

## Report to Stewards on Circle Time

Following our internal evaluation of the current state of Circle Time, Celebration Circle met with Will, John, and Marjory on February 24 for further discussion, since each of them had previously been in specific conversation with us on this subject. It was an amicable meeting in which we all affirmed the following:

- Circle Time will continue to begin with a period of reflection based on the current theme for worship, followed by less structured sharing and personal updates on the lives of Seekers
- Sending clipboards around so people can sign up for church activities such as the School for Christian Growth, Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners, Easter Breakfast, and other events central to the life of Seekers is integral to the success of those activities
- We are ending Circle Time earlier so that we can begin the more formal part of our worship at 10am. This makes Circle Time a bit shorter, so announcements should be brief and to the point
- The 2-minute story feature seems to have run its course and will be largely discontinued
- Lighting the Peace and Justice Candle is time for a short prayer, not a sermonette. We are grateful to the efforts of the Eyes to See, Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group for modeling and communicating this practice

## Seekers Guidelines for Announcements

*Every Sunday we have time to share information, activities, community events, and other matters with our church community. This is a very important part of our life together, for what we announce reveals our passions, interests and concerns, and in return we are asking for the community to support us, join us or be aware of what we are doing.*

*However, sometimes we get a bit long-winded, or the announcements are made so often that they lose their effectiveness. We hope that the following guidelines will help us all remember the most effective ways to make announcements and ensure that our audience will be receptive to what we want to share.*

**DO make your announcement as an invitation**, rather than an obligation or duty.

**DO be short and to the point.** Let people know they can talk with you later if they have questions or want to learn more about the event or activity.

**DO give all the pertinent details** that people will need to participate. Give the “who, what, where and when” succinctly and precisely. Do not use this time to give details like address, link, or phone number that are hard for people to remember. Instead, send details out by email or ask people to talk with you afterwards to get additional details.

**DO try to limit the number of announcements you make** each Sunday. We suggest a maximum of two announcements per Sunday, not as a hard and fast rule but so that different voices may be heard. If you have an activity in which other Seekers participate, rotate that announcement so that many voices are heard and given a chance to invite others to share in the activity.

**DO keep a positive tone.** If you are not seeing as much participation as you expected or need, state your need in a factual, straightforward way rather than scolding or guilt-tripping people into participating. Remember, we are a small community whose members are very active and have many other obligations. We need to trust that those who can will participate, and those who don't have a good reason for not doing so.

**DO try to alternate an oral announcement about an event one Sunday with an email** to All Seekers the following week so that you are not making the same announcement every Sunday for a prolonged period. This allows space for other announcements and reduces the amount of listener's fatigue that might occur.

**DO remember that at Seekers we limit solicitations for money.** Although there are many good causes that we may personally support, at Seekers we believe that part of our commitment to being in community is the discipline of pooling our money together and deciding, in a yearly meeting open to all, what domestic and international recipients we as Seekers will support. We have also found that for many of us who have limited income, constant solicitations for money for worthy causes can create feelings of unworthiness or guilt.

*Thanks for your attention to these suggestions.  
Please provide any thoughts or feedback to Celebration Circle.  
May 27, 2018*

### **Seekers Church Peace and Justice Prayer**

Every Sunday as a transition between our gathering time at 9:30 and our formal worship in the sanctuary at 10:00, someone at Seekers prays for Peace and Justice while lighting our Peace and Justice candle.

This is a time for a prayer (not a mini-sermon or discourse) *of about three minutes* raising up a place, a situation, a person or persons whose circumstances cry out for justice in the pursuit of peace and healing. Alternatively, the prayer can hold up individuals or organizations who are working for justice and peace in some particular place in the world. The person praying lights the candle then brings the gathered group into the moment with an invitation to pray such as "Let us pray" or "Holy one" or whatever words the individual comfortably uses to begin a prayer.

While the prayer offered may have an intercessory aspect to it, the focus is always on creating the justice that will bring peace. It is a time, for example, to pray for the work of peacemakers gathered at a negotiation in an area of the world immersed in conflict. Or to pray for individuals who lack access to health care, that they may experience the justice of having their health care needs met. It is not, however, a time to pray for healing for an individual having surgery.

Often, individuals offering the prayer will pray for an area about which they care deeply. The prayer becomes, then, an invitation to others in the community to speak to the candle lighter to learn more about the area they have prayed for.

Coordination of the Peace and Justice prayer is managed by the Eyes to See, Ears to Hear Peace Prayer Mission Group. Contact Trish Nemore for more information.