

Dear CSEOA friends,

What's an "affinity group" you ask?

Well, maybe you didn't ask directly, but affinity groups are part of our association's 12 Key Strategies, designed to help us move into our future story. Essentially, **affinity groups are people with a common ministry passion, interest, or mission. The groups will meet for community, for education and resource sharing, for inspiration.** They each will determine together their own specific conversation topics and gathering times.

Jay Yutzey, our Association Treasurer, for example, invited others to join an affinity group for anyone working in and/or interested in church finance.

Their example has inspired my own imagination. I've been pondering an affinity group of UCC women (and any interested men!) who want to read and talk about some of the women mystics of our time: Anne Lamott, Jan Richardson, Christine Valters Paintner, Joyce Rupp, Joan Borysenko, Mary Oliver.

Or maybe an affinity group for spiritual directors.

Or one for therapy dog owners who understand that work to be ministry.

Or a gathering of quilters with a spiritual bent.

Or people responsible for the labyrinth (or food pantry!) at their church who want to share stories and resources.

You get the idea - lots of possibilities! What might the Spirit be leading you toward?

**Ponder this: what ministry captures your heart? Or what mission or ministry has been tugging a bit to get your attention?** I invite you to pray about those questions. Lent is a great time to tune in to your own inspirations, to share a gift or "take on" a new interest that's captured your heart.

I'll be anxious to hear what you and the Spirit come up with! More details on actually forming affinity groups, communicating about them, etc. will be coming to you soon. Meanwhile this is an invitation to pray and ponder.

This is sure to be some of the "holy fun" part, friends! Affinity groups - help others (and yourself!) get more connected!

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