

Adventures in Spirituality

2020

3 Month CommUnity Study

September 6
through November 29

- Sunday talk series with Rev. Erin McCabe
- Weekly Small Groups meet for interpersonal book study

"Now more than ever, Susan Jeffers's wisdom feels like a precious gift. Her counsel is profound and meaningful in such challenging times."
—MARIANNE WILLIAMSON, bestselling author of *A Return to Love*

EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY

BREAKTHROUGH
METHODS
FOR ACHIEVING
PEACE OF MIND
WHEN FACING
THE UNKNOWN

SUSAN JEFFERS, PH.D.
AUTHOR OF *FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY*

Join Our Facebook Discussion Group:

[Facebook.com/groups/UnityAIS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UnityAIS)

Online Resources: UnityVillageChapel.org/AIS

HOST GUIDE

Contents & Weekly Agenda

Incorporating Sunday messages and Small Groups centered around a common book, we study and explore together, deepening our spiritual practices and building community.

WEEK ONE

Welcome, Weekly Overview, Commitment & Sacred Agreements

WEEK TWO

Chapter 1: The Wonder of Wondering

WEEK THREE

Chapter 2: The Power of Maybe...The Value of Doubt

WEEK FOUR

Chapter 3: Freedom from Our Attachment to Unhappiness

WEEK FIVE

Chapter 4: Increasing the Odds

WEEK SIX

Chapter 5: Embracing the Learning

WEEK SEVEN

Chapter 6: Collecting Heroes

WEEK EIGHT

Chapter 7: Finding Your Meaning and Purpose

WEEK NINE

Chapter 8: Embracing the Ultimate Uncertainty

WEEK TEN

Chapter 9: Enjoying the Feast!

WEEK ELEVEN

Chapter 10: Let God Worry About It!

WEEK TWELVE

Chapter 11: Making It a Good News World

WEEK THIRTEEN

Chapter 12: Be Prepared

Weekly Group Format

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OPENING PRAYER

We open this sacred space acknowledging the power of Divine Love which draws us together today. Each of us is a unique unrepeatable expression of God. Together as One, we are a powerful combination of souls. We acknowledge and appreciate the choice each person made to be here. This is a gathering of friendship and support. We are immersed in light and we bless our community and each Small Group gathering this week. Grateful for the insights, connection and spiritual growth, we say thank you Spirit. And so it is. Amen.

AFFIRMATION

Our hearts, hands and eyes are open as we are immersed in a holy field of life, love, and wisdom. A mighty quickening of mind-body-Spirit is happening right here, right now.

HOUSEKEEPING

Commitments, Sacred Agreements and Announcements

CHECK-IN

Share what is most alive for you this week.

MEDITATION / MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

We take a moment to bring our attention and intention to this present moment.
(Pause)

Setting aside anything that may have been on our minds and simply allowing the breath to take us deeply into this moment.

Tune in to the breath. *(Pause)*

As you slowly inhale and exhale, allow each breath to lengthen and deepen as your awareness drops from the mind to the heart center.

Let us breath here for a moment in the silence. *(1-7 minutes in silence)*

By the power of this practice, may all beings have freedom from suffering and the causes of suffering. May all beings know God as love and themselves as an emanation of this love. May all beings know they are born blessed and here to be a blessing to all. Namaste.

DISCUSSION

1. What touched you, inspired you, or captured your attention during this week's reading?
2. How did this week's reading show up in your life to cultivate spiritual growth and abundant living?
3. Review and discuss the questions/exercises from this week's reading.

SPIRIT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WEEK

Each Small Group member is invited to select an area of spirit work and growth during our time together. Individuals support one another in that opportunity by serving as accountability partners.

CLOSING

Prayer Requests

Acknowledgement of Spiritual Community

Small Groups are part of the core services of our ministry. There is no financial offering received during this meeting. Your ongoing contributions make gatherings like this possible for everyone in our spiritual community.

Blessing Statement

Divine love through us, blesses and multiplies, all of the love offerings and tithes flowing to your spiritual center now. And so it is. Amen

Prayer for Protection

The light of God surrounds us; The love of God enfolds us;
The power of God protects us; The presence of God watches over us.
Wherever we are, God is!

The Commitment

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Commitment transforms promise into reality. It is fueled by words that speak boldly of our intentions and the actions which speak louder than words. It is making time where there is none. It is following through. It is the power that transforms our lives and our world. It is the daily triumph of integrity and empowerment over skepticism.

COMMIT

I commit myself to this process of spiritual exploration, of fulfilling my soul's longing to understand and express the divine to the best of my ability with my thoughts, words and actions.

HEART

I go to my heart and invite other Small Group members to do the same. I believe in the connecting power of God that dwells in the one heart of which we are all a part.

CELEBRATE

I celebrate the greatness in myself and in you. Our lives are filled with infinite possibilities woven together in Oneness.

LOVE

I love and accept you just the way you are, and I respect your right to be different and to think differently than I do.

SHARE

I openly share my thoughts, feelings and beliefs. I care enough to share my personal experiences authentically and to lovingly listen with intention to your truth.

CHOOSE

I choose words of kindness, encouragement, appreciation and gratitude to build a strong foundation of mutual support.

The Sacred Agreements

Sacred Agreements help create a safe and healthy environment for the group. It is important that the group review these agreements and reach consensus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We honor confidentiality. We do not share another person's story, even good news, without permission. What is shared here, stays here. If there is something you hope to share, ask permission and honor the response.

COMPASSION

We relate to each other with unconditional, compassionate acceptance. Judgmental comments, even unspoken judgmental thoughts, are toxic to the group. When we need to process, we ask our host or minister for sacred and confidential support.

TRUTH & INTEGRITY

We are encouraged and supported by one another to honestly and authentically be ourselves. Although it involves risk, speaking our personal truth can occur safely in a compassionate environment.

RESPECT

We show respect for each other and the group by attending each week, arriving on time, not interrupting others and allowing everyone to participate.

CONFLICT

When people come together and speak truthfully, the potential for hurt feelings, triangulation and misunderstanding exists. When left unresolved, these are toxic to the sacred safety of the environment. We encourage speaking **with** people, not **about** them, and we refrain from talking about people when they are not present.

GROUP PROCESS

This process is for our own personal and spiritual growth, not group therapy. When discussing program related material, use "I" statements to deepen your sharing. Avoid advising, coaching or problem-solving for other members.

PARTICIPATION

We agree to prepare for and participate in discussions and group activities; however, each person has the right to modify his or her participation.

YOU ARE **NOT** LISTENING TO ME WHEN:

- ➊ You do not care about me.
- ➋ You say you understand before you know me well enough.
- ➌ You have an answer for my problem before I've finished telling you what my problem is.
- ➍ You cut me off before I've finished speaking.
- ➎ You finish my sentence for me.
- ➏ You feel critical of my vocabulary, grammar or accent.
- ➐ You are dying to tell me something.
- ➑ You tell me about your experience making mine seem unimportant.
- ➒ You are communicating to someone else in the room.
- ➓ You refuse my thanks by saying you haven't really done anything.

YOU **ARE** LISTENING TO ME WHEN:

- ➊ You come quietly into my private world and let me be me.
- ➋ You really try to understand me even if I'm not making much sense.
- ➌ You grasp my point of view even when it's against your own sincere convictions.
- ➍ You have given me your positive energy.
- ➎ You allow me the dignity of making my own decisions even though you think they might be wrong.
- ➏ You do not take my problem from me, but allow me to deal with it in my own way.
- ➐ You hold back your desire to give me good advice.
- ➑ You do not offer me religious solace when you sense I am not ready for it.
- ➒ You give me enough room to discover for myself what is really going on.
- ➓ You accept my gift of gratitude by telling me how good it makes you feel to know you have been helpful.

7 Small Group Questions & Answers

WHAT ARE SMALL GROUPS?

Small Groups are primarily home-gatherings of up to ten people who meet to enhance their spiritual practice, to make friends, to build strong and lasting relationships, and to share in caring for each other. Each group usually lasts two hours.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A SMALL GROUP?

When you attend a Small Group meeting there will be some combination of prayer, fellowship, sharing and discussion of spiritual issues as applied to daily living.

WHY ARE SMALL GROUPS IMPORTANT?

Building meaningful relationships is important in today's world. Small Groups help build a solid relationship with our Creator and healthy relationships with family, friends, acquaintances, and co-workers.

WHERE DO SMALL GROUPS MEET?

Ideally, Small Groups meet in private homes where there is a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere.

HOW ARE THE SMALL GROUPS ORGANIZED?

Each Small Group has a host who moderates and leads each meeting.

WHY LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS?

A Small Group has no more than ten participants because a smaller environment enables people to get to know each other, develop relationships and share at a deeper level. A large gathering does not always support this purpose.

Small Group Questions & Answers 8



HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM BEING IN A SMALL GROUP?

You will gain a more authentic spiritual practice and a genuine feeling that you are not alone in life. You will build more loving and lasting relationships with others. You will benefit from spiritual practices applied in everyday life for building your own dreams and aspirations.



IS THERE A COST TO BE IN A SMALL GROUP?

There is no cost to participate in a Small Group though we do invite members to contribute to your spiritual center as a source of spiritual growth. Consider the benefits of this program and give accordingly. Many people also commit to expand their usual tithe to the ministry during this spiritually inspired adventure.



HOW TO SIGN UP FOR A SMALL GROUP?

You can browse and register through the myriad of options online at:
[ENTER THE WEBSITE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL CENTER HERE](#)

Join Our Facebook Study Group:
[Facebook.com/groups/UnityAIS](#)

For Online Resources:
[UnityVillageChapel.org/AIS](#)

“In such small, intimate groups, people are finding themselves, finding each other, and finding God.”

— George Gallup, Jr.

Small Groups are non-judgmental, accepting, encouraging, and supportive of the individual on his or her spiritual journey. Small Group members hold each other in affirmative prayer throughout the duration of the program fostering a spiritual bond.

Unlike a class setting, there are no teachers in Small Groups. The groups are led by one member (the host), with the help of the other members. We are all spiritual students and teachers for each other.

Small Groups give us the space to “check-in” with each other, to be authentic, to share.

Small Groups meet three essential needs:

LISTENING

To be heard; to know that there is someone who is willing to listen to what we have to say.

ACCEPTANCE

To be accepted, appreciated, and valued for who we are.

CARE

To experience the love and care of people with whom we share some common affinity.

“Small Groups are where people gather and really care for one another. It is belonging and being loved by others who come into the Small Group. It is where heart-to-heart fellowship takes place.”

— Dale Galloway

- ➊ Create a safe environment that allows others to express feelings.
- ➋ Listen & uphold confidentiality.
- ➌ Are concerned with the well-being of all participants.
- ➍ Promote awareness by the participants.
- ➎ Are able to hold space for others to express intense emotion.
- ➏ Accept participants as they are.
- ➐ Act as monitors and keep the group focused.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SMALL GROUP HOSTS

- ➊ Guide and lead the discussion in the small group—be accountable to the minister and host trainer.
- ➋ Pray daily for members of the Small Group.
- ➌ Know the materials, be centered, and prepared for the role of host.
- ➍ Talk in an audible, positive tone; maintain good eye contact; refer to members by their first names; encourage members to address each other by name.
- ➎ Attend Sunday services and group meetings during the program.
- ➏ Between meetings, make any appropriate contacts with group members.
- ➐ Make certain the room is ready for group meetings.
- ➑ Use the group Sacred Commitments as the basis of guiding the group meeting.
- ➒ Open the meeting by leading a prayer.
- ➓ Arrange for any group business to be taken care of.
- ➔ Give ample opportunity and encouragement for members to participate openly with each other.
- ➕ Close the meeting with prayer.
- ➖ Take care of yourself by remembering —

*Be tuned in,
turned on spiritually.*

*Keep learning, no one
has all the answers!*

*Hang loose; maintain a relaxed
attitude in the group.*

*Trust the Holy Spirit to do
the work.*

*Maintain a sense of humor—
see Proverbs 17:22.*

*You are a person of worth!
Do not be afraid or hesitant
to communicate that! It will
encourage others to believe
the same about themselves.*

Live by the Sacred Commitments.

HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

General tips:

- ➊ Create a supportive, non-defensive climate that maintains all participant's self-esteem.
- ➋ Start with the lowest level of intervention.
- ➌ Describe what you are seeing.
- ➍ Don't take the reactions of participants personally.

Things to remember:

- ➊ "I" messages have three parts:

Behavior — describe the situation.

Feelings — state how the situation makes you feel.

Effects — describe the impact or the results of the situation.

- ➋ Helpful "I" message formula:

When...

I feel...

Because...

- ➌ Examples:

When you make side comments to your neighbor I get upset because it makes it difficult for me to hear what the speaker who has the floor is saying.

When Joe makes a suggestion, you groaned audibly. You did the same thing when Angie made a suggestion. I feel concerned because your groaning may discourage others from participating.

Establish sacred agreements:

- ➊ Establish ground rules in the beginning to eliminate any potential problems.

- ➋ Examples:

Keep an open mind..

No interrupting / honor the person sharing.

Balance time between those sharing.

Stick to the agenda.

- ➌ If a problem occurs you can refer back to the sacred agreements.

If side conversations occur:

- Repeat the sacred agreements.
- Say, "_____ (name of main speaker) has the floor now."
- Use humor (e.g. "Am I hearing voices?")

If the topic gets side tracked:

- Ask how this issue is tied to the topic.
- Ask the speaker to help you put their thought into a bullet point.
- Remind the speaker of the time limits.

Honor the one sharing:

- Remind the group who has the floor.
- Refer back to the ground rules.

Staying focused on the topic of conversation:

- Ask the speaker to be specific, e.g. "How is that similar to what we are discussing?"

Curtail repetitive sharing or story telling:

- Use active listening to paraphrase their thought.

Honor time agreements:

- Get time commitment from everyone up front.
- No disruptive behavior during the meeting.
- Start on time, and end on time.

Speak of personal experience and use feeling words:

- Rather than re-telling the stories of others, share firsthand information and insight.
- Ask, "Is that my story to share?"

If someone becomes critical of the group process:

- If your facilitation style is being criticized, point out that there are lots of different styles of facilitation and many ways to approach a problem; that there is no one right way. Ask the person to give your approach a chance to work.

When all else fails:

- Speak to the individual at the break.
- Pause for prayer.
- Use "I" messages to specifically state what the problem is and what impact it is having on the group from your perspective.

GUIDELINES FOR DO'S AND DON'TS

DON'T:

- ➊ Be an authority figure or an expert.
 - ➋ Let people interrupt each other.
 - ➌ Let participants attack or judge other participants.
 - ➍ Permit anyone (including yourself) to put words in another's mouth or answer questions for someone else.
 - ➎ Say, "I know how you feel!" (Even if you are absolutely certain that you do!)
 - ➏ Use euphemisms when discussing painful subjects.
 - ➐ Minimize any emotional reaction, pain or grief.
 - ➑ Imply that any feeling or response to stress is abnormal, good or bad.
 - ➒ Say, "Look on the bright side."
 - ➓ Give advice. (It is important to discourage participants from giving advice unless the advice is focused on dealing with bureaucracy or red tape about a specific topic and is welcomed by the recipient as helpful.)
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DO:

- ➊ Check out participant's "I" needs and expectations.
- ➋ Model skills for participants. (I'm feeling _____ right now.)
- ➌ Set limits. (It is okay to confront in a loving way.)
- ➍ Identify common feelings in the group.
- ➎ Identify underlying themes.
- ➏ Ask for feedback and clarification.
- ➐ Share personal experience to make a point.
- ➑ Be vulnerable.
- ➒ Encourage participants to know she/he has a choice.
(Sample question: Does this work for you?)
- ➓ Allow others to be where they are, without judgment.
- ➔ Direct group focus to the issues at hand.
- ➕ Help make things manageable by taking on a small piece of the big picture.
- ➖ Use detached involvement and get support for yourself outside the group.
- ➗ Try to control the tendency of participants to assume roles (dominator, observer, fixer, critic, organizer, etc.). Work within these guidelines to minimize destructive effects of role-playing.
- ➘ Acknowledge progress in participants over time.
- ➙ Operate on the principle, "One Day at a Time".
- ➚ Have fun and relax.

 **In which areas are you feeling effective or ineffective?**

 **Are you feeling supported/valued for your service?
If not, what would support you?**

 **What is working for you? What is not working for you?**

 **What personal value are you experiencing through facilitating
your group?**

 **How is your Small Group unfolding?**

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Inspiring Spiritual Growth and Abundant Living

Sunday Services 10:30 am CST • 600 Unity Way, Lee's Summit, MO 64086
More information and LiveStream at UnityVillageChapel.org