**Small Group Ministry**

**Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church**

November 18, 2014 By Heidi Green

**WELCOMING** (3 min) Heidi & Doug

**OPENING READING/CHALICE LIGHTING** (1 min) Heidi

**SILENT REFLECTION** (1 min.) Heidi

**PLATEAUS, PEAKS, VALLEYS** (30 min.) Heidi

Read prose on back

Sharing: peaks, plateaus, valleys in your life

*Preceded by 30 seconds of silence to gather our thoughts.*

**FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION** (15 min) Heidi

What more do you want to know?

**BREAK/ QUIET CONTEMPLATION** (7 min.)

**GROUP SHARING** (30 min.)Doug

Peak experiences as religious, spiritual, or secular events

*Preceded by 30 seconds of silence to gather our thoughts.*

**FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION** (15 min) Doug

What more do you want to know?

**CLOSING READING** (3 min.) Doug

**PEAKS, VALLEYS, AND PLATEAUS**

A wanderer through vastness of desert sees only unending waves of sand and is lulled into boredom and even death.

Miracles come as illusory breaks in the monotony of lifeless brown. A traveler needs variety—a breath-claiming uphill climb, the more to enjoy the view.

Even the plunge into the valley is needed tonic for the light air of height.

And sometimes the erratic ups and downs of the journey need the steady plateau to see just where we’ve been and where we’re going—a time to catch the breath.

I am the traveler, ascender of hard-won trails to claim the ecstatic view.

My feet ache as I descend from such heights to sense my smallness against the mountain whose summit I had just claimed. Or had it claimed me?

I am the traveler trying to catch breath and self on the steadier terrain of plateau.

No dull desert for me—lost in shifting dunes of sand. Give me hard and rocky trails to climb, deep valleys to keep me humble and rolling plateaus to steady my feet.