

Qualities of the Family-sized church:

- ◆ People bond better.
- ◆ Almost everyone knows almost every else.
- ◆ Acts & feels like a family.
- ◆ Each individual feels important & needed.
- ◆ Eating together is their favorite activity.
- ◆ Very good at celebrating the various stages of life.
- ◆ Operate on fluid “people” time.
- ◆ Better at meeting immediate needs rather than long-range planning.
- ◆ Smaller churches are tough & tenacious!

Challenges for the Family-Sized Church:

- Tendency for informal decision-making with key people left out;
- People who are not skilled in leadership may become leaders;
- A person with an agenda can divert the community from its mission and to themselves;
- Often don't have alternate resources (experts, donors, etc.);
- Have little wiggle room about finances or in a bad budget year;
- A persistent feeling of being isolated and abandoned;
- Too few people to do too many things.

Let's Embrace our Identity of a Family-Sized Church

Let's face it—we aren't going to compete with any of those megachurches. Still, growth and bigger size is not the issue. We ARE a very special type of church. What is that quality that makes us so? What makes us special?

At All Souls, we are a family! We have the same strengths, foibles, and dysfunctions of families.

Let us not be embarrassed or worried by our size. Our name says it all. We are a COMMUNITY. We know each other well—sometimes too well for our own good.

Here at All Souls, we are all ministers. We take into our hearts all sorts of people—young and old, straight, gay, or transgender, the reluctant soul, the quirky person, the employed, disabled, the tired and retired, the peaceful warrior and those of all religions. When one of us hurts, we care and we respond. When we have been beaten down by society, our friends at All Souls offer us a hand up.

When someone leaves us, we hurt then, too. In our All Souls family, people are always coming and going, hurting and loving, living and learning. We miss those who have left us and we care, because they are part of us. In the small church, each person makes a difference.

Our combined efforts for the church matter. Your input, ideas and work are appreciated. No one else has your specific talents. We can risk in relative safety, and be proud of our accomplishments together. We can work on our interpersonal skills and maybe even our culinary skills and have them appreciated.

I, for one, am glad I'm here at All Souls. We are a smaller church with a bigger heart. We DO care about each other. We are the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Caring Family Community. Let's Embrace our Identity as a Family-Sized Church!