

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

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**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**

**Text:** Hebrews 11:30; Joshua 5:13-15, 6:1-5, 15-21 (ESV) **Title:** By Faith: Jericho

**Teacher:** Tim Rice

Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. ... Joshua 5:13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" <sup>14</sup> And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" <sup>15</sup> And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. ... <sup>6:1</sup> Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. <sup>4</sup> Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him." ... <sup>15</sup> On the seventh day they rose early, at the dawn of day, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. <sup>16</sup> And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. <sup>17</sup> And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. <sup>18</sup> But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. <sup>19</sup> But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD." <sup>20</sup> So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. <sup>21</sup> Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

**The Storyline – God Owns Everything and It Matters To Him What We Do With His Stuff!**

God owns us. We are His. God owns everything. God has told us what to do with all of His creation including us, His/our bodies, His/our thoughts, His/our intentions, His/our desires, His/our attitudes, His/our emotions, His/our money, His/our friendships, His/our families and even His/our hopes. And He is our perfect judge who knows all things, remembers all things and is Holy and Wholly Good. So He is our perfect and best judge. And He is going to hold us accountable for all we are and have done.

**Ain't IT Grand!** Because our just and righteous Judge loves us and has made a way for us to be forgiven, righteous, adopted and welcomed not only into His family but into His inheritance. The squatter, thieves have become family owners and only by bowing to worship and raising our hands to trust the judge, the judgment and the mercy of the same Judge to save. Praising God. Yelling, "Make atonement for ME!" Knowing He has! Delighting in His love.

Themes

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|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| • Sovereign | • Mercy          | • Commander |
| • Judgment  | • Saving         | • Theophany |
| • Squatters | • Sinner / Child | • Seasoning |

## 1. Launchers: (10 min)

- Have you ever had to evict someone?
- Have you ever had someone take possession or ownership of your stuff and then try and get it back?

## 2. Worship: Command Me Lord! (10 min)

Our friend and church consultant Al Newel defines *Vision as a God-given picture of the future that you or your organization are called to fulfill*. Joshua meets with the commander of the Lord's Army and after worshipping Him says, "Command Me Lord!". So, we too have a God-given command as Trinity Presbyterian. Worship God as our Sovereign and then read Trinity's Vision and Mission and continue worship Him for picture He has given us and the calling He has commanded us to fulfill.

### Trinity's Vision and Mission

*A city transformed: Loved by God the Father, saved by Jesus His Son, empowered by His Spirit, called by God to reach our city with His love – Trinity, Lakeland.*

A Vision Statement is simply an attempt to express an organization's hope. When our church was planted in January of 1997 we did not want to start just one more congregation. We wanted to be useful to God in helping to reach our city for Christ. We knew that from the outset that the need was large enough in scope that it would require many congregations (even many denominations). And however small our efforts are in the scheme of things, we have always dreamed of seeing our entire city transformed by the love of God in Jesus.

Why do we want to see our city transformed? We believe that Jesus, as our Great God and Savior, is *necessary*. 4 out of 5 residents in our city have no meaningful connection to Him through a local church (and those statistics are slanted so that the younger you are the worse it gets). While it's possible to connect to Jesus apart from a local gathering of God's people, God's ordinary means for reaching and transforming people is by His church. This sad reality of people's disconnection from God and his church breaks our hearts. We know the experiences of guilt and we can see the wreckage that life without Jesus brings, so we want to do something about that.

While we believe this is a stark though realistic view of the situation, we also believe that our city is a wonderful place to work. God has given us good work to do, to pursue Truth and Life in a way that reflects well on Him and is good for anyone. God wants us to be a blessing for the good of those around us. This is what God's Word means to "seek the welfare of the city." (Jeremiah 29:7)

Why Trinity? Our work to transform our city flows from our beliefs about God's very nature revealed in the Bible. Most significant to us is that God is *loving*. We can see this especially in the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. As mysterious as this is, God's nature as Three-in-One at least means that He is (and always has been) *relational*! There has never been anything but love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Love is not merely something God *does*; loving is *how God has always been and always will be*!

*God is also powerfully active*! What fuels us is our hope in God's love and grace. The Bible is clear that our hope is not in anything that we have done or could do, but that our hope is in what God alone has done and will do. It is not about what we do; *it's all about Jesus and what He's done*. In His work to save sinful

people like us, God the Father Almighty set in motion an undeniable plan. God the Son came to this earth in Christ to accomplish this plan, and His dying words were, “It is finished!” And God the Spirit applies this work of Christ into the hearts of every last true believer – He literally works into us what Jesus did for us. Therefore, this Triune God is not only a communion of love who made us to love like Him, but He is also a God of great power who works to forgive and transform us so that we can love like him.

Believing this good news, this is one of the many reasons that we were eager to take the name Trinity Presbyterian Church. So as we say in our Vision Statement, “Loved by God the Father, saved by Jesus His Son, empowered by His Spirit,” we believe that God has called us extend His love to men, women and children throughout our city. *It is not our works that we’re proclaiming but His.* Our hope is in God’s work. And because we’re saved by God’s *grace* (and not by anything we’ve done) we’re humble. Yet also, because it is *God’s work* (and not ours) we’re *hopeful*. What’s He has done to redeem people like us, He could do for anyone, and what He does no one can reverse.

So this is our vision as His people. Our city transformed by God’s love and power – His grace – our hope.

### 3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

#### Introduction: How have you longed for just judgement?

#### Bow to God’s Sovereignty – He is in Command

- Why is it significant that God is not under anyone’s command (not for us or them)?
- How is He and has He continued to call Him to rally to Himself?
- Our sin – (Confess your sin and ask Him to give you eyes to see the wonder of His Judgment.
  - We demand God be on our side.
  - We demand God be against them.
  - We accuse Him of not caring.
- Our opportunity – Trust Him. Join Him in His Work.

#### Holy Judgment – His Ways are Not Our Ways

- Why is God just in this Holy War? Example: Going to the beach and coming back to squatters.
- Whose are you? Your Body? Your Mind?
- What do you have a right to do with what is yours? What does God have a right to do with what is His?

#### Mercy in the Midst of Judgment – God saves His Enemies

*Anyone may come in; everyone who does comes in as a former enemy. Jesus is amazing in His mercy: He reconciles rebels to be His ambassadors*

- Rahab the harlot is saved because she trusts in God.
- Will you rally to Him? If not, why?
- And if you trust Jesus is returning to put all things right, how does that help you?

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

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD, the Sovereign King of all reality. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that He is not allied with any man; rather He is worthy and calls for all people everywhere to rally to Him.
2. How have you lived more shaped in your beliefs by self-centeredness and myths than by truth and God's rule? Confess your pride and autonomy to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and to heal your thinking.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for His humble goodness even as He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth (see Matthew 28). Thank Him for silently bearing your guilt on the Cross while guaranteeing His victory over evil by His resurrection.
4. Who do you know that is threatened by God's judgment? Pray for them, asking the Lord to make known to them His love and worth, and that they would turn from their pride to rally to Jesus.
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of love and courage to be a faithful ambassador for Jesus. Pray for grace to represent His mercy well while you wait for His just judgment.

#### 5. Mission: Encouragement – Everybody. Everywhere. (10 min)

**A Christian is constantly honing their craft of celebrating each person they meet, each time they meet them, to help them be great .... all the days of the life.**

So how bout professional Christians? How do we pray for them? Encourage them? Celebrate them? Create a culture of greatness where they can have fun being them, transparent and candid, about who they are and how they feel?

Here is an article and 11 ways we can pray for our Renew Polk Churches and their ministry teams.

1. Trinity
2. Christ Community
3. Redeemer Lakeland
4. Redeemer WH
5. Strong To 99wer
6. Greater Hope

Renew Polk Churches that have closed

7. Redeemer SW – Winter Haven
8. Grace Community
9. Good Shepherd
10. Redeemer South – Winter Haven, never launched

## 11 Secrets Most Church Leaders Won't Tell You

[https://careynieuwhof.com/11-secrets-most-leaders-wont-tell-you/?utm\\_source=ActiveCampaign&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=11+secrets+most+church+leaders+won+t+tell+you&utm\\_campaign=4%2F30+11+secrets+%2B+CPW](https://careynieuwhof.com/11-secrets-most-leaders-wont-tell-you/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=11+secrets+most+church+leaders+won+t+tell+you&utm_campaign=4%2F30+11+secrets+%2B+CPW)

1. I'm Less Secure Than I Appear
2. Getting Close To God Isn't Easy
3. I'm Lonelier Than I Let On
4. It's Hard At Home Sometimes
5. The Criticism Hurts
6. I'm Afraid To Ask For What I Really Want
7. I've Thought About Leaving Even Though I'm Staying
8. My Secret Job Is Nothing Like This Job
9. I Feel Like I Don't Really Know What I'm Doing
10. People Seem to Believe In Me More Than I Believe In Myself Some Days
11. I Thought We Would Have Made More Progress By Now

## 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?