

CEDARS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Box 10175, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 206-780-0373 www.cedarsuuchurch.org

Meaningful Membership



THE ART OF BELONGING

by Revs. Barbara & Jaco ten Hove, co-ministers

Unitarian Universalist congregations are part of a long and distinctive heritage in the American Free Church tradition, which affirms freedom of belief. We organize ourselves not by required theological statements, but around a promise (historically a “covenant”) among members to walk together amid diversity. We say “Deeds, not creeds.” This rich posture can at times bring challenges, but it would not be as fulfilling if it were always easy.

Together we seek to inspire a good balance of individual styles and group effort. And we’ve discovered that a few particular commitments improve the odds for us to grow more deeply in both our personal spiritual strength and our relational bonds with others.

So we welcome and invite you to seriously consider these six guidelines for your active life among us...

1. Attend worship services regularly.

Our services shape the collective heart of this congregation, circulating life-giving energy among all participants.



Much unfolds each Sunday morning (as well as at special services at other times), and we center ourselves in this vibrant circle, finding important renewal, stimulation and friendship together. With regular attendance, we feel increasingly connected and come to know the stirring rhythms and diverse energies that animate our particular religious community. Whatever else happens in our lives, Sunday services are a dependable and cherished touchstone around which our congregation orbits.

2. Work on your own spiritual development.

Together we bring great intention toward understanding ourselves both internally and externally, growing into ever-deeper awareness of our being and our place in the universe.

We strive for “lifelong learning” that carries us toward knowing and developing the gifts that animate us, alone and together. In a Free Church, there is no one way for this to happen, so each of us has the joyful challenge to customize our journey into an uncertain but always hopeful future. We collaborate on a variety of opportunities to make intentional progress on our journeys, and we support each other in our more private, personal challenges as well.



3. Help to further the work of the church.

With competent, even skilled hands, we actively craft and recreate the ongoing vessel of our congregational life, holding each other close as valued colleagues.



We bring our gifts into a cooperative project that has limited staff, so we take turns dedicating a portion of our time to creatively serving the good of the whole. In this way we build community together and learn the delicious particulars of how this curiously inspiring religious community touches so many others.

4. Pledge financial support at a stewardship level.

Our monetary contributions breathe health into this project and provide the lifeblood that encourages vitality in many ways.

Our cherished heritage of “congregational polity” prevents any other group or official from exerting control over us; we are our own authority. This in no small way emerges from our financial independence, which also means we must support ourselves. So naturally, we thrive on financial support from our members and friends. We envision our contributions to support the church’s mission as part of our “stewardship” of an important resource, and we challenge each other to be as generous as possible, since generosity stimulates dynamic creativity.



5. Be involved in social outreach and service.

We seek to “walk the talk” and take strides toward a better world, which strengthens the backbone of our religious association.

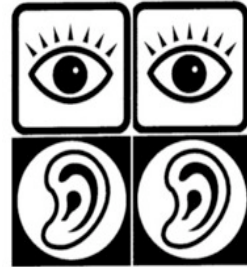


It is clear to us that we all flourish or flounder together—“all” and “together” meaning just what they say. Our affirmation of the interdependence of life on this finite Earth draws us into meaningful service that adds to the greater good. Specific educational efforts and projects toward justice help us build larger community as we strive to live out our values of unity and love.

6. Connect to the wider UU movement.

With eyes and ears attuned, we notice and listen to inspiration that emerges from the thriving and much larger Unitarian Universalist context.

By at least reading, in print or online, our award-winning national magazine, *UU World* [www.uuworld.org], we recognize the importance of belonging to an invigorating movement that capably represents our liberal religious values in a wider society that too often dismisses such a posture. Some of us eagerly attend regional gatherings that deepen our identity and expand our resources.



Our Congregational Mission:

WORSHIP WITH OPEN HEARTS
NURTURE A LEARNING SPIRIT
SERVE JUSTICE WITH COMPASSION
LOVE WITHOUT JUDGMENT