

Community Discernment ~ Wedgeblade Ministry



**Shadow
Rock UCC**

Sabbath 2019

Welcome!

There have been years when we've had "Sabbath Homework" as a community. This workbook kicks that up a notch! Don't be intimidated... although there are lots of hopes and dreams wrapped up in the document you're holding, it's meant to be a friendly tool for you and for our congregation as a whole.

Inside you'll find information, questions, and space to do your work:

Page 2: Discernment Prayer

Page 3: Glossary of Discernment Terms

Page 5: Discernment Basics

Page 8: Getting Down to Business: Tying Our Core Values to the
Discernment Process

Page 11: Other Big Picture Questions

Page 12: Cards on the Table

Page 13: Space for Notes

We hope you'll spend some time during July working through the questions and bouncing off of the ideas inside. The workbook is yours to explore (we won't ask you to give it back). When we return in August and through the fall, we will be working together to chart a path toward a new wedgeblade ministry for our congregation.

Wedgeblade ministry is the term we're using to describe ministries that are prophetic or cutting edge. A traditional model of church includes fellowship, mission, worship, discipleship, and evangelism. While Shadow Rock doesn't necessarily use this language, we do these things. But this churchy laundry list doesn't include ministries that are prophetic or cutting edge. Our Covenant and our shared theology compel us to add a sixth to the traditional five listed above. This new category of wedgeblade ministry speaks to our call to be involved in actions that cut against social conventions and bring accountability to our culture's power structures.

Over the fall, we can look forward to meeting together, discussing our Sabbath discernment work, and living into a new season of being a sensitive and responsive people. More specifically, you can look for a schedule of discussion gatherings when we return in August.

In grateful anticipation of the Spirit's movement among us,

Pastor Ken and the Shadow Rock Staff

A Prayer for Discerning

Eternal Light, shine in our hearts.

Eternal Power, be our strength.

Eternal Wisdom, guide us as we serve you and the world.

*Eternal Goodness, you have drawn us to your heart
and united us in this fellowship called Shadow Rock.*

*Now grant that with all our hearts, and minds, and strength,
We all may evermore be sensitive and responsive to your current work in
the midst of our history.*

*And finally, by your infinite Spirit of Life and Love, grant us wisdom as we
seek to perceive and respond to Your will for our spiritual home and our
future together.*

*Help us to keep the needs of every member and of the greater community
in our minds and hearts through every step of our discernment process.*

*In the spirit of the core values of inclusion, justice, and spirituality we pray.
Amen.*



Glossary of Discernment Terms

There are lots of church-y and Shadow Rock-y words in here! Check out this discernment and wedgeblade ministry glossary. While we are right to be on guard against insider language, at times a shared process calls for a shared language.

- ◇ Consolation—a feeling of comfort and peace when considering a particular discernment action
- ◇ Covenant—a voluntarily binding agreement among people or groups
- ◇ Desolation—a feeling of sadness or discomfort when considering a particular discernment action
- ◇ Discernment— 1) the process of making decisions that are in line with values; 2) observation in the absence of judgment that makes spiritual guidance and understanding possible
- ◇ Discipleship—the process of spiritual maturity; in Christian tradition specifically, the process of conforming one's actions and values to that of Christ
- ◇ Evangelism—sharing a portion of our spiritual journey with others, particularly in such a way that invites others to experience what we ourselves have found valuable
- ◇ Feelings—emotions and inner experiences
- ◇ Fellowship—1) friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests; 2) in faith communities, the mutual feelings of affection and companionship that arise from shared spiritual experiences and actions



- ◇ Formation—the intentional growth and maturity of a person in their faith and decision-making, for the sake of the world
- ◇ Holy Indifference—in discernment, the idea of setting aside one’s previously held opinions and thoughts to make room for the ideas of others and for the movement of the Spirit
- ◇ Inclusion—a Shadow Rock core value that speaks to our goal of welcoming all and finding room for every human gift and calling
- ◇ Justice—a Shadow Rock core value that speaks to our calling to make an abundant and grace-filled life possible for every person and for the planet
- ◇ Mission—a word about purpose, calling, and work
- ◇ Needs—things and experiences common to all people that make life good; human needs include various iterations of connection, physical well-being, honesty, play, peace, autonomy, and meaning
- ◇ Pick-a-Party—a series of Shadow Rock fundraising events that also serve to increase our connections and fellowship with one another
- ◇ Spirituality—a Shadow Rock core values that speaks to our connection to and relationship with life itself
- ◇ Wedgeblade—a central metaphor for the purpose of the Church; the purpose of the church as a community that perceives and responds to the movement of God’s Spirit on behalf of the world
- ◇ Wedgeblade Ministry—the tasks, mission, and causes undertaken by our community that fulfill our purpose as described by the metaphor of the wedgeblade; those ministries that are undertaken in response to God’s movement and are thereby ‘cutting edge’

Discernment Basics

“How?” and “What’s Next?” questions are all about discernment.

So, what is discernment?

Discernment is deliberate decision-making with an eye toward our faith and values.

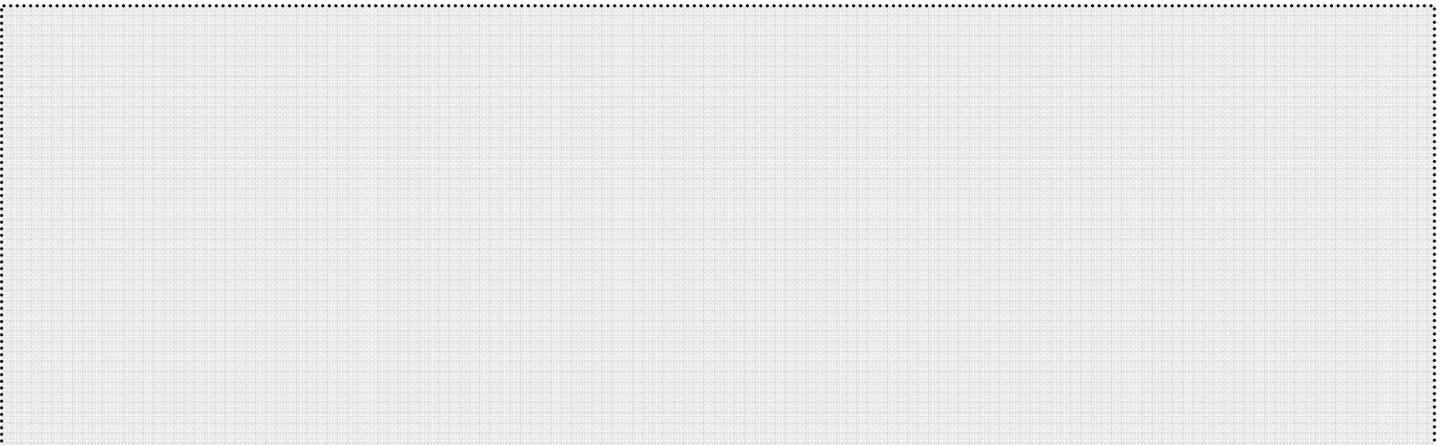
Have you ever...?

- ✓ done a Pros and Cons list
- ✓ asked trusted friends for advice
- ✓ assessed potential outcomes
- ✓ researched options
- ✓ prayed over a difficult decision

Yes? Then you’ve discerned before! In what circumstances have you made important decisions? Looking back, how was that experience for you?



When you’ve made personal or career decisions before, what values guided you?



We are asking you to utilize the lens of Shadow Rock's core values—Inclusion, Justice, and Spirituality—as you continue this process.

Discernment can be done by individuals and groups. Shadow Rockers have discerned together before: the Alcohol Policy, Sunday morning format changes, immigration ministries, and even our investment funds and financial management policies.

You're invited again to share these premises about discernment :

- Discernment is used for positive moral decisions. Often the most difficult decisions are between two “good” things.
- Discernment is accomplished in an atmosphere of freedom. Grounded in grace and freedom in our spirits, we can be sensitive to desires, needs, and motives.
- Discernment is hard work! It requires a commitment to openness and self-knowledge.

What is stirring in you as you think through these premises?



As you begin thinking about discerning new directions and ministries for Shadow Rock, try to observe your reactions using this formula:

“When I think about Shadow Rock embracing a new wedgeblade ministry, I feel _____

because I need _____

and I value _____

_____”

Feelings:

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Skeptical | Reluctant | Concerned | Torn |
| Puzzled | Overwhelmed | Vulnerable | Intrigued |
| Optimistic | Troubled | Impatient | Tired |
| Anxious | Curious | Inspired | Hopeful |
| Open | Content | Excited | Worried |
| Comfortable | Confused | Frustrated | Delighted |
| Lost | Grateful | Encouraged | Sad |

Needs and Values:

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Harmony | Acceptance | To be heard | Clarity |
| Integrity | Authenticity | Health | Equality |
| Order | Intimacy | Participation | Nurturance |
| Contribution | Efficiency | Inspiration | Ease |
| Structure | Compassion | Beauty | Autonomy |
| Celebration | Belonging | Purpose | Support |
| Reassurance | Inclusion | Friendship | Hope |

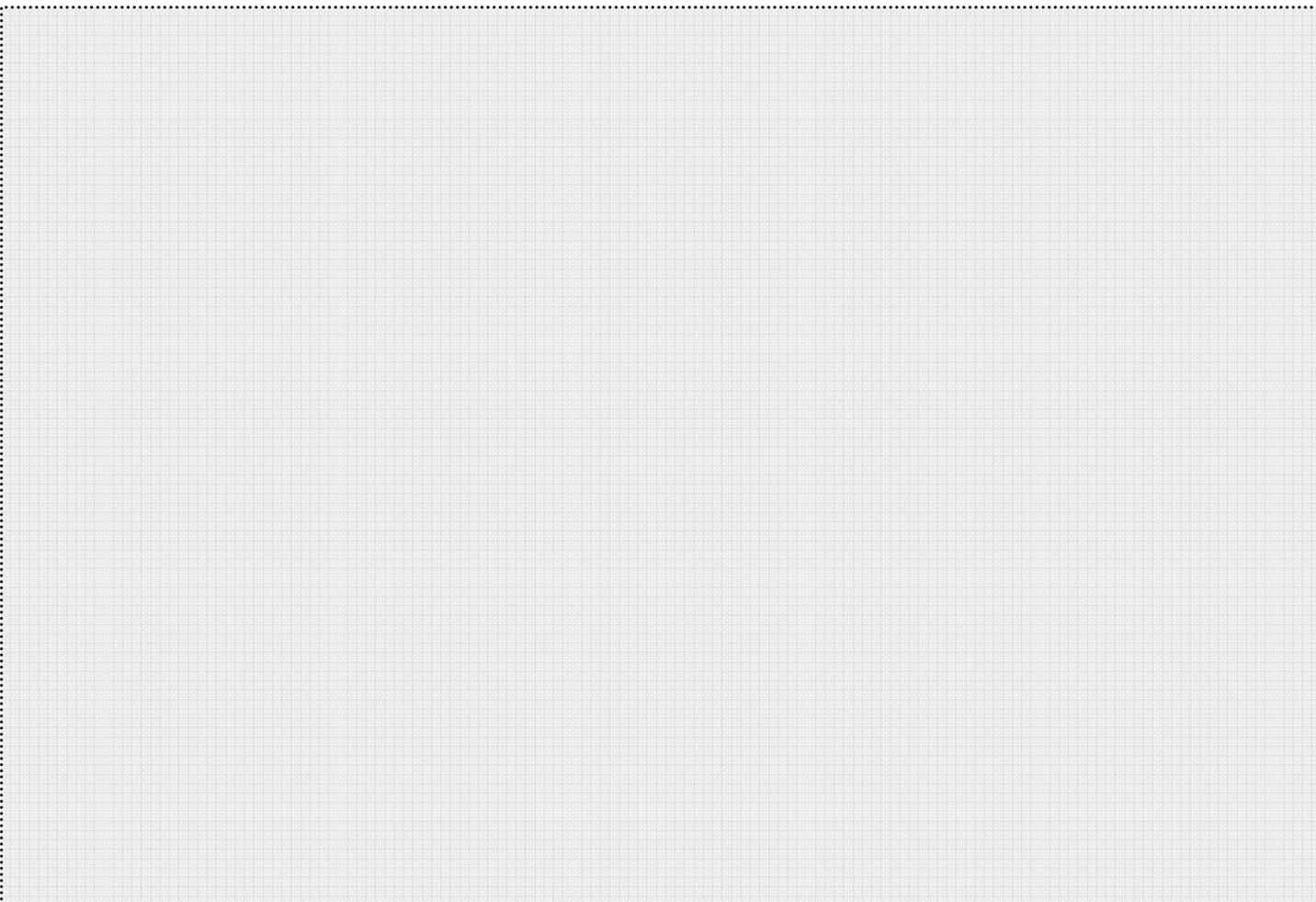
Getting Down to Business—Tying Our Core Values to the Discernment Process

The Question

In individual discernment, the first step is determining the question... What is the clearest way to describe the decision you're making?

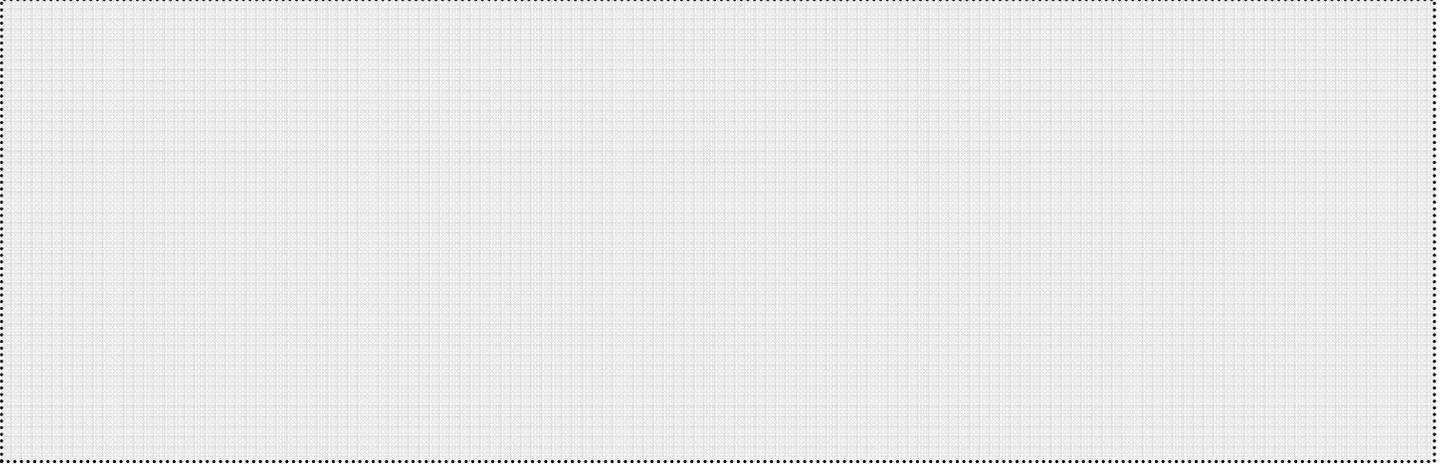
For our shared work of discernment, our question is *'What new work of inclusion, justice and spirituality is ours to do as a congregation?'*

What has been your past involvement in various ministries (Open and Affirming, Family Promise, Immigration/Sanctuary, and others) at Shadow Rock? Which of our core values motivated you or did you experience as you worked in those Wedgeblade Ministries? How do you feel now about your past engagement with these programs and actions?



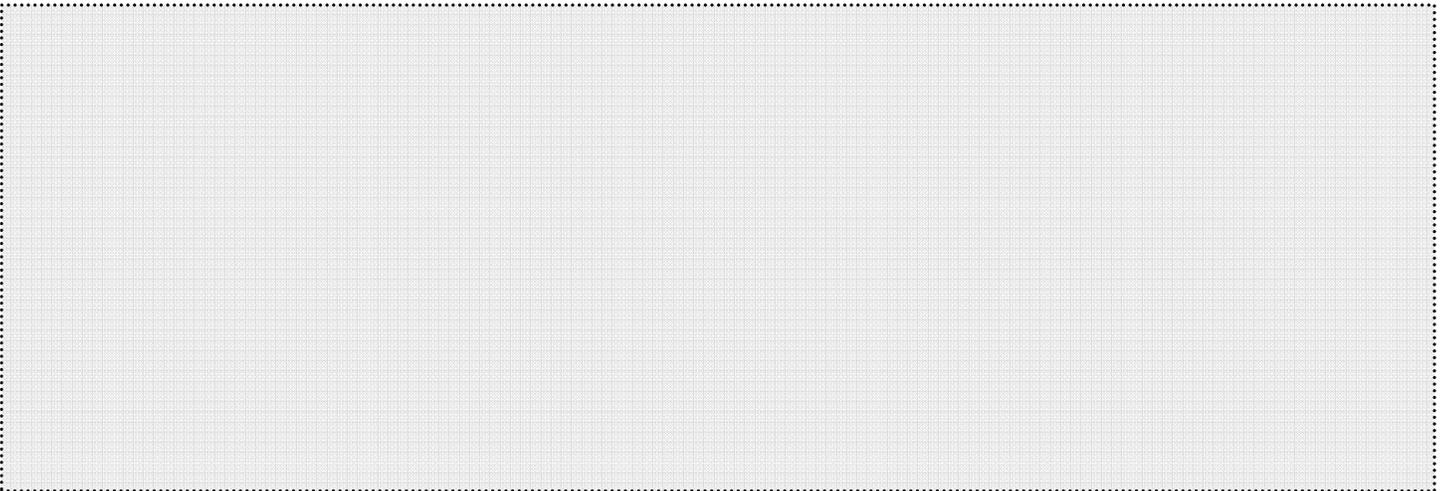
The Internal Work of Checking In

Can you be at peace with however the Spirit leads our congregation during this time of discernment? This idea of letting go of previous goals or agendas to be open to possibilities is sometimes called *holy indifference*. What would help you cultivate holy indifference? Does this seem like an easy task or a difficult one?



Practical Matters

What are some issues or actions that have captured your attention in the last year? If you're able, spend some time fact-finding about issues in our community, state, and nation. This can sometimes seem overwhelming. Exercise gentleness with your heart as you learn.



How will you exercise self-care when you feel discouraged about the scope of these problems?



Intuition and Imagination

Listen to your intuition. Take time in silence and get in touch with how our group discernment question feels in your body. Imagine a positive future for a new ministry at Shadow Rock. What does it look like? How are you finding a place in that work?

The Pot Simmers...

Reflect on this process as July continues. As you relax into Sabbath time, listen for a voice of consolation and comfort around this question. Keep praying; keep breathing; keep dreaming. What paths seem particularly open for you now?



Other Big Picture Questions to Consider As You Re-Create During Our Sabbath

What motivates my involvement at Shadow Rock?

When I look 5 years into my own future, what new things have opened up for me?

These are the things I hope stay constant in my life...

These are the areas of my life in which I welcome big changes...

Cards on the Table!

During our time together this fall, we'll be getting much more specific about wedgeblade ministry possibilities. This page is your opportunity to 'get real' about what kinds of work you would like us to tackle together.

“When I consider the possibilities of new wedgeblade ministries,
I feel energy and joy around

I can envision contributing to this work in these ways:

”

A Blessing for Your July

*May the grace-filled love of the Spirit of Life
grant you peace and rest during July.
May you receive an energizing sense of openness for
our fellowship and our healing work in the world.
May our time apart in Sabbath fill our reunions
with gratitude and sweetness.
Amen.*

Discernment Process Notes

