

Support Circle for Ministries, Councils, Committees

- The purpose of this circle is to provide an opportunity for us to share what is happening and to acknowledge what is on the mind and heart of council members as we continue this good and important work together.
- Talking piece and center piece
- Before we begin let's take a moment to quiet our minds and open our hearts and ears. Close our eyes and take a few breaths in and out.

Guidelines:

- **Respect the talking piece** – We will pass a talking piece to the right to signal the speaker. Only the person with the talking piece is speaking.
- **Speak from the heart** – share from your own experience, you always have the option to pass – the talking piece will come back around.
- **Listen deeply** – Remain fully present as possible and limit distractions. Please refrain from comments, questions, or interruptions when someone is speaking.
- **Honor time and equal voice** – Please be mindful that everyone has an opportunity to share.
- **Take learnings, leave the stories** – Respect the privacy of others. Please do not share personal stories or identifying features once we close this circle. Treating the information sensitively and honoring the trust that has been built.

Affirm the Guidelines: Is everyone comfortable with these guidelines? Is there anything we need to add, ask, or adapt about these guidelines for our group?

Opening

The Spirit of Ubuntu

Inspired by reflections of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in No Future without Forgiveness

“Ubuntu is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours.

I am human because I belong. It speaks about the wholeness, it speaks about compassion. A person with Ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share.

Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole.

They know that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are.

The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them.”

Lord, help us to live this day and each day in the spirit of Ubuntu. Remembering, always, that we are profoundly and integrally connected to one another. When people and relationships are broken by violence and oppression, remind us that I am because we are, I am because You are.

Amen.

Check In: What are you excited or worried about today?

Question: What is something recent that gave you hope or inspiration to continue this work?

Check Out: In a word or a phrase, how are you feeling as we begin this meeting?

Closing

Turning to One Another

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask “What is possible?” not “What’s wrong?” Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

Talk to people you know.

Talk to people you don’t know.

Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Invite in everybody who cares to work on what’s possible.

Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.

Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don’t fear people whose story you know.

Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.

Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

- Margaret Wheatley
Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope I the Future. 2002