



It will be our sincerest hope that all small group experiences affiliated with St. Paul's UMC strive to be Christ-centered in all ways. The following values should help provide further understanding and clarity as loving, compassionate and purposeful connections are made.

CORE VALUES

CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

As relational beings, we affirm that authentic community involves sharing life together and connecting on many levels with others in our group.

Growth best occurs within the context of Christ-centered community and relationships that exemplify the character of Jesus Christ. This small group will work to emulate the example of Christ in all ways with all people. In doing so, we trust that we will grow to intimately know others, empathize with others, share stories, and ultimately find the trust and vulnerability needed for Discipleship to occur.

PRIORITIZE GROWTH

We are invited to grow in Grace by the "Means of Grace" of which there are many. These opportunities are meant to be employed both individually and communally. As a group we commit ourselves to prioritizing our growth as disciples of Jesus Christ and understand that this group exists to aid in that most important journey.

HOLY SPIRIT-LED

Processes and strategies will be ineffective unless we invite and embrace the presence and power of The Holy Spirit. In order to experience community and growth, the living, beathing movement of the Holy Spirit must be the centerpiece of our group experiences.

SHARED MINISTRY

Groups are in themselves a ministry: both internally and externally, inward and outward. Each member of the group is looking for ways to minister to the other members of the group, helping to meet each other's needs while also understanding that we are to minister to all people in all places.

This group celebrates and affirms this call to be the hands and feet of Jesus to one another, their community, nation and world.

MULTIPLICATION

All groups should also be prayerfully considering a way to extend the ministry of their Small Group through Multiplication. Multiplication means eventually forming two or more groups so that others who are not yet in Small Groups can continue to find places to connect with a Small Group.

This group, while having a strong sense of community and intimacy, will strive to expand, include and multiply so that others may be welcomed into new expressions of Christ-centered community.

COMPASSIONATE CARE

Small groups will become a primary channel for shepherding within our church. Group leadership is shared and thus all members have responsibility to one another to provide compassionate, loving care. Groups will work together to establish relationships that could be considered "extended family".

COVENANT

Healthy small groups have healthy boundaries and are essential for healthy small groups. The use of a covenant cannot be stressed enough as a means of developing healthy, fruitful, Christ-centered small groups. Small-group covenants should provide beneficial expectations and guardrails for participants.

Covenants should include the purpose of the group, and can list specific tasks and roles for participants, expectations for attendance and confidentiality. These covenants should be reevaluated on a regular basis. Reviewing and/or renewing covenants can assist the group in having more open and candid conversations about whether the group is meeting participants' needs or if a switch in groups is needed to accommodate a change in life situation.

Resources to aid in covenant creation;

[Touchstones for courageous conversations](#)

[Respectful Communication Guidelines](#)

[Ten Guidelines for Dialogue](#)