

CONNECTION GROUPS

We EMBODY LOVE with one another and with our neighbors.

We READ scripture as a community.

We PRAY together.

We are FORMED by the Holy Spirit as a community.

CONNECTION GROUP Goals

- Provide rich congregational care.
- Create stronger bonds of connection with one another.
- Connect deeper with the Triune God through prayerfully reflecting on scripture.
- Create a welcoming space for new participants and guests to join us on this faith journey.

Structure

Our Connection Groups will commit to meeting twice a month for 8 months. The first gathering will happen in September each year. The last official gathering will happen in April, although Connection Groups are welcome to meet during the other months. Each fall we will open up the groups and relaunch.

Because childcare is a challenge for many of our members, it may be helpful to organize one casual gathering around a meal and one gathering more focused on prayer and reflecting on scripture per month. This second gathering could be facilitated online if it is easier for group members. We will invite our leaders to find times most convenient for them to gather and then have people sign up based upon their own schedule.

Here are gathering ideas:

- Group A - 1st Sundays meet after church for a meal. 3rd Sundays have a Zoom meeting at 8:00 p.m. to pray, reflect on scripture, and connect more deeply.
- Group B - 2nd Sundays meet after church for a meal. 3rd Fridays meet in person at somebody's house to pray, reflect on scripture, and connect more deeply.

Roles

Connection Groups Coordinator

This person helps make sure our Connection Group leaders are supported and encouraged. Pastor Coby will serve in this role until we find a volunteer.

Connection Group Leaders

Connection Group Leaders are the primary caretakers of each group. The commitment is from September to April each year. These leaders provide administrative and spiritual guidance for each group. That includes communication (email or text), facilitating discussions, coordinating the gatherings, etc. I encourage each group to have two leaders so that the burden is shared.

Connection Group Outline Example

When you gather with your Connections Group to pray and reflect on scripture, here is a format you could use. That being said, I trust you to guide it in a way that feels authentic to your style.

1. Go around the “circle” and have people share their names and good news from the week or where they saw God at work in the week.
2. Read the [Gospel selection of the lectionary passage for the week](#). Ask people to listen to the Holy Spirit for a word or phrase that stands out to them from the text. Invite them to share the word or phrase. This is not a time to process the sermon. This is a time to listen to the Holy Spirit as you read the scripture in community.
 - a. What stood out to you from the text today?
 - b. What might the Holy Spirit be inviting you into in light of the text?
3. Begin prayer time by inviting all participants to silently reflect upon these questions.
 - a. Are you at peace with yourself?
 - b. Are you deepening communion with God?
 - c. Are you deepening community with others?
4. Close in prayer (you can invite people to share prayer requests if you’d like).
5. Invite a person to “send the group out” by reading the Great Commission over them or reading together.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Creating Safe Space in Connection Groups

1. We are here to actively listen to the Holy Spirit and to one another.
2. We do not share opinions unless directly asked to do so.
3. All things shared in the small group should remain in the small group.
4. Be fully present with one another.
5. Be gracious with yourself as you grow into this role. This may be new for people. The more we practice, the more meaningful it will become.