

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Contemporary Christian Roundtable? The Contemporary Christian Roundtable is a group of adult Christians at Mountain View United Methodist Church who meet Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. to openly discuss faith issues. Generally we study material from a book chosen by the Roundtable's members.

Is the Roundtable a Conservative or Liberal Class? The class is neither conservative nor liberal. However, it considers itself progressive. Some of the authors studied include Marcus Borg, John Dominick Crossan, John Shelby Spong, Huston Smith, Harvey Cox, John Cobb, and Robin Meyers.

Does it challenge one to question what they believe and why? Yes. A premise of the class is that one grows in faith throughout their life. Further, growth in faith can be facilitated by openly expressing one's beliefs and hearing others express theirs.

Does it require one to believe in any prescribed way? No. Class members are free to agree or disagree with the material being studied and with one another. However, class members are expected to respect and honor everyone's views.

What are the sessions like? Sessions end at 9:45am. There is a period for members to check in and share their joys and concerns at 8:30 am. Beginning at 8:45 am, there is typically a short reading of material from Thomas Merton, Thich Nhat Hanh, Rumi or Hafiz. Sessions are facilitated each week by one of the Roundtable's members. The topic for the week is generally a chapter of a book that we are studying. There is usually a brief introduction to the topic and then some questions are introduced to generate discussion within the group.

What is the purpose of the Roundtable? The Roundtable provides an opportunity for people to deepen their faith by sharing it with others and from learning from others as well as the author being studied. People are welcome from all faith perspectives but must be open to the faith perspectives of others as well.

Is the Roundtable consistent with Methodist theology? Yes, below is a statement of "The United Methodist Theological Task" from the denomination's *Book of Discipline*.

"Our theological task is both critical and constructive. It is critical in that we test various expressions of faith by asking: Are they true? Appropriate? Clear? Cogent? Credible? Are they based on love? Do they provide the Church and its members with a witness that is faithful to the gospel as reflected in our living heritage and that is authentic and convincing in the light of human experience and the present state of human knowledge? Our theological task is constructive in that every generation must appropriate creatively the wisdom of the past and seek God in their midst in order to think afresh about God, revelation, sin, redemption, worship, the church, freedom, justice, moral responsibility, and other significant theological concerns. Our summons is to understand and receive the gospel promises in our troubled and uncertain times."

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016) p. 81