

Opening: Open Each Community Group Meeting by Reading the Community Grp Summary

What is a Community Group at Trinity Presbyterian Church?

Community Groups are basic Christian communities. Believing that getting to know Jesus and falling in love with him are activities best carried out in a community context, Community Groups provide that context. They are gatherings of 6 to 12 people meeting in homes and apartments throughout the city during the week. In Community Groups, people come to know God and to experience His presence, community is developed and fostered, and people are nurtured, equipped and released for God's work in the world. They provide an opportunity for intimacy, mutual support, practical love and service, learning about the Christian faith, prayer, and sharing of what we see God doing in our midst.

What is the Purpose of Community Groups?

A place to meet and experience Jesus Christ in our midst through mutual ministry

A place for fellowship and friendship

A place where gifts are exercised

A place to discover Christianity

What happens during a Community Group Meeting?

Worship – Experiencing the Worth of God and freely giving ourselves to Him

Sharing – Learning to tell the story of our journey with God

Sermon Application – Reflecting together on what God has given us from His Word during Corporate Worship

Prayer – Talking with God

Mission – Having experienced God's love, we now go to love our neighbor with the love we have from God

How do they fit in at Trinity as a whole?

Community Groups are the *primary place for pastoral care at Trinity*. Churches do one of two things: They either practice systematic care and encouragement of the congregation or systematic neglect of the congregation. Our network of community groups is the means through which we seek to practice the former. While some congregations may have small groups, *our congregation is small groups*. Our network of Community groups serves as the nervous system of our church. In them, the gospel is used to motivate people towards a richer relationship with God. In them, the gospel is used as a balm to apply to the wounds we incur in this broken world. In them, the gospel is used to call and motivate people into the service of God's kingdom: In response to God's grace, people are urged to develop lives of moral beauty, integrity and other-centeredness and to discover and use their gifts to carry out ministry both within the congregation and to the world.

The Context of Change: The Worshiping Community

Worshiping God enables us to see the beauty of God and the beauty of godliness. When we worship, we find that our love for God deepens and the hold that other things have on us loosen. When we worship, we find that it changes what we want: we want God and we want to please him more than we want and desire other things. Regularly worshipping God with the larger church, in small groups and on a daily basis as an individual is indispensable if our lives are to change.

Growth by Multiplying New Groups

Trinity's primary vision is that by multiplying groups we are able to increase our capability as a church to care for people. When people are not involved in significant Christian relationships, like Community Groups, it greatly inhibits Christian maturity. Currently many of our friends at Trinity fall outside this kind of caring and encouraging community. For this reason, we consider it imperative to develop new leaders and expand the number of groups. We are not concerned with multiplying groups as an end in itself. We want to increase the number of groups because we want to provide quality personal care and community life for those who are part of our network of friends. As long as we have too few groups, Trinity, Lakeland and Polk County will fail to be as effective as we might be. If we are going to be successful at multiplying groups, then we will need to cast a vision that will make people enthusiastic and committed to these things. If this vision casting is neglected, the resistance to multiplying groups will prove too strong to overcome.

Warm Up (OPTIONAL) - Read Sermon Passage and Corporate Worship Themes

We read the sermon passage, storyline and themes to warm our hearts and minds to remember what God has spoken to us in our time together Sunday morning.

Proclamation of God's Word**The Storyline –** The King is coming! (again) Make ready!

I love the call to readiness. The announcement of the coming of someone special and all the preparation that goes into the anticipated visit of this highly regarded friend. Isaiah uses the metaphor of preparing the roadway or highway for the coming King. The high spots cut down. The low spots filled in. The crooked sections straightened out. The goal is to have the king or queen in such a state so as to reflect and conclude good things about their kingdom and their subjects.

The analogy fits for our own hearts. Are we prepared for the coming of our King Jesus? Are the highways of our hearts prepared in such a way that Jesus' Spirit is anticipated and that He has easy access? Where are we proud? Where are we low and beaten down? Where is our life crooked? Where are our hearts rough?

And how are our friends preparing for the coming of King Jesus? Having been both comforted and confronted by Holy Spirit, how do we now in tenderness and truth herald the good news of the work of Jesus has accomplished for us to others? Pray for a continual renew of repentance and joy in Jesus and for an outpouring of Holy Spirit on us and our neighbors that causes us to announce to all we know, friends and enemies alike, the love of God for us and for them.

Themes

- Comfort
- Guilt
- Wreckage
- Tone
- Compassion
- Tenderly
- Paid for dbl sins
- Paradox
- Those who don't deserve
- Receive
- Those who think they deserve
- Don't
- Wrath – Forgiveness
- Under Cover Boss
- Big Reveal
- God shows up personally
- Make ready
- Herald of Good news
- Eternity
- Return

1. **Launchers:** Questions to ignite reflection, conversation and understanding

- If your life were a roadway, which one would best describe it?
 - Example: I am driving a big 18-wheel truck up a **steep, steep grade** and it feels like I won't make it to the top. Overwhelmed carrying the burdens and cares of some very dear people.
 - Example: Driving a truck full of good things for many folks with lots of stops but the main road I am to travel is under repair and has been narrowed from 8 lanes to 4 lanes to 2 lanes then finally **to one and traffic is backed up for miles**. No deliveries today.
 - Example: Driving down a **winding dirt road through a forest of trees** and not only do the lights go out on my car but my GPS connection quits.
 - Example: **Driving across Colorado on a 4-lane highway with no traffic on beautiful sunny day** praising God for the wonder of His creation with worship music playing so loud that you can't hear your own voice singing to the glory of God at the top of your lungs.

2. **Worship God** using Isaiah 40:3-5. Confessing, Repenting and Crying out to Holy Spirit.

Friends, here is a remarkable opportunity for us to rejoice in Jesus and prepare the paths, streets, trails, and roadways of our hearts through the promptings of Holy Spirit to ask Jesus to work by his Spirit to make "highways to Zion". Psalm 84:5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. Read the following passage from Isaiah 40 quoted in Luke 3:3-14 and ask Holy Spirit to help you "bear fruit in keeping with your repentance" by asking "What then shall we do?". All () are TimO's additions.

Luke 3:3–14 (ESV)

³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, (reflect on your relationship with our Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit)

make his paths straight. (where have you complicated your relationship with Jesus)

⁵ Every valley shall be filled, (where are you depressed, sad, defeated, needy, hurting)

and every mountain and hill shall be made low, (where are you proud, arrogant, self-righteous)

and the crooked shall become straight, (where are you disobedient and doing your own thing contrary to God's commands)

and the rough places shall become level ways, (where do you need to ask God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of others, where you are working out of your calling)

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' " (is your life a testimony of God's grace)

⁷ He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" ¹¹ And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

What then shall we do this day, tomorrow, this week, this month, this year and all our remaining years?

3. **Sermon Reflection: Isaiah 40:1-11 (9-12-21: The Coming of the King)**

Intro: *What if God called you to comfort the disturbed? And disturb the comfortable?*

THE LORD PROMISES COMFORT

Why do we need comfort from God?

- How do you know yourself to be guilty before God and in need of forgiveness?
- How do you know yourself to be broken and in need of healing?

AND TO SHOW UP PERSONALLY

Why is it significant that the King is making a personal visit?

- How did you become convinced that you have a personal problem with God that only He could personally solve?
- How are you humbled and God exalted by His personal saving work?
- How are you reassured that His work satisfies His requirements?

BUT NOT QUITE YET

How well do you handle a long assignment? In a place, as yet unchanged, the voice of God's messenger calls out to *prepare* – "**Get ready!**"

- Who heralded the Good News of God for us in Christ Jesus to you?
- How have you been changed?
- How does your life now herald that same good news to others?

4. **Kingdom Centered Prayer:**

1. Praise the LORD for His status and power as the Only True King. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His authority to re-order and command what we think and how we live.

2. How have you lived as if God does not really deserve your allegiance? *Confess your unbelief and pride to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse and correct you, trusting that He died for this sin as much as He died for any of your sin.*

3. Give thanks to Jesus for how He brings an enduring comfort that none of us deserves and also that no one can undo. Thank Him for undoing our core problems of guilt and ruin by His death and His life for us!

4. Who do you know that is weary and burdened? Pray for them asking the LORD to comfort them by the gospel and give them hope by His Word.

5. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what it means to live a *life* of preparing (repenting & believing Jesus). Ask the Father to pour out His Spirit upon our city to move our city to renewal and repentance.

5. **Mission:** Christians are people on mission to bring renewal and repentance to our city, county, state, nation, and world.

How is God calling you to participate with Him and His people to bring renewal and repentance to our city and county?

- What then shall we do? Who has God called you to Comfort and Confront (disturb)?
 - Give
 - Serve
 - Tell
 - Comfort
 - Confront – (disturb)

6. **Jesus From Others**

Close your time together in letting each person share something they came to love about Jesus from something someone in the group shared during your time together.

- What do you love more about Jesus from what someone shared during our CG tonight?