

**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** - 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.

**Read God's Word – Have someone read the sermon passage if needed as a reminder.**

**Text:** Hebrews 11:7, Genesis 6:5-14a, 17-22 (ESV) **Title:** By Faith: Noah

**The Storyline** – For Chrystl, Ted and I the dinner table at my house growing up was where it all happened. The warnings, the stories, the laughter, the vision, mission and strategy of living a Godly life were discovered, discussed and delivered all between 5:30pm and 7:00pm every night, night after night. We were taught and we learned to faith there. The good our older siblings did encouraged us to do the same. The bad stuff they did, we surmised not to ever, ever do. Their lives and choices “faithed” us in many, many ways to love and follow our parents teaching but also to love the God they loved. Our older brothers and sisters of the faith in the Old Testament do the same for us today. Last week, Cain in his defiance and his unbelief while Able in his submission to God, both of them encourage us to believe. One from good. The other from ill. This week God wants us to grow our faith by watching and listening to Noah as his life “heralds the righteousness of God’s gracious favor” and condemns those who will not “tremble at the warnings of God’s Word”. Noah believes God’s Covenant promise. This covenant is a “death oath” that Noah knew God would have to fulfill so that he and his family would be saved. And this salvation was not “from” the flood judgement of God that was coming for mankind’s every, only, continual heart for and habits of evil and defiance to God but actually by way of the “salvation flotilla” called an ark that carried them “through” this very judgement. As Noah looked to the promise of God to save through this ark so we today look and believe the promise of God that God will save us through the work of Jesus’ Life, Death and Resurrection. Faith looks to Jesus! Faith unites us to Jesus so we are with Jesus in his condemnation for our sin as we are also united in the celebration of His ascension to heaven forever to be with Our Father.

**Themes:**

- Evil
- Christendom is Dead
- Ridiculed and Harassed
- Every, Only, Continually evil
- Comprehensive Alienation
- Pervasive – Universal
- Flood / Ark
- Judgement
- Noah – Herald of Righteousness
- Found Favor – Grace
- Covenant – Blood Oath
- Tear and Break – Design
- Warning – Condemn
- Wealth – Built / Inherited
- Rescue IN judgement
- Rescue through judgement
- We
  - Condemn our Sin
  - Herald Jesus our Savior
- How rich are you?

## 1. Launchers (10 min)

- What was a place of warnings for you growing up?
- What were some warnings you heard growing up of challenges yet unseen?
- What person's life choices condemned yours, in a positive way?

## 2. Worship God for His Brilliance in Warning Us to Ready for His Return by NOT telling us when but THAT it would happen. (10 min)

Matthew 24:36-51 – Read and worship. Read and Praise Him.

<sup>36</sup> “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

<sup>42</sup> “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

<sup>45</sup> “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup> It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. <sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>48</sup> But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ <sup>49</sup> and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. <sup>50</sup> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. <sup>51</sup> He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## 3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Introduction: Why can't we talk about evil? How does that cause it to flourish?

### A World of Trouble

- What is the problem God identified in this story?
- How do you experience the “every”, “only”, “continually” aspects of evil in this world?
- How has God faithfully been warning you of the coming judgement?
- As Christendom dies, are you ready to stand firm against the schemes of Evil?

**A Devastating Response – God Acts**

- What was God’s response and how hard is that for you to believe?
- Are you a “word of God” trembler like Noah or a “water judgement of God” trembler like his friends and neighbors?
- What is tearing or breaking in your life because you are shouldering a weight too great for you? Let’s stop and cry out to Jesus casting our burdens on Him.
- When did Holy Spirit warn you concerning events yet unseen – Heaven, Hell and the Coming Judgement? How did He do that?

**Divine Justice Two Outcomes**

- How is the Lord’s rescue of Noah and his people a picture of how we are saved through faith in Jesus?
- Have someone tell the story/testimony of Noah
  - Pre-Warning Years
  - Building the Ark Years
  - Days of the Flood
  - Back on Dry Land
- New Words – Grace, God’s Work and Covenant Blood Oath
  - Noah – Found Favor, Wealth God built, Noah inherits
  - God’s Blood Oath – No animal death can save you. I will die for YOU!
- Humble / Confidence
  - Condemn ourselves for OUR sin
  - Herald Jesus, our Savior
- How rich are you?

**4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)**

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His wisdom, power and goodness, especially in light of our sinful world. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His holiness to 1) work to stop evil *and* 2) His grace to save sinners.
2. How have you lived just as defiant of God’s authority, as people did in Noah’s day? Confess your pride and unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to work to cleanse you *and* to change your heart to love Him and His will.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for all that He has done to covenant with us in His grace to save us. Thank Him for giving us a place in His work (like a spot in the ark) so that what goes for Him, goes for us.
4. Who do you know that is slugging it out in a faithful labor of obedience in the face of much opposition? Pray for them, asking the Lord to encourage them and sustain them in their work, as He did Noah.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you the fruit of love and faithfulness. Pray for His work to sustain you in faith, endurance and passion – as He did for Noah – to carry out His assignments for your life.

5. Mission: Thank ALL the “Warn(ers) and Condemn(ers) God by His Grace has sent your way! (10 min)

You are who you are because God brought friends, families, and enemies into to your life to warn you of “the yet unseen” adventures ahead. Find them. Call them. Thank them. Bless them. All of them, those who you listened to and those you did not.

- Think through the decades of your life and list the Warners / Condemners.
- Thank God for them.
- If you can text them, call them, email them, do it. Let them know.
- Some did by their life choices for good and some for ill. Praise God for both.

6. Jesus From Others (10 min)

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?