

First United Methodist Church Nixon, TX

SoulCare Small Group

Program Notes
January 23-March 26, 2012

Purpose

Our society, composed of many elements, cultures, ethnicities, and pursuits, has a very difficult time connecting with God and with each other in ways that help the soul of each person to feel safe and experience safety. We have few ways in our society to address our deepest concerns, joys, and fears in ways that our very shy souls would recognize as a trustful matrix...even in some of our families.

***SoulCare* is designed to allow us and our very shy souls to address things of importance to us, things that frighten us, things about which we are unsettled or uncertain, things about which we rejoice, and things about which we have grave misgivings and doubts in a place and set of relationships that develop and maintain safety.**

Process

***SoulCare* meets weekly on Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.** If the group thinks extra time is needed for a discussion to continue, we may extend the time by one-half hour only in order to preserve the remainder of the evening for persons to rest or otherwise occupy their time.

SoulCare will enable discussion that respects the Speaker's right to be heard without interruption. Problem solving is not the point of *SoulCare*, but rather only processing by the Speaker. Listeners may ask questions, but the nature of the questions is guided entirely by the understanding that all Listeners are simply assisting the Speaker to process what is within the Speaker's soul.

SoulCare discussions may become devotional or confessional, but only because the Speaker wishes to engage in devotional or confessional issues.

The *SoulCare* group may choose to use an object of some sort to indicate who is the Speaker, such as a hand cross, or a "talking stick."

Speaker and Listener are two elements of *SoulCare*. A "third thing" will also be offered to guide prayer, Bible study, meditation, and/or contemplation during the week between meetings. The "third thing" may also be used to focus the discussions or inquire gently about the current state of each person's soul. The "third thing" may be a reading, a poem, a fragment of long-standing Christian practice of prayer and/or self-examination.

SoulCare will develop a Covenant (see below) that holds this process before both Speakers and Listeners throughout the meetings.

SoulCare participants understand that God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is ever-

present with the participants, whether during the meeting or at any other time.

SoulCare sessions will begin with a brief time of worship and end with guidance for the coming week and closing blessing. Thus, a *SoulCare* session would normally be five minutes for worship, fifty minutes of discussion, and five minutes for leave-taking, for a total of 60 minutes of meeting time (extended by one-half hour only by group consensus).

Duration

This iteration of *SoulCare* is from January 23 through March 26, 2012.

Participants will be able to evaluate the experience at the end of the first quarter sessions. Please register on our website, www.fumcnixon.org, or by phone at 830-582-1482, or in worship by the sign-up sheet in the bulletin (please put into the offering plate).

SoulCare is a quarterly experience in its current design. Registration for the next *SoulCare* will be in the final two weeks of March, 2012.

Covenant

A model Covenant will be offered upon registration for *SoulCare*. The group, at its first meeting, will examine and may modify the Covenant for this particular group of individual souls. If the group finds that the Covenant should be modified further along in the program, the group may discuss and enact changes that help to maintain the safety of each person's soul.

Cost

The cost for SC is the price of the Upper Room's *Weavings: A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life*, \$4.50/copy/person. Your copy of *Weavings* will be ordered as soon as we have five persons (and per registration thereafter), and payable at the first meeting.

Contact

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