

COMMUNITY CARE GROUP GUIDE

JANUARY 28, 2018

Welcome to the time set aside for Communities and Community Care Groups! This is the second of 9 Sunday opportunities to meet this winter and spring leading to the final date on May 6. Communities and Community Care Groups are, of course, encouraged not only to meet on the designated dates but to be creative and use any opportunity to fulfill the four purposes of Communities: fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship and mission. These 4 purposes were explored in an exercise now completed by all but 3 Communities. The results and subsequent questions are intended to provide fodder for further Community discussions.

(Communities 3 and 4 are meeting today whereas Community 13 is meeting on February 11.)

***There are **three options** for discussion presented in this material, preceded by some creative “connecting” questions for people to get comfortable with one another. Of course you are also welcome to go back to any material from previous weeks. The material is on the church website under the “Communities” tab. **Note:** At the end of the material you will find a few *suggestions* for possible Community activities.

Option 1 includes the results of and feedback for the Community Exercise, now sent to Communities 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 14. The pastoral elder and deacon of the Communities mentioned have material in their possession.

Option 2 is applicable only to some Communities since it involves a discussion about elder/deacon succession. The Nomination Committee is looking for nominees this month. Please take some time to talk about who is gifted, able and suited to fill the soon-to-be vacated offices and forward those names to Gwen Hamming (pastoral elder) or Raymond Mostert (deacon).

Option 3 includes questions about the current sermon series on the Gospel of Mark. Questions cover both the message from January 21 and from today, January 28.

Leaders are asked to go through these materials ahead of time and use them to prepare a discussion for the meeting times. Feel free to pick from all the available options.

(Note: At the moment it is not possible to have the latest sermons online)

Beginning Your Time Together

Spend some time with one or two of the “connecting exercises” (good for all ages). Here are some suggestions:

- Talk about your week. What did you do and what did you experience?
- Did you notice anything about the area of the city you live that was unusual? What sorts of conversations have you had with your neighbours recently?
- What book have you read lately and why would you or would you not recommend it?
- What movie did you see lately and what do you remember?

- What are the youth or children watching?
- Any sci-fi lovers in the group? Ask them what is it about sci-fi that captures their attention?
- Our God displays time and again, in scripture and in our lives, His awesome power; greater power than any other god we could follow. Take some time to go around your group and share a "WOW God" moment, whether a grand event or a quiet moment, that you experienced this past week.

Prayer: Whichever of the options you choose to discuss as a community, ask God to bless your conversation and grow you as a Community through it.

Option 1 - If your Community leaders have received feedback on and questions about the Community exercise, you may wish to work through them (one section at a time) over the next number of Community gatherings.

Prayer: As you think about your Community, take the opportunity to spend some time in prayer for your Community – the CCRC members and also your neighbours. Pray that the Lord would bind you together as a small “congregation”. Pray that the Lord would open doors of service in the broader community around you. Include people of all ages in your prayer time. Such prayer can be done early in your gathering or at the end of your time together. You will need to plan some time if a number of members of the group are going to be involved in prayer. Waiting until the very end of the meeting often cuts prayer time short because it encroaches upon eating time or departure time.

Option 2 - Elder/Deacon Nominations: If you have an elder or deacon who is ending their term of service this June, have a conversation about leadership. What is your community looking for in a leader? Have your elder and deacon talk about their service over their term. What are the joys and challenges of serving in this way? How have they been blessed? How have they grown in their faith? Who is gifted and suited to take over the position this summer? Have your group leader take note of the nominees and pass the information on to your elder or deacon.

FYI: The following pastoral elders and deacons are retiring this June:

Community 2: Deacon: Craig Hockaday

Community 8: Elder: Shannon Cook

Community 9: Deacon: Aaron DeRaadt

Community 13: Elder: Adom Postma; Deacon: Annette Nusselder

Community 14: Elder: Larry Lutgendorff

The following Administrative Elders are also retiring: Ian Berkhuizen, Jerry Postma

The following Youth Elder is retiring: Elaine Adema

Prayer: As you think about leadership in your Community, pray that the Lord would provide new elders and deacons. Give thanks for those who are serving and spend some time in prayer for the entire church leadership.

Option 3 - Reflections on the Gospel of Mark

Read: Mark 4:26-34 (January 21 Sermon)

1. If you have children from grade 4, 5, or 6 in your group ask them what they talked about in their sermon discussion either last week or this week. What sorts of topics and questions were raised?
2. At this point in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is teaching his disciples and followers through parables, which they find difficult to understand. What teachings of Scripture do you find difficult to understand? What do you do when you come across a part of Scripture that troubles you or confuses you? What resources or people do you turn to for help?
3. Why do you think Jesus taught using parables? Why didn't he just say things plainly? What do you think Jesus' parables have to say to us today?
4. Parables can have multiple and multifaceted meanings. When you read the two parables we looked at on January 21 (Mark 4:26-34), what do you interpret their meaning to be?
5. Pastor John connected these parables to the doctrine of Sabbath and trusting in the work of God in Christ. What are your practices around Sabbath? How does the discipline of practicing Sabbath help us trust in the work of God?
6. (Omit if you have already discussed this). What is the gospel? If someone were to ask you what the "good news" is that we are called upon to "believe", what would you say? Give it a minute. Have people write an answer or think about an answer and then go around the circle, children included, and share what you would say.
7. Reflect on the exercise in question 7. How difficult of an exercise was it? Did you notice common answers or trends? Did you notice anything missing from the answers given?
8. Allow people to share a story of when they told someone the "good news" or when they witnessed to others concerning the "hope" that lives in them.

Read: Mark 6: 1- 30 (January 28 sermon)

1. As you read the story of the death of John the Baptist, what strikes you? What is your reaction to the story as recorded by Mark?
2. Why do you think Mark included the story of the death of John the Baptist where he did in his narrative? Scan the narrative around the story and take note of what you find.
3. What do you suppose the sending out of the 12 (verses 7-12) has to do with the death of John? Is there any connection?
4. How would you tell such a story, as the death of John, to children? Do you have a children's Bible available? Read the story from the children's Bible and see how it handles the death of John.
5. What does the story of the death of John have to do with the gospel? What does it tell us about Jesus?
6. John was a martyr for the faith. Do you know any martyr stories? If you have the equipment look up some websites or films about martyrdom. (Voice of the Martyrs –

vomcanada.com is one source) Talk about what you find. Pray for the persecuted church. How would you explain to children that some people die for the faith?

Prayer: For your closing prayer time, it's always a good idea to go around the circle and let everyone who is willing share what is on their hearts. Be sure to include children as well. Let everyone who wants to pray have a chance to pray. If you want, you may close your time together by singing a song or reciting the Lord's Prayer together.

Intergenerational "Community" Activity/Service Suggestions (1-8):

- 1. Donating blood together.** Yes, this is possible and not a strange idea. The KW Blood Donor Clinic has been in touch with the church and it is not unheard of that groups make an appointment to go together to donate blood. It usually takes an hour to donate blood and the group would be together throughout the event. (**Note:** there are various restrictions on who can give blood and so before you actually take this on as a project be sure to check out the eligibility requirements for all those 17 years of age and older. See - blood.ca/en/blood/eligibility-quiz

If a group is eligible, here is how a group donation works:

- A date/time that works for your Community or CCG to come in would be worked out with the Blood Clinic.
- The Clinic would block of a number of spots just for your group so that the general public could not book in to them
- Sign-ups would organized 2/3 days before donation
- The Clinic will even arrange free taxis (if wanted) to pick you up at the appointed times. So you could meet at the church and go from there – (a true group outing) or you could simply meet at the Clinic. All that is needed is a valid ID.

The KW Clinic is located at 94 Bridgeport Rd E, Waterloo and the hours are as follows:
Monday & Thursday 3:00pm-7:00pm
Tuesday & Wednesday 11:00am-7:00pm
Friday & Saturday 8:00am-12:00pm

For more information contact Tara Gutscher (Regional Manager) at 519-884-5646 (x4883)

- 2. Consider a Progressive Dinner.** Community 8 did this on October 20, 2017. The concept included 4 houses, walking the neighbourhood, prayer for the city, learning something about the history of the area and eating as they went.
Why do this? This is what their invitation said: *"To get to know our city a bit better; to get to know each other in a different way; to create an event that is community-rooted, low-commitment on the hosts, and a fun way to have dinner together!"*
How does this dinner happen? Here is what the invitation said: *"Each of the 4 participating homes will offer one course of our 4-course dinner: a quick snack and hot beverage, an appetizer, a main course of soup and buns, and dessert. At each participating home, in addition to eating together, we'll also learn a little about Kitchener history and each other's homes, and pray*

together for an aspect of our city (reading a short pre-written prayer provided in a handout at the starting house.)” This is a wonderful intergenerational event. For more information on how it all worked contact elder Shannon Cook in Community 8.

3. **Men’s or Women’s breakfasts.** A number of Communities have pulled people together in a local restaurant for a breakfast. The women have tended to linger longer than the men...at least in Community 9. There on a given Saturday morning the men had breakfast at 8 and were home shortly after 9 whereas on another given Saturday morning, the women were gone for more than 2 hours. 😊 This is a good intergenerational event. Everyone needs breakfast and it is a casual way to meet others. If the social time sort of tends to fail, why not consider a topic for discussion. For example, the Fall 2015 issue of the Shalem Digest asked the question: **What's Going On With Men Today?** Mark Vander Vennen wrote: *“For the last couple of years, in conversations with men, I have found occasion to say, “I think men are in trouble today.” To my amazement, every man I have trotted out this statement to has immediately agreed.”* Link: shalemnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ShalemDigest-Fall-2015-Men.pdf Perhaps this is a worthwhile topic for a breakfast meeting...
4. **Invite someone on the list in your Community whom you don’t know very well, for coffee or for a meal.**
5. **Write notes of encouragement to people in your Community whether you know them well or not at all.**
6. **Consider a “Community” Worship Service.** Over the last couple of years you have heard our Communities being referred to as “small congregations” within the larger congregation. What would it look like if a Community were to gather for a worship service on a given Sunday in their own geographic area rather than at Community CRC?
7. **Consider a neighbourhood prayer walk.** Start with those immediately around you. Draw a map and put the names of your neighbours on the map and the houses in which they live. Talk with God about your neighbours and neighbourhood. Walk through your neighbourhood and pray for the houses you pass. This is also something that you can do as a Community Care Group or as a whole Community.
8. **Explore programs by promoted by civil government to encourage neighbourhood involvement.** For example the City of Kitchener has the “#lovemyhood” program. The link: www.kitchener.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/CSD_NHS_lovemyhood_guide-to-great-neighbourhoods.pdf
9. Do you or does your group have any other opportunities or ideas that you wish to share with the other Communities? Please pass them along to Pastor Carel.