

## **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES TO PROMOTE CONNECT GROUPS**

### **October Newsletter (introduction)**

In the early church and in Wesleyan tradition, small groups of believers gathered frequently to grow in faith, to learn, to pray and worship, to fellowship, and to serve others. Participants in these groups find themselves connecting more deeply to each other and getting encouragement from each other to grow in their faith. All of this strengthens faith and enriches our congregation's ability to live out our faith in our daily lives.

For these reasons, \_\_\_ UMC will soon be making "Connect Groups" a central part of the ministry here. Beginning in 2017, everyone will have the opportunity and be encouraged to join a group of their choice, with different opportunities being offered several times throughout the year. Each group will have a different focus – from Bible study, to prayer, to service projects, to life application, to fellowship – and will meet at a different time of the week or month.

Watch for more details to come. Questions, ideas, volunteers, and suggestions for group topics may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **November newsletter**

Connect Groups: Where Change Happens!

"It's where change happens."

That's the response I received when I asked the Divine Design group about the reasons they choose to be part of a small group study. What a powerful statement about the value of connecting with other believers through a small group! They recognize the difference it had made in their lives to connect with others as we try to apply our faith to everyday life.

In January, you will have the opportunity to choose from 13 different Connect Groups that may have that kind of impact on your life. Whether you are interested in fellowship, deeper spiritual growth, serving others, or applying the Bible to a certain aspect of your life, there will be something for you!

Skeptical? Not sure if anything good would come of it? Nathanael didn't think anything good could come from Nazareth either (John 1:46), but like Phillip, I encourage you to "Come and see!"

### **December Newsletter**

Acts 2 paints a picture of the early Christian church where members spent time together in prayer, in fellowship, in teaching about Jesus, and sharing things to meet one another's needs.

The Connect Groups ministry is designed to reflect that image, inviting each of us into closer relationships with each other and with God.

How will you begin the New Year? Will you deepen your spiritual growth? Draw closer to one another in fellowship? Reach out to others with mission projects? Or learn about how to apply scriptural truths to your daily life? No matter what you choose, Connect Groups has an option for you.

Watch for details and be ready to sign up in January!

## January Newsletter (Promotion Month)

What if one new thing in 2017 could dramatically impact your walk with God? Would you choose it?

For about 3 years, I have been praying for a way to implement a small group ministry in our church. Why? Because that's where lives are changed. Small groups connect us with one another. They give us a place to be authentic with other believers about our struggles, victories, and questions. They help us learn how to live out our faith in our daily lives, impacting our little circle around us – or even a bigger circle!

Now it's finally happening! January is sign-up month for our first Connect Groups session! Take a look at these brief descriptions and think about where you want to Connect. More details are available on the church website and in a printed booklet when you attend worship.

- Financial Peace University – Dave Ramsey teaches us how to dump debt, spend wisely, save for the future, and give generously.
- Intentional Parenting – Good intentions in parenting only go so far. Doing it well requires a plan.
- The Daniel Plan – Innovative approach to creating a healthy lifestyle rooted and framed by five life areas: faith, food, fitness, focus, and friends.
- Your Divine Design – When we know our primary spiritual gift and begin to operate in it, we have fulfillment, energy, purpose, and discernment. That is an exciting way to live!
- Improving with Age: God's Plan for Getting Older and Better – Celebrate the uniqueness of experience, ideas, and energy that aging believers bring to ministry. Embrace your present life stage and use your wisdom and gifts for God's glory.
- Bookworms – Reading and discussing books that help us to expand understanding and participation in God's mission, increase sensitivity to all human beings, and engage in critical thinking about today's issues.
- Agape Circle – Learn, discuss, and apply what the Bible teaches about God's strength and how we access it in our daily lives.
- Joy-Us Circle – Meet monthly to grow in faith and encourage one another.
- Mary Circle – Study and fellowship in Garnette Gardens meeting room.
- Mission Makers – Gather to make sensory blankets for dementia patients in our community.
- Potluck Fellowship Group – Gather to enjoy fellowship around the table in each other's homes, getting more closely connected through the sharing of this time together.
- Mission Minded – Take on several hands-on mission projects and put your faith into action.

Our vision? That EACH OF YOU finds at least one group to try. Will you accept the invitation? How will you connect?

## February newsletter (written and submitted in January before registration was complete)

Connect groups are up and running at \_\_\_\_\_ UMC, and we are excited about the response for this first session! As of this writing, there are 10 groups scheduled to run with more than 65 different participants, with an age span of nearly 80 years. And one week of registration to go!

If your group hasn't started yet, you'll be hearing from your leader so you have all of the details before it's time to begin.

Since this is the first session, your feedback is needed to help Connect Groups run smoothly and have the greatest possible impact. The committee welcomes your compliments, questions, and suggestions for improvement. If you have an idea for a future group topic or focus, please let us know that as well.

If you missed your chance to register, watch for information in May about our summer session, which will be a lighter, more compact session running through June and the first part of July.