

## UU Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Program - Small Group Session Plan

### Session 2C - Congregational Peace

#### Chalice/Candle Lighting

#### Opening Words:

Let your  
Intelligence begin to rule  
Whenever you sit with others  
Using this sane idea:  
Leave all your cocked guns in a field  
Far from us,  
One of those damn things  
Might go  
Off. - Hafiz, *The Sane Idea*

Incline us, O God! to think humbly of ourselves,  
to be saved only in the examination of our own  
conduct,  
to consider our fellow-creatures with kindness,  
and to judge of all they say and do with the charity  
which we would desire from them ourselves.  
- Jane Austin (*Life Prayers From Around the World*, 1996)

The ultimate measure of a man is not  
where he stands in moments of comfort  
and convenience, but where he stands  
at times of challenge and controversy.  
- Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*, 1963

Once we learn to touch this peace,  
we will be healed and transformed.  
It is not a matter of faith;  
It is a matter of practice. - *Thich Nhat Hanh*  
(*Life Prayers From Around the World*, 1996)

#### Check-in/Sharing

**Discussion:** We come to our congregations for a variety of reasons: peace, inspiration, support, community, and spiritual growth among others. And at times we find what we are trying to avoid: strife, fear, anger, gossip, factions. Sometimes it seems that invisible systems of conflict are baked into the very walls of the building. How we engage in these difficult situations matters: do we withdraw, do we simply watch, do we perpetuate them, do we somehow transform them into spiritual wisdom?

Reflect on a time when you encountered a significant conflict within your congregation:

- How would you describe the conflict?
- How did you feel (physical sensations and emotions)?
- What assumptions did you and others make about the conflict and the parties involved, about the role of your congregation's lay and ministerial leadership?
- What gave the conflict energy/kept it going, and what caused it to transform or dissipate?
- What had real meaning for you from what you witnessed? What surprised and/or challenged you?

#### Select the topic and location for the next meeting

#### Check-out / Likes and Wishes

#### Closing Words:

"I love this church of broken, beautiful human beings, striving so hard to be good, failing so spectacularly on such a regular basis, and being lifted up so tenderly by such fragile hands. I love this church of wholly inspiring human beings, weaving music and art, kindness and wisdom, insight and simplicity into one shining fabric to wrap around our community."

--- Allison Barrett, former intern minister at UU Church in Reading, MA.