

Small Group Ministry

Spring 2023 – Week 5

Opening Prayer:

Common to all Small Groups

Lord, we thank you for today and for this time to gather as friends in faith. We pray for our church and our community. Guide us and help us to deepen friendships and seek to grow in faith together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening Discussion

1. How is everyone? Highs /lows from the week?
2. Do you plan to attend the May 1st Trinity Kids Family Service & Celebration? Have you considered inviting a friend? Don't forget to RSVP!

What is a Small Group?

- Faith Exercise - Intentionally deepening our relationship with God.
- Building Community - Intentionally deepening our relationship with others in faith.
- Common Interest – Intentionally celebrating common ground.

Group Parameters:

- In-person gatherings will adhere to most up-to-date health guidelines
- Gatherings will begin with Prayer & Scripture to unify this ministry across the groups.
- Members will remain courteous and ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to share.
- Thoughts and feelings shared are private and should remain confidential.
- You are encouraged to share news but cautioned about crossing into the territory of gossip.
- Grow in friendship, faith, and community with one another through this experience.

1 Peter 1:17-23

¹⁷ If you invoke as Father the one who judges impartially according to each person's work, live in fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸ You know that you were ransomed from the futile conduct inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰ He was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹ Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your trust and hope are in God. ²² Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual affection, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³ You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Luke 24:13-35 The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him." ²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Therefore welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God. – Romans 15:7

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

Thanksgiving for Recovery from Illness

- ¹ I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplications.
² Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
³ The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.
⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord,
“O Lord, I pray, save my life!”
- ¹² What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?
¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord;
¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.
¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.
¹⁷ I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the Lord.
¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord!



Discussion Questions:

Two of the benefits of centering our lives around scripture are as follows. On the one hand, it speaks to us personally through teaching, encouraging, reminding, instructing, and so on, so that we can walk in faith with confident hope in the midst of all things, because of what God has done and is doing. This leads us to the other hand. Scripture is a reminder of God’s faithfulness and how he has acted to save throughout history. Both the story of Israel (the Old Testament) and the story of Christianity (the New Testament) call us to look up from our own particular situation and see this larger story of God’s faithfulness.

We are currently called into a season of prayer (“50 days of faith”) in our congregation as we attempt to discern our way forward in our modern age. Turning to Psalm 116 we read about someone telling the congregation about an answer to prayer.

In what ways has God answered your prayers? What are some of your prayers? (Consider this point of interest: Scholars suggest another possible translation to verse 1 could be “I love, because the Lord has heard my prayer.” i.e., we are equipped to love (generally) because of our interaction with God who is the source of love)

1 Peter 1

Focussing on verse 22, “Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.” **What would a congregation look like that loved one another in this way?**

The community receiving this letter was a community on the margins of society. The early church receiving this letter from Peter (perhaps as early as 60-65 A.D./c.e.) was comprised of resident aliens who were recent converts to Christianity, and, Jewish Christians who found themselves on the outside of their old community. They are experiencing some form of hostility, either that of the Roman sanctioned persecution of Christians, or more localised oppression. As our society moves further away from the historic roots of faith, we too may find ourselves living like ‘resident aliens’ in our own community. **How might this letter strengthen resolve and clarify vision for modern Christian congregations?**

Luke

This story takes place on that first Easter Sunday. As the disciples encounter the stranger on the road they engage in conversation. They are broken hearted, despondent, and confused. Even though he instructs them in scripture they are kept from recognising him until he breaks the bread. The meal redefines the disciples’ understanding of Jesus. Jesus takes, blesses, breaks, and gives the bread to them (Luke 24:30), the same sequence of actions we recall from his final meal (22:19). The form of this story reflects the form of worship in the earliest development of the church and for most of the Christian church throughout the ages; it happens on a Sunday, they have gathered together, there is the interpreting of scripture, sharing of the eucharist, and finally, going and telling the story. How does gathering together in worship help us recognize the presence of Jesus Christ in our midst? How do our own assumptions and expectations of church/God/Jesus affect our ability to see with eyes of faith?

Musical Reflection: Matt Maher, Lord I Need You

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuvfMDhTyMA>

How can the group pray for you this week?

