

Sabbath Circles © is a new approach to being church together. As family life has changed with ever increasing demands on time and energy, it has become clear that traditional models for sharing the faith – like Sunday School – are no longer functional for many families in this day and age. There are so many activities competing with each other for time on family calendars that families are forced to choose between competing, worthwhile options.

As a church seeking to be relevant in the world as it is, we decided to change our ways of doing things rather than expect families to adapt to our schedule. We want to offer a teaching/learning model that works within family schedules, as they exist. We want to move beyond church confined to a building, being just another thing on a “to do” list that’s already too long. We want our faith community to be active out in the world, as an antidote to the crazy pace, confusing messages and questionable values of the world as it is today.

Here is what we hope to accomplish with this new curriculum:

- *We want to empower and inspire* parents and grandparents to be the first teachers of the faith.
- *We want to hold on to worship* as the heartbeat of our church. That’s why the Sabbath Circles© curriculum is linked to our weekly worship in content but you do *not* need to be present in worship to use the curriculum.
- *We want each weekly lesson to be user-friendly* so it has a simple format with a focus Scripture text and suggestions for going deeper with the text. This is done through suggested conversation questions as well as a variety of different activities utilizing Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences because everyone, no matter what their age or ability, learns differently.

In case you are wondering, the Sabbath Circles© logo of four interlocking and overlapping circles does have a meaning

directly reflective of the ministries of our church. Here is what the circles represent:

- **Worship** – on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings and whenever else the Spirit calls us
- **Learning** – Lifelong learning for all who follow Jesus is a vital aspect of faith so opportunities are on-going.
- **Fellowship** – has always been central to the practice of the Christian faith going back to the earliest days of Jesus and the disciples gathering at table for meals and conversation
- **Service** – Working together to make a difference in the world has always been central to the practice of faith and it is at the core of who we believe ourselves to be as a church.

The interlocking circles design reminds us that every part of life in the church is always connected to the others. Some folks are more comfortable becoming involved through one circle rather than another – for example, service rather than worship. We believe it’s all good! Whatever part of church speaks to you here will welcome you with open arms.

We believe we have the beginnings of an exciting new way to be church together and, more importantly, to pass on the faith of Jesus Christ. If you are a member of the church, you can access these Sabbath Circles© materials every week at worship or on the church website free of charge. If you are not a member of the church, a suggested donation of \$10 for a year’s subscription to the curriculum will be much appreciated. More details available through the church office or speak to Rev. Ruth at her Community Office Hours at the Savoy Bookstore and Café on Canal Street in Westerly most Thursdays from 2-4pm.