

Small Group Ministry at St. Michael's

Since March 2020, we have been gathering in a way we never anticipated: through two-dimensional screens. While the isolation of the pandemic has undoubtedly been difficult, we've also seen immense blessings in growing relationships at St. Michael's via Zoom. Being able to gather virtually at home has brought an intimacy and immediacy to the way we relate to each other, and we have had deeper and richer conversations as a result. In 2021, we will bring that blessing to the way we grow as Christians, by beginning a Small Group ministry at St. Michael's.

This is a new way of approaching Adult Formation, so here are answers to some "Frequently Asked Questions" about small groups.

So, what is a small group?

An intentional small group is a gathering of people, usually 8-12, who come together for fellowship, study, and prayer, and commit to building transformative relationships and caring for each other's spiritual development during their time together. At St. Michael's, our small groups will meet weekly for a limited amount of time (16 weeks), via Zoom. This model of meeting at home is inspired by the gatherings of the early church as mentioned in Acts 2:46: "Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread **at home** and ate their food with glad and generous hearts."

Do small groups replace Sunday morning worship?

Absolutely not. Just as early followers of Jesus attended temple worship and then met in homes, small groups enhance worship by building deeper relationships between parishioners. When you're part of a small group and also attend congregational worship, you might feel that, instead of sitting next to (or looking on-screen at) people you know only casually, you are interacting with people who feel like spiritual family. Many small group members attend Sunday morning more often. They feel accountable to others and look forward to sharing with people they now care about. Intentional small groups help create a sense of belonging – something we all long for.

Why does it matter for my life?

Part of living the Way of Love is to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, both of which are an essential part of any healthy intentional small group. Following the model of Jesus himself, all Christians should be living out their faith as individuals, as members of local churches, and within intentional small group communities. We believe that when we take the time to establish and attend intentional small groups, we are better able to grow as the Jesus Movement: a community of people who follow the loving, liberating, life-giving way of Jesus – a way that has the power to change each of our lives and to change this world.

When will St. Michael's Small Groups meet?

We will be offering Small Groups at a variety of different meeting days and times, and we hope that this will accommodate as many people's schedules as possible. Small Group meetings are approximately one hour long. For this round of Small Groups, gatherings begin the week of January 24 and conclude the week of May 23, with a break during Holy Week/Easter.

How do I sign up?

Make sure you're subscribed to [St. Michael's weekly "Looking Ahead" newsletter](#); right after Christmas, we'll be sending around a sign-up form which will contain all available group times.