

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.

1. Launchers:

- What is your best, “WOW, I did not see that coming!” moment?

2. Worship God – Life from Death – God who empties Graves.

TimO's “I did not see that coming” moment happened the day my brother moved. My brother Ted moved on Saturday October 5th, 2019. God moved him by Holy Spirit from Tennessee where he was swimming to Heaven where his spirit now dwells waiting for his new body. On that Saturday morning, Holy Spirit prompted my daughter to give me my SOW, Song of the Week. It is a song that brags that “God empties graves”. Christin is a great friend of mine and is my go to person for my SoW's and she came through for me that day just like she has many, many other times. Ted and I scheduled our hearts for “the move” or to have “our graves emptied” in the summer of 1966 when our brother Rick invited us to trust Jesus to move us through this life and into the life that is to come. I am loved beyond my wildest dreams, and I DID NOT SEE THAT COMING!

Remember by Bryan and Katie Torwalt

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5zKEoeTglzSW4nUzAW6SIq?si=ca7139c3745849f2>

How quickly we forget the God
Who lives in every day
How easy to lose sight that You
Reside in the mundane
How quickly we forget the power
That's running through our veins
The kind of power that empties graves

And oh my soul
Remember who you're talking to
The only one who death bows to
That's the God who walks with you

And oh my soul
You know that if He did it then
He can do it all again
His power can still raise the dead
Don't tell me that He's finished yet

Lest we not forget the voice
That's holding back the waves
Was once the voice that told the skies
To pour them into place
Let us join the endless song of everlasting praise
The only God who empties graves

Oh my soul
Remember who you're talking to
The only one who death bows to
That's the God who walks with you
And oh my soul
You know that if He did it then
He can do it all again
His power can still raise the dead

Don't tell me that He's finished yet

If You broke through the oceans
You can break through these chains
If Your word made the mountains
It can move them all the same
If death fell before You
And it's still on its face
Then the power that raised You
Is about to move again

If You broke through the oceans
You can break through these chains
If Your word made the mountains
It can move them all the same
If death fell before You
And it's still on its face
Then the power that raised You
Is about to move again
Is about to move again

Oh my soul
Remember who you're talking to
The only one who death bows to
That's the God who walks with you
And oh my soul
You know that if He did it then
Then He can do it all again
His power can still raise the dead
Don't tell me that He's finished yet
He's not finished yet
And oh my soul
His power can still raise the dead
Don't tell me that He's finished yet

3. Sermon Reflection: A Life Out of Death Kingdom – Isaiah 11:1-10 Tim Rice**DEATH & CONDEMNATION**

What do stumps prove? The larger the stump the greater the force to cut it down.
What successes have you seen cut down the lives of those who possess it?
Who have you felt the need to turn into a stump?

FORGIVENESS & RESURRECTION

What does a shoot *out* of a stump prove? The dead live.

Who do you know has been cut down to a stump that God's has brought back more beautiful than ever?

AN ENTIRELY NEW WAY OF LIFE

What happens in a Kingdom like this?

What story do you have to tell about the grace of God to bring you back to life?

How has God's grace changed your life and choices, hopes and dreams?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His wisdom to save us through Christ's own weakness and death. Praise Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for His miraculous love that would motivate Him to undergo that for us.

2. *How do you live as if Christianity is a religion for the strong?* Confess your arrogance to Jesus for thinking you know better than Him, asking Him to forgive you and heal you from your pride.

3. Give thanks to Jesus for His power to bring life even out of death. Thank Him for dying to comfort to break the power of selfishness and suffering *death and condemnation* to atone for all of our sins!

4. Who do you know that claims to trust Jesus yet is profoundly different from you and your values? Pray for them, asking the Lord to help you both pursue Jesus even more and therefore grow closer to them as well.

5. *Ask the Holy Spirit to mature you and grow you in the influence you exert as Jesus' representative in our city.* Ask Him to use you to heal antagonism, to bring comfort to those who suffer, and be fruitful as you display Jesus.

5. Mission: Start a new Holiday Tradition – *Life out of death living!*

God's Kingdom is life out of death living. It is our privilege and honor to be sent out to invite and to explain to our friends and enemies how they fit into God's Kingdom. Christians are on mission to help folks know "***how they fit into God's world***". I was struck by that thought as I read David Bostrom's book ***Get Dominion*** because that is the very question he works to solve for his readers. <https://madefordominion.com>

"Are you having a hard time figuring out how you fit into the world?"

God has placed that on David's heart and it should be on ours – to love our neighbor by helping them understand how they "fit in" to God's world and His Kingdom. Tim and Jason work hard each Sunday morning during worship to model this for us. Every Sunday we confess, pray and hear about the wreckage we have caused and God's plan to redeem and restore us through the work of Jesus applied to our hearts and are then encouraged to "go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere". What a blessing! What a story!

But most folks don't know the story, so they aren't experiencing the blessing. They don't know how they fit. So this holiday season look for those who don't seem to fit and love them. Encourage them. Bless them. Include them. Follow Holy Spirit's lead and look for ways to share your story of God's work and blessing in your life. Share how you came to know how you, not only fit in but are now a child of God.

A New Holiday Tradition – Look and Love those who don't fit in.

- Eyes to see - Pray for God to give you eyes to see those who seem left out.
- Heart of love – Move toward them in love and like them
- Ears to hear – Show you care by asking them questions, be interested in their story.
- Mouth to encourage – Bless them. Thank them. Encourage them with words.
- Words to Pray - Pray for them. Asking God to help and give His Spirit to them.
- Minds to remember – Next time you see them let them know you enjoyed your time with them and that you prayed for them.

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?