

## Coming This Fall of 2019...

### PCJH Small Group Ministry: What You Need to Know

**Our Vision:** To see PCJH develop a culture of thriving small groups within our church.

**Our Mission:** To engage people in small groups through transformational relationships, study, prayer and service.

#### What is a Small Group?

*Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:42*

The early church began with groups of people who worshipped together as a community of faith in large group settings (temple courts) and then gathered in small groups (house to house) for more teaching, fellowship, and witness and service. Within the church, there are a wide variety of different small groups: dinner/fellowship groups, ministry/service groups, recreational groups, even bible study groups. But our hope is to move from being a church **with** small groups to a church **of** small groups. That means we want every person to be in a small group that is intentionally giving a balanced time and effort to praying together, studying God's word, becoming a community, and outpouring ourselves to others. It's a place where we can connect with each other on a more personal basis, grow in our faith, go deeper together in support and care, and experience a real transformation in our spiritual walk with Christ.

#### Why Small Groups?

- 1) The Bible is an adventure – a journey of discovery. People today are searching for truth and support and most of all, for Jesus Christ. Small groups are people journeying together, following Christ. In the small group, we open the Word and see how it can form our lives. We talk and share about the joys and challenges of our faith. Together, we discover God's desire for our lives. *"If you obey my teachings, you are really my disciples, you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."* John 8:31
- 2) Small groups help us become faithful disciples: set free by the love of Christ and who seek to share his love with others. As Dallas Willard said, *"Small groups meet some of the most important needs we have: need for spiritual growth, friendship, support, encouragement, strength in time of trial, need to give and receive love, and to serve others."*
- 3) Jesus Used Small Groups
  - To develop leadership among his followers.
  - To strengthen the community of faith which became the church.
  - Help the disciples to really grow in their relationship with Him.
  - To reach out to others who needed to know God's love.

- 4) They remind us that the Christian life is not a solitary life but one that is made in the company of the committed. (Acts 2:41-42:46-47a.) Notice that the early NT writings were not written to individuals but to small groups. There is a relationship between large and small group gatherings. We are created for community.
- 5) People joining with other people help right the injustices and the problems we face. It begins in a small group and grows from there. The nature of the church is a “people” rather than a “place”. As a people, we become a dynamic resource to fulfill the calling of the church to “go into the world” and “make disciples”.
- 6) One of our foundational theological principles is the “priesthood of all believers”. This means we all have been called and gifted for the body of Christ, “until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...” Eph. 4:13. The small group enables us to better understand difficult scripture, learn new values, inspire spiritual application, and encourage sacrificial service.

### **How Will These Small Groups Work?**

- 1) Facilitator-Led. Each group will have a facilitator/leader who will give guidance and initiative to help with the group. The facilitators/leaders are **not** “teachers” or “experts on the Bible”. They are fellow “sojourners.” The main qualification for a leader is that they are willing to be a responsible servant of the group in order to help it accomplish its goals. They are “helpers” who care about the members of the group to become positively involved with the scripture and with the other group members. A good leader is someone with a positive Christian faith, a liking for other people, a servant heart and a desire to explore the scripture with others.
- 2) Facilitator/Leader-Equipped. The small group ministry team is devoted to care and equip all interested leaders/facilitators with extra training sessions as well as being mentors and partners to the leaders.

If interested in serving as a leader/facilitator, please contact Rev. Tamara Mitchell, [tmitchell@pcjh.org](mailto:tmitchell@pcjh.org).

### **Nuts and Bolts**

- 1) Each small group commits to meet weekly for 8 weeks.
- 2) The content of the group will be sermon based – a curriculum will be provided.
- 3) Groups may be made up of any kind of participants – women, men, couples, singles, intergenerational, etc. It depends on the leader’s preference. It doesn’t matter if you are a member of the church or not to be in a group.
- 4) Day of the week, time, child care and other details will be decided upon the leader.
- 5) They will be open groups, up to no more than 10 people in a group.
- 6) Look for sign-ups to begin in September!

More details to come in the near future! Join us in praying for PCJH!