



# CHALICE CIRCLES

*Bellingham Unitarian  
Fellowship*



## WHAT IS A CHALICE CIRCLE?

Chalice Circles are a kind of small group ministry that are said to facilitate the simultaneous experience of the “intimate” and the “ultimate”. Specific groups of participants meet regularly (usually monthly in someone’s home) for structured topic discussions. Over the course of time, group members begin to know each other deeply which stimulates a feeling of intimacy. The topics themselves provide opportunities to consider deep convictions, a sense of purpose and meaning, tasks or issues that get to the core of existence— thus, stimulating a sense of the ultimate.

The impact of the work of a Chalice Circle begins at the level of each participant. Through the process of sharing and listening, each group member learns and grows. This leads each person to new understandings of life meaning and ultimacy.

From this center point of individual growth, the impact of the work widens. All members of the group and ultimately the group itself is affected by their own growth. The influence of the work spreads beyond the group to include the congregation, the community and wider world.

In addition to the group covenant that helps groups establish their own expectations and norms, each group is asked, each year, to participate in at least one service project that will benefit the congregation and at least one that benefits the larger community.



## *Six Chalice Circle Essentials*

Different Chalice Circles take on different “personalities”, however, the following six elements, developed by Calvin Dame, are the basics that apply to all groups:

1. Groups function in the context of covenant, members covenant with one another and the larger life of the church.
2. Groups meet regularly once or twice a month.
3. Groups follow a format that allows for both deepening and connection.
4. Groups remain open to new members.
5. Facilitators meet with each other and the program coordinator/s at least quarterly.
6. There is a culture and practice of service beyond the group, both in the congregation and the larger community.

## *Session Materials*

The session plans for Chalice Circles provide a consistent pattern and structure that all groups are encouraged to follow. The general outline is as follows:

- Opening words, chalice lighting
- Check in of those present
- Presentation of the topic, especially through readings
- Questions based on the topic to guide the sharing.
- Individual group members share their responses to the questions posed.
- General discussion (if time permits and if the group includes this as their norm).



## *How and When Can I Get Involved?*

Chalice Circles are wonderful opportunities for newcomers as well as long term members and friends. Therefore, the only requirement is a sincere commitment to prioritize this group and attend all sessions possible. We are planning on starting several new groups this fall and winter— there should be a group that meets at a time when you are available! Contact Crystal Neva at 224-1984, [uuneva@gmail.com](mailto:uuneva@gmail.com), or Carl Nyblade, 739-4847, [carlnblade@hotmail.com](mailto:carlnblade@hotmail.com), for more information.

Feel free to tear off the bottom half of this brochure and place it in the offering basket, the box outside the office door, or in Crystal’s box we look forward to getting you connected!

## *Chalice Circle Sign Up*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle all times that are possible for you** (you may put a star or something by the one/s that work best):

<b>Sun</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Mon</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Tues</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Weds</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Thurs</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Fri</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Sat</b>	Morning	Afternoon	Evening