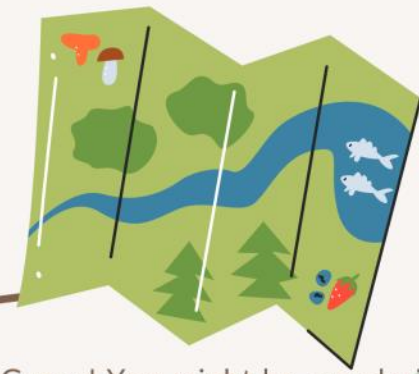


Grove Groups Participant Manual—Fall 2024



EXPLORE WHERE YOU ARE THE GROVE PATHWAY



However you arrived, we're glad you found your way to The Grove! You might be wondering what's next now that you're here. How might God grow goodness in and through you? Each person is unique, but we want everyone who calls The Grove their church to have some shared experiences — much like visiting a state park.

WELCOME VISITING THE GROVE

Like a park entrance, we want you to know you are valued from the start. Check us out on the web or social media. Watch us online. Worship in-person where you will feel at home.



CONNECT GETTING TO KNOW THE GROVE

Like a visitor center, explore and learn about The Grove through: Hello and Welcome Lunches, First Connections Group, and Partnership Gatherings.

BELONG JOIN A GROVE GROUP

Like finding a campsite into which you can settle, Grove Groups are where you'll grow meaningful relationships by learning with, caring for, and serving alongside others.



FORM EXPLORING DEEPER

Like exploring a park, beliefs are formed and reformed in community. Study groups are available throughout the year to explore our beliefs and values that matter most.

PARTNER PASSHOLDER

Like a state park passholder, we hope you come to love The Grove so much that you commit to supporting it with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.



Contacts

To arrange Childcare: Colleen Kelly	kids@thegrovemn.church
To schedule a meeting space in church: Debbie Crank	buildinguse@thegrovemn.church
Pastor Kelly (Staff Liaison)	651-789-0376
Christy Schally (Staff Liaison)	651-789-1376
Carolyn Winslow (Staff Liaison)	651-789-1462
Pastor Dan (Staff Liaison)	651-789-0189

Expanding our Circle of Inclusion

A few groups established groups from last year will be adding new people as we live our value of welcoming others. Thanks for offering your Grove hospitality.

- Take time to introduce yourselves as if everyone is new to the group.
- If your group has norms that aren't list on the next page, make sure you talk about those too.
- When referencing events or activities from previous years, make sure you explain.
- Sometimes formed groups make jokes about past experiences. Be sure to let the new people in on those jokes.
- Make a special effort to touch base with the newer folks as they are trying to learn the patterns.

WHY GROVE GROUPS?

Grove Groups are the primary way we establish intentional community, connection, and belonging at The Grove. Groups launch each October and run through August.



Grove Group Facilitator

Keeps the group engaged by convening the group, handling details, facilitating discussions, and communicating with the staff liaison.



Care Coordinator

A volunteer in the group who is responsible for raising up life events of participants (birthdays, anniversaries, special events) and encourages care between members.



Staff Liaison

The program staff person assigned to the group. Liaisons are responsible for supporting leaders, dropping in on monthly gatherings periodically, and providing engage pages for monthly gatherings.

DISCUSSION



Group discussions range from about 40-90 minutes with the hopes of fostering belonging, formation, and care.

Gathering Schedule

Most groups meet once or twice a month. We suggest actually meeting weekly three times right at the start before moving into your normal schedule. This is the best way to build the relationships which will enhance participation. During your first gathering, your facilitator will help the group create the schedule.

Group Norms

- A. Everyone should feel safe.
- B. Members are willing to be vulnerable with each other to their comfort level.
- C. We abide by confidentiality, unless permission is granted for sharing.
- D. Everyone in the group talks and listens in roughly equal measure, keeping contributions short.
- E. Members communicate directly with one another, not just with the person leading the discussion.
- F. Respect each other's differences: recognize people have different comfort levels with talking in a group, assume good intentions of group members, and only speak positively about each other.
- G. Be willing to **share leadership** so the facilitator isn't the only one in charge.
- H. Members should feel free to connect outside of group time.

Your FIRST meeting is about logistics...

SOME OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO ACCOMPLISH:

- Group Norms.
- Figure out your meeting schedule.
- Talk about **shared leadership**: how do you want to handle care coordinator? Who is interested in planning/leading upcoming discussions? Is anyone willing to lead the service projects (no need to decide on projects now, but someone could volunteer to lead that when the time is right.)?

After that...

After the first meeting, the group is responsible for setting the agenda. A discussion guide, based on the worship series, will be offered every 4-6 weeks, which can easily be used to guide discussion.

How do you get your first meeting scheduled?

Your facilitator will reach out to you in the next couple of days to work on getting the first one scheduled. From there, you will pick a rotation.

CARE



To encourage the building of personal connections and provide support for one another, the group will nurture care.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we aspire to love as Christ loves, caring for one another and supporting one another. These caring relationships naturally grow as participants get to know one another, hear one another's stories and share life's highs and lows.

Care Coordinator Role/Roles

- Some groups have a designated volunteer from the group who will be the designated care coordinator, raising up life events of the participants (birthdays, anniversaries, other life events), and encouraging care between members.
- Other groups have several people share the roles or rotate it throughout the group.

And yet another word about shared leadership....

If you think you could fill this role, please let your facilitator know. Do you have a heart for celebrating people? Do you like to find ways to build relationships? This might be for you.

Connected-Care Activity Ideas

To encourage the building of personal connections, groups are encouraged to participate in some kind of Connected-Care Activity during the year.

Eat dinner together: Prepare a potluck. Each person takes a minute or two to share what they brought and any special significance attached to their dishes.

Compile a group playlist: Each person suggests 2 songs for a group playlist. Get together and listen to snippets from the songs. Might work best if Care Coordinator has cued up the songs in advance.

Talent Show: Each person has 5 minutes to demonstrate some talent, unique ability, or special hobby. Play piano, read a poem, show off your seashell collection, wiggle your ears, sing, dance, hula hoop, perform a comedy routine, whatever! Part of the time can be allowed for explanation of their "talent" (history, interesting factoids, etc).

Picture your Life: Each member brings a significant picture and shares why it represents a memorable time in their life.

Cookie "Exchange": Each person bakes their favorite cookies for sharing. Participants will share any stories of the history of their cookie(s) and/or why it's one of their favorites.

SERVICE



To Grow Goodness by cultivating the common good, groups will participate in one or more service opportunities from October to August.

Guidance

- Below is a list of service opportunities, but also look for possibilities in the newsletter.
- Groups might research and participate in something together outside the church.
- Groups will choose when and what they do.
- Groups are encouraged to join with another groups for these service activities.
- When a group participates, The Grove would love to post pictures on facebook for others to see.
- Groups with families with children are encouraged to try to include kids when feasible.

Another word about shared leadership...

Some of you are really passionate about service. Your facilitators have been told that they should hand over leadership of service to someone else who would like to coordinate the opportunities.

Service Ideas

Cover Coffee Time Shifts for a Sunday: We all love Coffee Time! It happens because of devoted volunteers. Your group could give them a rest by covering the coffee time shifts for a Sunday. Don't worry, you'll get good instructions to make coffee, set out cookies, and clean up. tsu.me/coffeevolunteer or Sharon Dimberg (quirkyquilting@comcast.net)

Deliver Christmas or Spring Plants: During Advent and Lent we deliver plants to folks who need a little extra cheer. Carolyn Winslow (caring@thegrovern.church)

Open Cupboard: Work a shift together at Open Cupboard. The Grove has an established monthly shift on the 3rd Thursday, 9:15-11:30. Jean Roemer (jean.roemer@comcast.net).

Community Connect Helpers: Look for upcoming information about Community Christmas and Easter Hullabaloo to be a helpers. Kelly Lamon (klamon@thegrovern.church)

Write Notes or Cards: Some Grove folks are more isolated. A note from their church can make a big difference. Carolyn Winslow (caring@thegrovern.church) or Jean Roemer (jean.roemer@comcast.net).

March is Food Insecurity Month: Donations can be dropped off at The Grove in the Plaza area. Donated items will be donated to a local food shelf. Did you know you can donate any time though?

Skoolie: The Grove provides free food and activities at some of the Skoolie Family Fun Nights at Royal Oaks and Armstrong Elementary schools during the summer. Delores Hedrick (deloreshedrick@comcast.net)

Coordinate donations to the Youth Connections Drop-In Center in Cottage Grove: Bring joy & necessities to youth with unstable housing in Cottage Grove area. www.theconnectcenter.org

Emma Norton: Go to their website to see great service opportunities. As a United Methodist Organization we support their great work. www.emmanorton.org