



Covenant Groups at ERUUF

*...helping to light our way
to deeper connection
with each other and the world*

Covenant Group Guidelines

Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
4907 Garrett Road, Durham, NC 27707 919-489-2575

Overview: A healthy, vital UU community is made up of people who are deeply connected to the spiritual, intellectual, caring, social, and service aspects of the UU movement and our own congregation. Like many UU churches across the country, ERUUF's Covenant Group Ministry supports these connections through intentional practice.

All ERUUF members and friends have the opportunity to be part of a group of 8-10 people who will meet regularly at the church or in homes to engage in:

- **Spiritual seeking** - To deepen our spiritual lives and build on the benefits we receive from our regular worship services.
- **Community building** - To foster positive connections among newer and long-time members of our congregation.
- **Ministry** - To extend the ministry at ERUUF by caring for and ministering to one another.
- **Intellectual exploration** - To expand our understanding of the world and ways to demonstrate our UU principles in our lives.
- **Living our values** - To engage in service projects to benefit the church community, the neighborhood, or the larger society.

All groups are led by trained facilitators who are ERUUF members.

The Covenant Group Ministry program is an ongoing, church-wide engagement that involves the minister and staff, the Board, and all members and friends of our congregation. Its purpose is to help us better realize our mission as a religious community.

Expectations for Groups and Group Members

Regular meetings: Covenant Groups usually meet for two hours twice a month. The location may be at the church or in member homes.

Confidentiality. Meetings provide a safe environment for members to share their deepest thoughts. Groups make a covenant to keep confidential what is shared in the group.

Attendance. Group members make attendance at all Covenant Group meetings a high priority in their lives. If a member cannot attend a particular meeting, he or she is expected to notify the facilitator in advance.

Follow a format. Although each group develops its own preferences over time, all groups will include these basic activities: opening ritual, check-in, program/discussion, and closing ritual.

Open membership. From time to time new members may be added to existing groups. An “empty chair” at all Covenant Group meetings symbolizes the group’s openness and welcome to new members.

Covenant. Each group develops a Covenant Statement that, along with the UU Statement of Principles, serves as the foundation for the Group’s practice.

Service. Each group will be expected to undertake at least two service projects a year, one for the congregation and one in the larger community.

Connection to ERUUF. Each group will send a representative to the Covenant Group Leaders Meeting to help with the planning and coordination of the program.

What Covenant Group Ministry is intended to offer participants:

- ❑ A way to deepen our spirituality through shared practice.
- ❑ A way to come together to explore important and interesting topics.
- ❑ A way to deepen our connections with the congregation.
- ❑ A way to organize and practice service to the larger community.
- ❑ A way to connect across age, gender, ethnic, economic, and other differences.
- ❑ A way to help newer members engage with our community.
- ❑ A way to explore and deepen our practice of our shared UU principles.
- ❑ A way to be engaged, included, and heard in a safe, nurturing environment.

What Covenant Group Ministry is not intended to be:

- ❑ A social club, although ties between church members deepen through CGM.
- ❑ A debate society, although many important topics are discussed.
- ❑ A support or therapy group, although the atmosphere is positive.
- ❑ A worship service, although there is a strong spiritual aspect to the meeting structure and topics.
- ❑ A rigid template of activities, although there are general guidelines to follow.
- ❑ A closed “fraternity,” although groups must be limited in size to be effective.

Assignment to a Group

Any one who is interested in joining or being assigned to a Covenant Group at ERUUF should complete the attached information sheet and turn it into the church office, fax it to the office at 919-489-9149, or email it to covenant@eruuf.org. Forms are also available at the church office, the web site at www.eruuf.org, or from Dan Grandstaff or Carolyn Worthing, co-coordinators of the Covenant Group program (email them at covenant@eruuf.org or call them at 942-8094).

Go with the flow. Group formation is based on the first UU principle honoring the worth and dignity of every person, and is intended to connect people across age, gender, ethnic, and other differences. Although it is understandable to gravitate toward a group that includes friends and people with whom we have much in common, people in Covenant Group programs around the denomination say that the most rewarding experiences result from meeting with people unlike themselves.

I'm Interested in Joining a Covenant Group at ERUUF

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

_____ I would like information about available Covenant Groups so I can learn more about which would be a good match.

_____ I would like to be assigned to an available Covenant Group. I've given my preferences below:

Preferred days and times:

Weekday evenings: (specify): _____

Weekend evenings: (specify): _____

Weekdays during the day (specify): _____

Weekends during the day (specify): _____

What would be your preferences for location? Check any that would be acceptable:

____ ERUUF ____ Durham ____ Chapel Hill ____ Raleigh area ____ Hillsborough area

_____ Other Considerations (please specify)

I have read and agree with the Guidelines for Covenant Groups at ERUUF.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

AFTER COMPLETING THIS FORM: Turn it in to the ERUUF Office
OR Fax to the office at 919-489-9149 OR E-mail to covenant@eruuf.org
Questions? Call Dan Grandstaff or Carolyn Worthing at 942-8094
or e-mail covenant@eruuf.org.