



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF  
SAN JOSE

## **Member has Left the Group**

**Preliminaries**

Card on the table

**Opening**

Today we are saying goodbye to [name]. She (he) will be missed, and we acknowledge that this will change our circle. However, as the Taoists say, you cannot dip your toe in the same river twice: we also acknowledge that all live is change, and we can only go forward. Our empty chair reminds us that our circle will gain new members in the future. Today let it also remind us that [name] is no longer here.

**Sitting in Silence**

I invite you to join me in a moment of silence, and to think about what you will take with you from [name's] participation.

**Read-Round-the-Circle  
- Wendell Berry**

Within the circles of our lives  
we dance the circles of the years,

the circles of the seasons  
within the circles of the years,

the cycles of the moon  
within the circles of the seasons,

the circles of our reasons  
within the cycles of the moon.

Again, again we come and go,  
changed, changing. Hands

join, unjoin in love and fear,  
grief and joy. The circles turn,

each giving into each, into all  
Only music keeps us here,

each by all the others held.  
In the hold of hands and eyes

we turn in pairs, that joining  
joining each to all again.

And then we turn aside, alone,  
out of the sunlight gone  
into the darker circles of return.

**Ritual**

Take the card from the table, and pass it around the circle, giving each person an opportunity to say the person's name and, if they wish, something they will take with them from that person's participation in the group.

After the session, people will have an opportunity to sign the card, and the leader will see to it that it is delivered to the person.

**Closing:  
Unison Reading  
- Ruth Rudner,  
Partings:  
Chronicles of  
Transformation**

There is a wind that comes up  
strong at moments,  
as if to say whatever is now  
is only for the moment.  
Everything will change.  
Everything is as it always was.  
Nothing is permanent.  
Not rain, not sun, not light, not silence . . .  
We begin here.  
We end here.  
Neither beginning nor ending is permanent,  
yet both are eternal.