

ST. PATRICK'S
ANGLICAN CHURCH

**COMMUNITY GROUP
GUIDEBOOK**

Why Community Groups?

Our mission is **making disciples through worship, community, formation and mission**. One of our central activities for discipling is Community Groups.

How do Community Groups help us make disciples?

One of the easiest errors to make about growing as a disciple is that it is essentially about learning more and more content. As important as content is, what's more important is Christ centered relationships.

There are two key reasons why Christ centered relationships are central. First, in discipling **more is caught than is taught**. We learn as we grow in friendship and model for one another how to live as disciples. We all need a place where we can practice imitating Christ as we imitate each other. (1 Corinthians 11:1). Over the long haul, who we relate to has more influence on our ability to live as fully devoted disciples than the amount of doctrine we have memorized.

The other reason Christ centered relationships are central is because **growing as a disciple is not a linear process**. There is no cookie cutter pattern the Holy Spirit follows as he works with each of us. Each journey is unique and personal. Yet, no one can make the journey alone. Everyone needs a place of love, support, connection and even accountability to grow as a disciple. We need a group of other disciples who come alongside and walk with us through the challenging seasons of spiritual growth.

This is why we have Community Groups.

How Are Community Groups Organized?

In the same way that there is not a one size fits all program for growing as a disciple, there is not a one size fits all way of organizing a Community Group. In our structure we allow Community Groups to take all kinds of shapes.

We imagine different types of groups that meet as a part of our community life. From monthly women's book clubs, to weekly community group bible studies, from men's and women's groups, to seasonal studies. **If you are interested in a community group, please contact Fr. Pete+ at peter@saintpatrickschurch.org.**

Community focused

Community Groups create a place where members can practice Christian community. A place to make friends, pray, support, serve and help each other grow in Christ. While Bible study can happen at a Community Group (and most of the time will), the focus isn't Christian education. The focus is practicing community.

Open Door

In general, we ask that Community Groups have an open door policy of welcoming new members at anytime. This won't apply to some groups because of their purpose and organization. However, because we want to help all new people who attend Saint Patrick's to find a group, we will work with Community Group Leaders to find a group new folks can join

Life Cycle Length

Community Groups can last as long as they need. If a group needs to last for 10 weeks great! At the same time if it needs to last three years that is also fine. In other words, groups can last as long as the natural life cycle of the group dictates.

Varied Rhythm and Location

Different groups can have different rhythms. Based on the need of the group, Community Groups can meet weekly, twice a month or even monthly. A Community Group can meet anywhere. One group might be a multi-generational family group that meets in a home, while another Community Group might be a women's discipleship huddle of three or four that meets once a week at Panera. Each group decides its own venue.

Are you interested in starting and leading a Community Group? Are you interested in joining a Community Group? If so, contact Fr. Pete and he talk with you about the steps involved in moving forward with a new Community Group.

Starting and Organizing a Community Group

How to Start a Community Group

A Community Group can start three different ways.

- Church leadership recognizes a need, finds a leader and organizes a Community Group.
- A group of Saint Pat's parishioners come together and organize a group.
- An individual wants to start and lead and group.

How to Organize a Community Group

We ask that Community Groups meet once monthly, twice monthly or weekly.

- How often does your community Group plan to meet?
 - Weekly
 - Twice Monthly
 - Once Monthly
- What day(s) will your Community Group meet?
- What time will your Community Group meet?

Community Groups exist to help us live out **The 4 Practices**.

- Worship: How will your Community Group practice praying together?
- Community: How will your Community Group use food to foster fellowship?
- Formation: What will your Community Group study together?
- Mission: How will your Community Group be focused on those outside the Church?

A number of roles need to be filled to organize a Community Group.

- **COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER**

The CG Leader gives oversight to the Community Group under the leadership of the rector. (See Ministry Description for more detail about this role.)

- **ADMINISTRATOR**

The CG Administrator makes sure the CG meeting calendar is planned out – especially organizing for food for each meeting. The CG Administrator responsible for:

- Organizing CG Meals – i.e, making sure the group knows who is bringing what to each meeting.
- Organizing who will host the CG meetings.
- Making a calendar of meetings or events if needed.
- Other items deemed helpful for organizing the life of the CG.

- **PRAYER COORDINATOR**

The CG Prayer Coordinator collects prayer requests from the CG and distributes them so that CG members can pray for each other between meetings.

- **MISSION COORDINATOR**

The CG Mission Coordinator makes sure the CG is giving attention to its defined mission focus.

- **HOST**

Serving as a Community Group Host is a revolving responsibility. In many cases, each household will take a turn hosting a Community Group.

Please note that it is not required that a different person fill each of the roles listed above. In some groups it might work best to fill each role with a different person while in other groups the same person will fill all five roles. Each Community Group can decide how to implement these roles based on its size and scope.

The Community Group Covenant

Saint Patrick's Mission is **making disciples through worship, community, formation and mission**. One of our central activities for discipling is Community Groups. Community Groups exist to help achieve this mission by providing a place for healthy Christian community designed to foster growth in Christian friendship and spiritual formation.

The Expectations of Our Community Group

Attendance

Joining a Community Group requires a commitment to attend each meeting. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! This commitment is the key to a healthy and fruitful Community Group.

Support

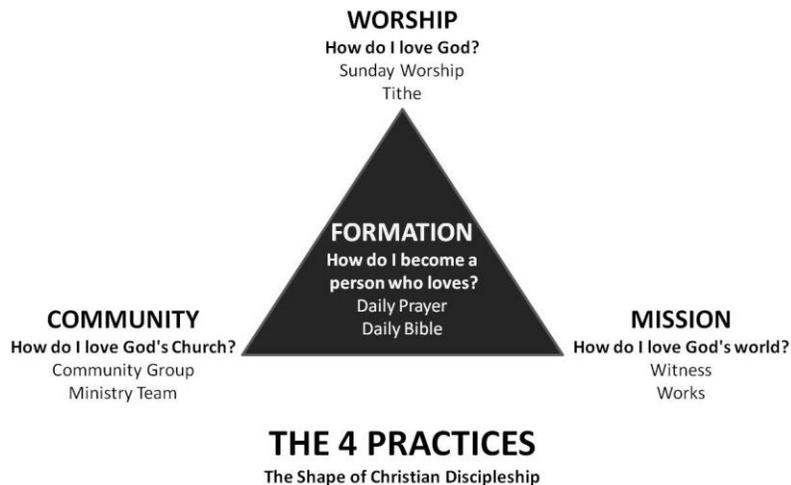
At each meeting, we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (see John 15:9–13). This care will take many forms, such as praying, listening, meeting needs, encouraging and even challenging one another as needed.

Five Marks of a Healthy Community Group

For our group to be healthy, we need to

- Focus on spiritual growth as a top priority (Romans 8:29);
- Accept one another in love just as Christ has accepted us (Romans 15:7);
- Take care of one another in love without crossing over the line into parenting or taking inappropriate responsibility for solving the problems of others (John 13:34);
- Treat one another with respect in both speech and action (Ephesians 4:25–5:2);
- Keep our commitments to the group and keeping confidences whenever requested (Psalm 15:1–2, 4b).

Community Groups are organized around The 4 Practices



The Activities of Our Community Group

Community Groups exist to help us live out **The 4 Practices**.

WORSHIP - Our Community Group will practice praying together by:

COMMUNITY - Our Community Group use food to foster fellowship by:

FORMATION – Our Community Group will study:

MISSION – Our Community Group will focus on those outside the Church by:

CHILDREN – We will involve and care for children in our Community Group by:

The Roles in Our Community Group

These roles need to be filled to organize a Community Group.

_____ will serve as our **COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER**

_____ will serve as our **ADMINISTRATOR**

_____ will serve as our **PRAYER COORDINATOR**

_____ will serve as our **MISSION COORDINATOR**

_____ will serve as our **HOST or**

- Hosting will rotate in our Community Group (The CG Administrator is responsible for organizing this schedule.)**

The Times for Our Community Group

Dates

The Group will meet on _____. First Meeting Date _____.

Time

Group meeting begins at _____. Group meeting ends at _____.

OUR COVENANT

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. As Community Group members, we covenant together to live out the purpose, values and structures of this Community Group. ALL COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS SIGN BELOW

(Please Give a Copy of your Community Group Covenant to Fr. Pete+)