like books! And there before us was our Small Group Ministry Service Project -- a collection of books in random order. *We called it the General Library. Do you know where it is? Have you visited it?*

It's in the Committee Room, next to the Coat Room, across from the Sanctuary!

But it is more than the books. UU congregations in Augusta (Winthrop Street and All Souls) had collections of publications that connected us to UUism through:

--*awareness* of the place of UUism in history as well as in the world today;

--*connection* with a values-based community that encourages many paths and choices of spiritual practice through worship, social justice and covenantal relationships.

--*access* to a place for *ourselves* within UUism.

Do you know what is in the Library?

--writings by and about Unitarians and Universalists from earliest times to present, and how Unitarian Universalism has evolved.

--a wide range of material from Beacon Press with social and cultural focus, Skinner House Press with church and spiritual practices, and *UU World*.

--inspirational religious, earth-based and other and spiritual resources,

Nance: Interruption tone

So what is there in the Library for me? Why should I bother going in?

Jean: Our Fiction section –yes, a section comprised of the Olympia Brown Mysteries. Rev. Olympia Brown (named for an historic Universalist minister) explores issues such as religious cults, bullying, clergy misconduct, and life issues using the backdrop of a mystery. There are 14 books in the collection so far. (*hand listing to Nance*) The author, Rev. Judith Campbell has started the Viridienne Green Mysteries, also addressing current happenings in churches and communities.

Try the mysteries. They shed some light on how UUs approach life and issues! And they are current. Do you see anything that you might like to try?

Nance: Well, this one has a picture and description that looks like it might have been written at Ferry Beach, you know, the UU camp and conference center in Saco. We had youth events there. I'll take a look at that one.

(*Turn to audience:* Has anyone been to Ferry Beach?)

Jean: The background of the mysteries based on real places. Here is *Twisted Mission*. (*Hand to Nance.*)

Nance: (*Look to the box of books under the edge of the piano*)

Is this box from the Library?

Jean: They are from the FREE BOOK ADOPTION CENTER. We have a space constraint in the library. These books that have not been included in the library, or are additional copies. You may take for your own pleasure and pass them on. If you are interested in an item, "take it when you see it".

Let's pull the box out a bit so that people can look at this later.

And please visit the General Library in the Committee Room.

Other services that we have done over years are:

Thursday AM Group

Here is a list of some of our service projects over the years.

--helping occasionally with hospitality, like Fellowship Hour and lunches

--baskets for auction,

--preparing a care package after Hurricane Katrina.

--collected items for pet care for participants in Meals on Wheels
--Ongoing—collect and clean prescription medicine bottles for the Kennebec Valley Humane Society. (Will put receptacle in the Library.)
Medicine bottles taped to instructions for display
We are planning to do an animal-focused project in the Spring. Stay tuned!

This concludes the Service Collage for this morning. I would like to thank the groups for sharing the importance of service with us.
And service continues as is usual in our Sunday Services, with the Offering.

Offering #402 “From You I Receive” SGM members, **Marty**
From you I receive, to you I give,
Together we share, and from this we live.

Closing Words: in UNISON **Helen**

What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us.
What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.
- Albert Pine SGM Session: Service, Cambridge

Extinguish the Flames *Marty*
Postlude *Morgan*
Announcements *Marty*

UCC SUNDAY SERVICE OCTOBER 22, 2023
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY INSERT TO ORDER OF SERVICE

Our church has a vibrant Small Group Ministry (SGM) program. Groups of up to 10 participants meet once or twice a month to explore issues of spirituality and life. Small Groups have become an important part of our religious community. Participants have established new and deeper connections with one another and have found a place for religious exploration and spiritual growth.

Join Small Group Ministry! New members are welcomed into existing groups or to newly created groups. If you have participated before, join Small Group Ministry again! Explore your faith and share your spiritual journey with others.

If you are interested in learning more about Small Group Ministry, please take a brochure from the table in the hallway. You may also contact the co-chairs Linda Findlay at linda.findlay@gmail.com 207-377-8028 or Helen Zidowecki hzmre@hzmre.com 207-582-5308. And talk with Small Group Ministry participants at Fellowship Hour this morning!

The Church Service this morning is presented by participants in Small Group Ministry. A primary component of Small Group Ministry is providing service to UCC community and beyond. The following quotations about service introduce the presentations from the groups.

“The call to service is a yearning for the heart to live and move beyond ourselves. Love, compassion and gratitude lead many to a life of service.”
Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Literacy*

“In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us.” Flora Edwards

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.” -Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Members of our groups may already be active in the congregation. People provide service both individually and with various groups within the community, as well as with a small group. Small Group Ministry provides services and supports services provided by others.”

“Groups that just talk all the time, well, they just talk all the time. Groups need to get up and do something together, where members roll up their sleeves, rub elbows, get to know each other in a different way, and gain the satisfaction of contributing together.”