

**Edited Comments from the Zoom Chat**  
**Liberating Governance for Our Time Gathering**  
**February 28, 2023**

**Questions or comments on pre-work**

- Susanne, Melrose MA: This is huge culture change. Is it possible?
- Mary Vallier-Kaplan Peterborough: How does this work relate to the role and relationship between a governing board and the Committee of Share Ministries in other words not just the professional ministries.

**Think of a small group you have been in that was a really good experience for you. (You define what good means!) This could be in any context. If you have never been part of a small group that felt good, imagine what such an experience would be like.**

**What was good about the group you thought of? What characteristics or practices make for a good group experience?**

- Barb Gutsch, Salina, KS: Deep listening, trust, communication,
- Susanne, Melrose MA: Strong covenant, sense of trust. Strong listening, deep sharing. A feeling of working closely on things that matter. Cooperation, respect.
- Lori Saccardi, ESUC, Bellevue WA: highly committed to purpose, trust, structure to the discussion
- Mary Vallier-Kaplan Peterborough NH: collaborative attitude, learning framework
- Grace Colton (she/her) Bellevue, WA: inviting, communication, trust, aliveness
- Marty Pelham (they/them) Rockland, Maine: Talk in rotation. Questions and what you like - not what's wrong
- Ann Fletcher (Bellevue WA) she/her: Honor differences and utilize their strengths
- Bobbi Pace Hamden CT: trust, observing each others' gifts, commitment
- Jon, Chatham MA: Honesty, willingness to be unafraid of conflict
- Judy Sullivan, Hartford CT: Good for me was learning - non-judgmental and listening to each other
- Kiki, Arlington, MA: Clarity around time commitment
- Bobbi Pace, Hamden CT: observing and citing each others gifts

**What if board service was viewed and experienced as one of the most fulfilling, cherished, honored roles a person could have in their congregational life? What about the experience would make it so?**

**What if at the end of one's board tenure trustees testified to personal growth; to growth as a Unitarian Universalist; and to feeling better equipped to live their faith in the world? What kinds of board experiences would they describe in their testimony?**

- Barb Gutsch, Salina, KS: more personal connection check in check out
- Susanne, Melrose MA: Boards used to go on real retreats — away, overnight, with spiritual content — but that doesn't happen any more.
- Ann Fletcher (Bellevue WA): Onboarding welcoming

- Mary Vallier-Kaplan Peterborough NH: Governing Boards need to share and show the rest of the congregation what a personal growth and special opportunity it is to be on the Board.
- Lori Saccardi, ESUC, Bellevue WA: what best aligns with values etc? measure outcomes so outgoing members feel a sense of accomplishment
- Ann Fletcher (Bellevue WA): Short break outs during meeting for smaller group discussion
- Bobbi Pace Hamden CT: focus Board on spiritual questions and visioning, along with business. Show board accomplishments with congregation
- Ann Fletcher (Bellevue WA) she/her: Link Agenda Items with what which of our values and our mission they help fulfill
- Judy Sullivan, Hartford CT: Being on board considered a second job - need to keep values and mission in mind
- Grace Colton (she/her) Bellevue, WA: onboarding, spiritual meetings, personal growth via check-ins or small groups to talk about a value such as antiracism, linking agenda items to values.

**What brings you to this group? What challenges are you experiencing in your congregation?**

**What changes are you hoping to make?**

- Lori Saccardi, ESUC, Bellevue WA: ministerial loss and change
- Susanne, Melrose MA: volunteer burnout, nobody steps up, lack of energy
- Mary Vallier-Kaplan Peterborough NH: I tend to lead with my head more than my heart and I want to work on this.
- 20:07:12 From Barb Gutsch, Salina, KS to Everyone: Streamlining Board structure for small lay led congregation. no one wants to be in charge
  - We had a conversation about what “streamlining” means. Barb shared that the congregation has around 35 members, with 7 on the Board. They are thinking of reducing the size of the Board. To encourage the congregation to be more engaged, everyone is invited to attend Board meetings, and whenever there is a vote, everyone present can vote.
- Lori Saccardi, ESUC, Bellevue WA to Everyone: aging congregations
- Ann Fletcher (Bellevue WA): #1 belief that the structures and guidelines can be interwoven with and reflect our values, Vision, and mission. #2 Challenges--focusing on higher level visioning, engaging the congregation with open questions for this purpose for the first time
- Susanne, Melrose MA: too much indecision, re-inventing the wheel, wasted effort
- Bobbi Pace Hamden CT: I am a new VP, we lost our minister, financial issues and coming out of covid and needing reimagining reconnecting and recommitting