

LIFE IN GOSPEL COMMUNITY



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WHY AND HOW WE DO GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

In many ways, Summerleas is very similar to other contemporary, evangelical Churches. We hold weekly Sunday gatherings where the preaching of God's word is central; we seek to engage in God's great mission; and we hold to reformed, evangelical beliefs.¹ One of the big things that makes us distinctive, however, is the way we structure church life around *Gospel Communities* (GCs).

Our commitment to GCs flows from two theological focal points that are right at the core of our convictions about Church.² These are:

1. The gospel³ of the Lord Jesus Christ
2. The community of God's people

WE ARE GOSPEL CENTRED BECAUSE...

It is through faith in the gospel that we enter a relationship with Jesus Christ and become God's children (Romans 1:16; 10:13-14; John 1:12-13).

The gospel is our model for life (Philippians 2:4-11) and it sustains and grows us in godliness (Titus 2:11-12)

It is through the gospel that we are brought together into a community of Christ-like love (Ephesians 3:6-10; John 13:34-35)

The gospel entrusts us with the mission to go out and make disciples for Christ this side of his return (Matthew 28:18-20)

In summary, for us to be 'gospel centered' means that we *find our roots, sustenance, growth and mission in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

WE EMPHASISE COMMUNITY BECAUSE...

We are created to be in community with God and one another (Genesis 1:27-28; John 17:20-23). This is God's ultimate and eternal end for his people (Revelation 21:2-3). A Christian community is, therefore, a supremely valuable end in itself. Through its simply being, it brings great glory to God (Ephesians 3:10).

Christian community is an incredibly powerful mission tool and an ideal context for gospel proclamation (John 13:34-35; 17:23).

Community is the proper context for Christians to build one another up in Christ (Hebrews 10:24-25).

It is from these two foci that we derived our mission *to make disciples of Jesus through Gospel Communities.*

Of course, all of this is much easier said than done so to help us achieve this vision we structure our church around *Gospel Communities.*

¹ see Appendix 1

² see Appendix 2

³ Good News

1. WHAT ARE GCS?

GCS can be described as *Small communities that are Diverse, Organic, and Gospel centered.*

a) WHY ARE THEY SMALL?

- i. We are convinced that meaningful relationships are essential if we are to disciple one another affectively (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12). This is because we need to teach people not only by word, but also by example (1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7). Indeed, in our culture, many of the New Testament's 'one another' passages require the context of relationship if they are to be obeyed in a meaningful way (see Appendix 3).

We are also convinced that meaningful relationships are essential if our communities are to reach their full potential in terms of mission. Jesus tells us that our Gospel centered love for one another can be an incredible apologetic for the gospel itself (John 13:34-35; 17:23).

- ii. The challenge is that in our busy, western culture it is difficult for us to maintain meaningful relationships with a large number of people. There is certainly no way an individual could develop a deep relationship with every other member at Summerleas. This is why our GCS are small (typically 10 -15 adults and up to that many kids). When people commit to, and focus on a smaller community, real, relational progress can be both aspired to and made.

b) WHY ARE THEY DIVERSE?

- i. Unity in diversity is greatly celebrated in the Bible. Our God is diverse (one, yet Father Son and Holy Spirit), he has made a diverse creation, and he means for his people to be diverse (Revelation 7:9). Indeed, there is great strength and opportunity in our diversity (1 Corinthians 12:14-18).
- ii. It is in the context of diversity that God grows our godliness. Peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, bearing with one another, forgiveness, considering others better than yourself, etc. are not so difficult when you're primarily dealing with people like yourself. However, when very different people are in community together our godliness is constantly challenged and strengthened as we wrestle to love and care for one another (Colossians 3:11-14).
- iii. Finally, it is our unity in diversity that brings great glory to God in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:14-16; 3:6-10)

For these reasons, we try to make our GCS as diverse as possible in background, age, gender, life stage, and personality types.

c) WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'ORGANIC' AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

The word 'organic' is used to describe something that is characteristic of, pertains to, or is derived from a living organism. We use the word to describe GCS because our vision for them is that they would exist in, and be moulded by, the stuff of *real life*. We want them to be characterised and lived out in the real, messy lives of their members.

It can be all too easy to conduct ministry in a series of appointments, where people put on a mask and try to present a picture of their lives that has nothing to do with reality. As can be seen under 1.a.i, however,

people need to see the Christian faith modelled and *lived out*. This will require much more than a homogenous, neat, small group Bible study once a week.

We need to get people into our homes, show them how we parent our kids, set an example of how we mobilise our families to care for people, and how we engage our families in God's glorious mission. But most of all, we need to do all of this in an open, real, 'organic' way.

To achieve this, we encourage people to see GC as more than just a meeting. Of course, they do meet and they do study the Bible. But one member babysitting another's kids is also GC. Two members meeting to study the Bible and pray over breakfast is also GC. A couple of members going to the movies with some non-Christian friends is GC. Wherever you have the community interacting whether it be all of its members or just two, there you have a GC experience.

d) WHY ARE THEY GOSPEL CENTERED?

The reasons for our gospel focus are spelt out in the introduction (point a) so we won't re-hash them here. However, it is important that this focus is never assumed, and that it remain right at the fore front of the community's identity. This is because there will always be the temptation to embrace another focus (e.g. a social club or support group). When this happens, a community very quickly loses sight of the gospel Mission. In addition, instead of relating to other members in a Christ like way characterised by love, grace and self-sacrifice, people approach the group with a 'what's in it for me' attitude. Suddenly 'do I have friends' or 'am I being cared for the way I want' becomes the all-consuming concern.

Of course, if it's centered on the gospel a GC will be social and a place where people can expect to find fun and friends. It will also be a place where we are cared for practically and where people support one another. Most importantly, however, a gospel centered GC will be a place where people grow in Christ likeness and reach out to others with the life-saving message of Jesus Christ.

2. WHAT DO THEY DO?

Our aim is that most of the day-in-day-out business of church will take place in the context of our GCs. Whilst we still do some larger 'whole Church' events, most of our practical care, discipleship, and mission activity takes place in our GCs.

Ideally, we would like to see GC ministry happening in the cut and thrust of everyday life (see section 1.c), however, to keep us on track, GC members will also organise their diaries together and get together at least once a week to do various things. Figure 1 (p.6) shows part of a real Summerleas GC calendar (only the names have been changed). The calendar schedules a mixture of:

a) BIBLE STUDY

GC "Classics" look very much like a normal Church Bible study group. Normally aimed at adults (and older teens). Classics are generally held during the evening at someone's house and focus on reading the Bible and praying together.

For women who are in a stage of life that means they may find Classics hard to attend there is an option of attending the Summerleas Women's Bible Study. This is held weekly on Tuesday mornings. Child Care is provided for pre-school aged children. This is not to replace involvement in a GC, however it can provide women with some Bible Study if they cannot attend classics, or some extra Bible Study for those who would like it. For more information about the Summerleas Women's Bible Study talk to your GC Leaders.

b) MISSION

Our 'organic' emphasis (see point 1.c above) means we seek to engage in mission in all kinds of informal ways as we love, serve and spend time with non-Christians and introduce them to other GC members.

We also encourage GCs to schedule whole GC Mission events (on this calendar the GC attends and serves at a local international Student Ministry F.O.C.U.S.) as well as actively engaging with the Missionaries that Summerleas Church Supports. GCs approach this in different ways; it may include writing letters to them, skype calls, sending presents etc. However, we do hope that each GC will be involved in prayer for the Missionaries. For more information about the Missionaries that Summerleas Church supports contact the Mission Purpose Team Leader.

In addition, GC's have regular Whole Family Meals (WFM). These are regular, family friendly meals that provide an easy, social, front door to the GC. For more information on how we do mission and evangelism, please see the *How we do Mission and Discipleship* section of this document (p.9).

c) SERVICE

The hope is that everyone in a GC will be serving at Summerleas in some way. Whether that be set up/clean up, kids ministries, morning tea etc. GC's can help facilitate this by encouraging their members to be involved in the different ministry teams as well as keeping an eye out for people in their GC who may be able to step up and serve more or in a new way.

d) YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Whole family learning (WFL) is a time that is focused particularly on ministering to the young people in the GC. For more info. on these, please see the *How we do Youth Ministry* section of this document (p.13).

Youth Ops (ages 9-13) and Youth Group (grades 8-12) on Sunday afternoons are also available for this age group. However, they are not meant to replace GC's for younger people. The hope is that they will also be active members in their GCs with youth group as a supplement, providing a specific time of learning and encouragement with others of a similar age.

e) SOCIAL

We also schedule time to simply hang out and build relationships. This calendar shows a date night (all of the adults in the GC going out to dinner), a weekend away together at Bruny Island, and a women's breakfast. Our Whole family meals also have a very social dimension.

These calendars should never be seen as the be all and end all of gospel Community life. On top of this GC members do all sorts of things together to care for one another, build each other up, and reach out with the gospel, however, the calendar gives a basic idea of what you might expect in your GC.

FIGURE 1 – EXAMPLE OF A GC CALENDAR

	Event	Location	Leader
17th July	Date Night - Adults only	Kingston Thai	
24th July	Classic	Doe	John
31st July	WFL	Smith	Bill
7th August	Classic	Jones	John
14th August	DNA	All different locations	
21st August	Classic	Doe	John
28th August	WFL	Smith	Betty
4th Sept	Classic	Jones	John
11th Sept	WFM	Williams	
12th Sept	F.O.C.U.S. @ UTAS		
13th Sept	DNA	All different locations	
18th Sept	Classic	Smith	John
19th-21st Sept	Bruny Getaway		
25th Sept	WFL	Doe	Mary
2nd October	Classic	Jones	John
9th October	WFM	Williams	
12th October	Women's Breakfast	TBA	
16th October	Classic	Smith	John
23rd October	DNA	All different locations	
30th October	Classic	Jones	John

3. HOW ARE GCS FORMED?

a) INITIAL FORMATION

As can be seen from point 1, our GCs need to be a certain size and maintain diversity. We also believe that each GC requires a strong leadership team (see point 5 below). Of equal concern is the myriad of personal issues various members face. We want people in communities that can best support them and help them grow. Whilst we'll never get this 100% right, we strive to get as close to the ideal as possible. To achieve this our community team are ultimately responsible for the formation of each GC and a lot of thought, energy, and consultation with other church members goes into their composition.

b) RECENT CONVERTS

If someone is converted through a GC, then we expect that they will carry on in that same GC until such a time as when change is required (see point 4 below).

c) TRANSFER GROWTH

If people transfer to Summerleas from another church, the community team will try to place them in the GC that (in no particular order):

- will benefit most in terms of the newcomers bringing diversity and leadership
- will benefit the newcomer most in terms of care and growth

4. CAN I EXPECT MY GC TO CHANGE?

The short answer is 'yes', but we don't make big changes for changes sake. Because we emphasise meaningful relationships we try to give them the time they need to develop. There are, however, two very important reasons why our GCs *do* change.

a) FOR THE SAKE OF MULTIPLICATION

Our big vision is *to grow gospel centered organic communities*. This is because the gospel entrusts us with a mission to multiply Jesus disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). Because of this, we hope and pray that our GCs will *grow*. When they grow, they eventually get too big to continue to function effectively as GCs (see section 1.a). At this point we look to plant a new GC. Of course, there's a sense in which leaving a close, established, community is always hard. However, we prefer to rejoice in the fact that God has raised up yet another community of light that is making disciples for Jesus. Eventually we would love to see our GCs multiply so much, that every suburb in Hobart has a GC in it!

b) TO MAINTAIN STRONG GCS

Sometimes GCs change for reasons outside of our control. People need to move away, leaders are unable to continue in their roles, extreme personal circumstances mean that people can no longer continue in their GC. If a situation arises where a GC is significantly depleted in numbers, lacking in leadership, or weakened in some other way, changes will be made to address the issues. The extent to which change takes place very much depends on the seriousness of the situation. It might be simply a matter of bringing in some leaders from another GC.

At the most extreme end it may be necessary to actually disband a GC in which case members will be warmly welcomed into another of our GCs.

Because change is bound to take place eventually, we encourage our people to be open to it, prepared for it, and excited about the possibilities that change can bring.

5. HOW ARE THEY LED?

We have learnt that GCs require strong leadership teams if they are to be effective. The broad range of ministries they are charged with, and the central role they play in our Church life, means that leading one is well beyond the scope of a single leader.

We are committed to each GC having a leadership team of two. A Maturity Leader (who oversees the Bible teaching and direction of the community) and a Community Leader (who oversees the communication, pastoral care, and logistics).

Whilst we start with two leaders we are constantly looking to raise up more. Our intention is that these leadership teams will grow so that when we plant new GCs we will have an abundance of leaders to plant with.

Each GC leadership team meets with our Maturity Purpose Leader at least once every two months. This provides accountability, keeps our GCs unified, and provides an opportunity for the team to step back and review how the community is going. If there are areas that the GC is struggling with, these will be discussed, worked on and plans will be made to address them.

6. CAN I ENJOY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHURCH MEMBERS OUTSIDE OF MY GC?

Of course! One of the great benefits of belonging to a GC type church is that whilst you get many of the small house-church benefits, you also have access to a much larger community of Christians.

We believe that our broader church community has the capacity to provide people with all kinds of relationships that will support and encourage them in the Christian life.

In addition to this there are times where two, more, or all of our GCs might co-operate together to run events, serve the broader community or care for people in ways that are beyond the scope of a single GC.

HOW WE DO MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

INTRODUCTION

At Summerleas, our Mission is *to make disciples for Jesus through Gospel Communities*.⁴ If this mission is to be realised, and our communities are to be truly *gospel centred*, then they must be communities that reach out *with* the gospel (evangelism) and help people increasingly centre their lives *on* the gospel (discipleship).

1. MISSION IN THE CONTEXT OF GOSPEL COMMUNITY

The New Testament sees both evangelism (the proclamation of the good news of Jesus) and ongoing follow up / discipleship ideally taking place in the context of a gospel centred community (John 17:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 2:8). As people witness and experience real lives transformed by Jesus, the truth of the gospel is confirmed to them, and they learn to live gospel shaped lives themselves.

For this reason, our GCs are right at the heart of our evangelistic strategy as they share life with those they reach out to.⁵

Ideally, we would love to see this happen in a very ‘every day’, natural way. God has placed many people in our lives with whom we can connect, love, have fun with, serve, and share GC. Our prayer is that as people do this many opportunities for gospel sharing will arise (1 Peter 3:15).

To help our GCs keep evangelism focussed and clear, we encourage them to take people through one of our recommended ‘Christianity Explained’ type courses (see 4. Evangelistic Resources). These courses may take place 1-to-1, in a small group from the GC, or as a whole GC.

Summerleas Church also organises whole church mission events throughout the year with the purpose of supplementing the mission that is happening in GC’s. These are:

- ‘*The Good Life Project*’. This takes place in a local café and runs for four evenings, once a week, for four weeks. The course is designed to present the gospel clearly to those who don’t know Jesus and is available for all of our GCs to make use of.
- Easter service: This evangelistic service happens on Easter Sunday and aims to clearly present the gospel in an all-ages appropriate way. This is a great opportunity for people to invite their friends to church to a) hear the gospel and b) be introduced to Summerleas Church
- Carols event: This is a family friendly carols event held on the closest Sunday to Christmas during the afternoon. This is a very relaxed and informal event to invite friends to in order to introduce them to Summerleas Church. It is also an effective way for the community around us to engage with Summerleas Church and to show our generosity to them by putting on this free event and having as many things free as possible.
- Christmas Day Service: Similar to the Easter service, this is an evangelistic service on Christmas day which clearly presents the gospel in an all-ages appropriate way. This is a great opportunity for people to invite their friends to church to a) hear the gospel and b) be introduced to Summerleas Church

These events are not to take away from mission happening in the GC’s, but are to supplement what is already happening and provide opportunities for people to invite their friends to things that will introduce them to Summerleas Church and the gospel.

⁴ Please read our *Core Values* (Appendix 2) for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues> and why they are key to our vision.

⁵ We are of course open to other methods of evangelism, and support our members if they feel that a particular person would benefit from a different approach. This document is not about enforcing hard and fast rules, but rather articulating how we primarily envisage evangelism taking place.

2. SUMMERLEAS MISSION PATHWAY (Figure 2, p.12)

Doing Evangelism in the context of GCs can at times seem vague and haphazard. Because of this, our 'mission pathway' has been designed to bring clarity to the primary way we envisage evangelism taking place.

Please note that this is a *broad strategy*, it is not necessarily the only right way that people have or will become Christians at Summerleas. It is rather an attempt to bring clarity and empower both leaders and church members by giving them concrete steps to follow in seeking to bring the gospel to their friends and families. (An explanation of Figure 2 – Evangelism Pathway can be found in Appendix 6).

3. DISCIPLESHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF GOSPEL COMMUNITY

We believe that people need to experience Christianity lived out by mature Christians in community in order to become strong, established Christians themselves. For this reason, our GCs are central to our discipleship strategy (for more detail on how GCs disciple people see our *why and How we do Gospel Communities* document [p.2]).

One of the challenges when it comes to discipling people in GC, is that often people will be at very different stages when it comes to their knowledge and Christian maturity. To ensure that people have every opportunity to grow from where they're at we encourage people to join a *discipleship relationship (DNA Groups)*. These usually consist of two to three GC members of the same gender who help one another grow in their knowledge of the God. Discipleship relationships are great places to receive encouragement, care, challenge, prayer and accountability when it comes to living a gospel centred life. If you would like to join a discipleship relationship, chat to your GC leaders or the Maturity Purpose Team leader.

4. EVANGELISTIC RESOURCES

We have recommended the following three resources to use to explain the gospel to the people we reach out to. They are all biblically sound and easily understood booklets/courses to work through.

'The world we all want' by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis introduces the reader to Jesus by working through a simple bible overview and explores how Jesus fits into that (*study notes with alternative, less comprehension style questions are available*).

'God and you' by Pete and Anne Woodcock, takes the reader through Romans 1-5 by answering a series 'big' questions. The two booklets are suitable to do either one on one or in a small group.

'Introducing God' by Dominic Steele (<http://www.introducinggod.org/>), is a 6-8 week course that begins with a meal and involves watching some film clips (including a small drama, and short talk by Dominic Steele) that are then discussed in the group afterwards. It is a very non-confrontational and relaxed style of evangelism suitable for the GC context or small groups.

If members of your GC would like access to any of these resources (and leaders guides) or training in how to run them please have them contact the Mission Purpose Team Leaders.

5. DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

Once a person has finished going through a basic Christianity course it is important that they continue to be built up and established in their faith, both in their beliefs (doctrine) and how they live as an individual and in the church community. The following resources are available and cover these areas

well. All of these resources would be appropriate to go through in a small group, a GC, or one to one. If you would like to get hold of any of these resources you can visit our website <https://www.summerleaschurch.org/discipleship> or speak to the Maturity Purpose Team Leader

Faith in everyday life

- ***'Gospel-Centred Life'*** by Steve Timmis and Tim Chester

Doctrine

- ***'I Believe'*** is a booklet by Tim Chester that explores the core beliefs contained in the apostle's creed.

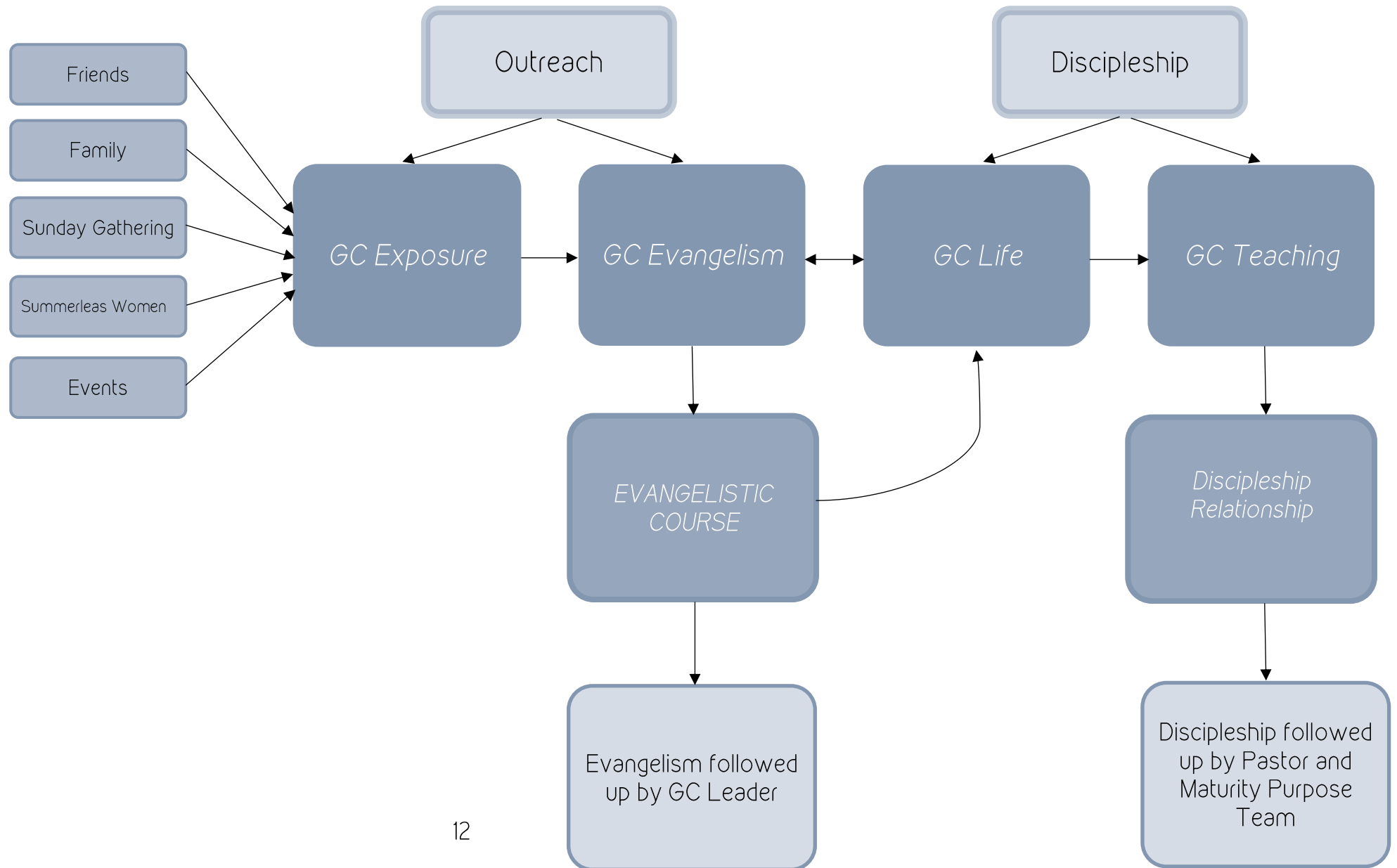
Gospel Communities

- ***'Gospel Community Foundations'*** (free download from our website <https://www.summerleaschurch.org/discipleship>)

Explaining the Gospel

- ***'Gospel Fluency'*** (free download from our website <https://www.summerleaschurch.org/discipleship>)

FIGURE 2 – SUMMERLEAS MISSION PATHWAY



HOW WE DO YOUTH MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

At Summerleas, our mission is *to make disciples of Jesus through Gospel Communities*.⁶ If this mission is to be realised and our communities are to be truly *gospel centred*, then they need to be places where youth⁷ are welcomed, cared for, and learn to centre their lives on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because of this, we have invested serious time and effort into thinking through how our church can best help its young people grow. What we have come up with is a bit different to how Youth Ministry is done in other Church settings, so this document is here to help you understand how, by God's grace, we ideally see our youth ministry operating.

At Summerleas, Youth ministry takes place within four, key, overlapping spheres *Parents, Gospel Communities (GCs), Sunday Gatherings, and Youth Ops/Youth Group*. Below is an explanation of how we hope each of these spheres will operate.

1. PARENTS

In the New Testament, the only *direct* reference to youth ministry is the ministry that parents have to their own children (Ephesians 6:4). For this reason, we want to encourage the parents of our church to be the primary youth ministers for their kids. Parents do this in 2 main ways:

a) Bible Teaching - We need all Summerleas parents to carve out time to read the Bible with their kids and pray. If parents need help with this, we encourage the use of the *Discover Bible notes*. Parents should speak to either Dave or their GC Youth Co-ordinator to access these or other resources.

b) Bible Living - It is vital that our parents practise what they teach to their kids. We need Summerleas parents to be active, engaged Christians that model daily Christian living so that our youth will see that following Jesus impacts all of life. As can be seen from 1 Thessalonians 2:8, modelling and sharing the Christian life is absolutely essential if true discipleship is to happen.

⁶ Please read our *Core Values* (Appendix 2) for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues>

⁷ In this document, 'Youth' refers to kids who are around 9-10 years old through to those who are currently in High School

2. GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

All Christians need the love, support, and teaching of a gospel centred community if they are to be effectively disciplined. This can be clearly seen from the numerous ‘*one another*’ verses of the New Testament (Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 4:9 etc.). For this reason, we believe ‘youth ministry’ is the responsibility of all GC members in one way or another (see Appendix 7) and it is why GCs form the second important sphere of youth ministry at Summerleas. One of the key ways parents can help their kids grow is by making sure they have regular, meaningful contact with their GC.

Like our nuclear families, our GCs also minister in the main areas of Bible teaching and Bible Living.

a) Bible Teaching

Whole Family Learning

At least once a month, our GCs have a time of *Whole Family Learning*. These learning times are designed to be accessible to everyone in the GC from little children right through to the elderly. Youth learn from the material itself, but also from processing it with others in the GC and helping younger children to understand.

GC Classics⁸

As kids get older and are able to stay up later, we would love to see them involved in GC classics.

DNA Relationships⁹

As kids get older we would love to see them join a DNA relationship with other adults.

Supporting Parents

We appreciate that teaching your kids the Bible is hard work. Sometimes it’s hard to know where to start or how to go about it. This is especially so for parents who are new Christians. Because we value the ministry of parents so highly (see point 1), we want our GCs to be places that equip parents to disciple their kids. We encourage our GC leadership teams to review this regularly, encourage parents to work hard at teaching their kids, and train/resource parents who don’t know how.

Supporting kids when parents aren’t engaged

This fits equally under point 2.b *Bible Living*. Some GCs might find themselves ministering to children who do not have Christian parents at all. Other kids in the GC may have Christian parents, but these parents might be at a stage where they are avoiding GC, or are engaging with it irregularly. Ultimately, a child’s participation in GC will come down to their parents’ consent. However, we want our GCs to seek such consent, work hard at including these kids in GC life, and implementing plans to help them come under the regular teaching of God’s word. If a GC finds itself connected to kids in this situation, we encourage the GC leadership team to review this important ministry regularly.

b) Bible Living

⁸ GC Classics normally happen at least twice a month. They are a more adult focussed time of Bible study and prayer, more like what you’d expect from a *classic* church small group.

⁹ These are discipleship relationships held around once a month. They are more focussed times of discipleship with just 2 or 3 people together in a group. More information about this is on page 10.

The GC Life

We want our youth to be meaningful and valued members of our GCs. This is important because they need to see that a life of radical discipleship is not just for their pastor, parents and a couple of 'involved' people. Instead, we want them to see that it is the norm at every stage of life for all sorts of people. This requires relationship and regular contact. Our kids need to get into people's houses and see how others live up close. As we have already seen from 1 Thessalonians 2:8, we want to share not only the gospel, but our lives as well. Because of this, we want our youth present and involved in all aspects of GC life (meals, social activities, before classics, when we look after each other practically etc.).

The GC Mission

GC mission events are key times for youth discipleship. Through these events they see everyone in their GC involved in mission. This reinforces the idea that a mission orientated life should be the norm for all Christians. As the GC reaches out together, our youth learn how to relate and reach out to people who aren't Christians. Finally, these events often give rise to all sorts of amazing, formative, conversations about sacrificial living, passion for the lost, and God's big picture for this world.

3. SUNDAY GATHERINGS

We want our youth to participate in our Sunday gatherings as much as possible. They are welcome to read the serve and join ministry teams. We encourage parents (as well as the rest of our GC members) to be working hard at empowering their youth to participate in these areas. Our GC leadership teams will regularly review youth participation and if parents would like to see their kids involved more, they should speak to their GC's Maturity Leader.

We also encourage kids to listen to sermons from a comparatively early age (around age 9 or 10). However, we acknowledge that every child is different. Some are ready sooner, some later, so we are flexible with the exact age and believe that the decision should be made by the parents in consultation with our *Skid'lettes* and *Summerleas Kids*¹⁰ leaders.

If parents are still unsure, or if there is a divergence of opinion between the parents and *Summerleas Kids* leaders then we ask that parents contact the Ministry Purpose Team leader.

'Sermon sheets' are available to our youth (positioned at the welcome desk). These sheets are designed to help kids engage with the preaching. We have been amazed at how much kids as young as 9 years old can get out of a sermon when they work hard at these sheets. We encourage the kids to show what they have done to the preacher after the service, and there may even be a reward!

Some kids may require their parents to be engaged in helping them to listen and write things down. When children do not have parents available to help, we encourage the GC to be active in assisting its younger members in this way (see point 2.a.). We also encourage parents to use their children's notes throughout the week, at home, or in GC as a way to reflect on God's word with them.

4. YOUTH OPS AND YOUTH GROUP

¹⁰ *Skid'lettes* (ages 3-5) and *Summerleas Kids* (ages 6-8) are ministries we run on Sunday mornings for kids.

As Summerleas Church has grown the need for a youth group also developed. This led to a weekly Youth Group (grades 8-12) and a more regular Youth Ops (ages 9-13). These are both held on Sunday afternoons. The purpose of this is not to replace youth involvement in the GC's, but to provide the youth with a specialised time of learning and encouragement with those of a similar age. For more information about this contact the Youth Coordinator.

SUMMARY – HOW TO ENGAGE

Parents

Read the Bible and Pray with your kids

Model the Christian life to your kids

Make sure your kids can be as involved in GC as possible, *especially* Whole family learning, meals, whole GC mission events and Youth Ops if old enough

Encourage your kids to serve at Sunday gatherings

If your kids are old enough, encourage and assist them to engage with sermons

Encourage your youth aged children to attend Youth Ops or Youth Group

Everyone

Work hard at building relationships with the kids in your GC whenever you get the chance

Model the Christian life to the kids in your GC

Engage and participate in Whole family learning times

Volunteer to disciple a teenager

HOW WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

INTRODUCTION

At Summerleas, our mission is *to make disciples for Jesus through Gospel Communities*.¹¹ If this mission is to be realised and our communities are to be truly *gospel centred*, then they need to be places where people are loved and cared for (John 13:34). One of the great benefits of being part of a Church community is that we don't have to struggle through life alone. Instead, God has graciously given us a loving, inclusive community which aims to love, care for, and share in the joys and sorrows of each of its members (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

At Summerleas, we have two major spheres in which we aim to care for people. The primary sphere is through our *Gospel Communities* (GCs), and the secondary sphere is through our *broader Church community*.

1. CARE IN GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

The primary sphere in which people are cared for at Summerleas is their GC.

Why do we use this model?

i. It's Biblical

The biblical expectation is that *every Christian* should be responsible for caring for their brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:25-26; Galatians 6:2,10). Even when the New Testament speaks of specially gifted *Pastors*, it does not envisage a specialist that does all the caring by himself, but rather someone that equips *everyone else* to care for people (Ephesians 4:11-12,16). Caring for one another is not an optional extra for the Christian, we are all called to it and it is at the heart of the Christian life (1 John 4:19-21). Using our GCs as our primary care system acknowledges this biblical emphasis and encourages all our people to be active in this role.

ii. It's Practical

When you consider care from a practical perspective, it is easy to see why the Bible calls everyone to be involved. To rely on one person, or even a small group of leaders, to care for a church the size of Summerleas would result in irregular, shallow care for our people and a burnt-out pastor/leaders.

For most people a meaningful relationship is required before they are willing to ask for help, or honestly share their true joys, sorrows, wins, and problems. Whilst this level of relationship is impossible to maintain between one pastor and a whole church, it is possible within the context of a Gospel community.

What does this model require?

¹¹ Please read our *Core Values* (Appendix 2) for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues> and why they are key to our vision.

Regular review by the GC leadership team

Our GC leadership teams meet regularly to assess how the GC is going and plan any actions that might be required to keep it on track and growing. As part of this meeting our teams review how the GC is going in terms of caring for its members.

All GC members to be willing to care and help

As we have seen above (1.a.i) this is the biblical expectation for *all* Christians. We need every GC member to be proactive in caring for people and willing to help when asked. This is important, because as devoted as our leadership teams are, other GC members may know more about what's happening with some GC members than the leaders do. Where GC members are new or immature Christians, the GC should seek to disciple them in this area quickly.

All GC members to be willing to share and ask for help:

Unfortunately, people aren't mind-readers. It is unreasonable to expect people to know something is wrong unless we tell them. It is also important that we communicate *how* we would like our needs to be met. People communicate love and care in different ways that don't always align with what we need. If we don't communicate clearly we may find ourselves inundated with 100s of freezer meals when all we really want is someone to sit and chat.

2. CARE IN THE BROADER CHURCH FAMILY

Because every GC is part of the broader Summerleas church, we have several additional resources at our disposal should a person's circumstances require them.

A full-time Pastor

Summerleas supports a full-time pastor who is available to meet with people should they request it. It is important to note that the Pastor has no official qualifications in terms of counselling/psychology/social work.

Maturity Purpose Team Leader

Gospel Community leaders are supported by the Maturity Purpose Team, so will receive training, accountability and support from the Maturity Purpose Team Leaders.

The Maturity Purpose Leaders are also a resource for our GC leadership teams. They provide them with ongoing accountability and training and if a team is confronted with a situation they feel is beyond them, they may contact the Maturity Purpose Team leader and ask for their help. They may deal with it directly or depending on the situation ask the Pastor for assistance.

Diversity of skills, gifts and relationships

Summerleas is blessed with a range of people, all who possess different gifts and skills and personality types. When the Maturity Purpose Leader or a GC leader, feel as though they are out of their depth, our broader community is a wonderful resource.

In addition, sometimes an individual may require care but for whatever reason feels that their GC is unable to meet their needs. When this is the case, our broader community and the different relationships it offers, can be a helpful support.

If someone would like to benefit from the broader community, but are unsure of who to approach or where to start, they should contact the Maturity Purpose Team Leader.

Broader prayer support

Every Monday we distribute a weekly email called the *Community News* with several prayer points in it. If you would like the whole community to pray for you using any of these formats, please contact the pastor. Not everyone likes to share prayer requests this broadly so *requests will not be shared unless you personally ask us to or give someone permission to share that request on your behalf.*

Broader Financial and Practical Support

Sometimes people need more financial or practical support than a single Gospel Community can consistently provide. When this is the case the GC leadership team contact the Maturity Purpose team to access the help of the broader church. *Such requests will not be made without the GC leadership team first gaining the permission of the person requiring support.*

APPENDIX 1

CORE BELIEFS

This document is not a complete summary of all we believe. As a Christian Reformed Church we uphold the confessions of the European Reformation and look to these confessions for a fuller summary of our Christian beliefs.¹²

The confessions speak to some issues that we class as ‘secondary’. We believe that secondary issues need not get in the way of someone being considered a full member of our Church family provided that:

They can lovingly bear with our confessional stance being taught and practiced

They are happy not to cause trouble, disunity or conflict with regard to secondary issues they personally disagree with

The Confessions also speak to other issues that we class as ‘primary’. These issues are so core to our faith, life, teaching, and practice that someone cannot be considered a full member of the Summerleas family unless they uphold these beliefs themselves.

In order to make these Core Beliefs more accessible, we have compiled this document.¹³ Please take the time to read it, pray about the teaching you read here and decide whether you can agree with what it says.

The Triune God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another.

This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration.

Immortal and eternal, he perfectly knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Revelation

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, but has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word.

Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both a record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is:

¹² For more details please visit <https://crca.org.au/about-the-crc/beliefs/129-beliefs-doctrinal-standards.html>

¹³ In compiling this statement we have been greatly helped by the *Gospel Coalition* and this document is largely an adaption of their ‘Confessional Statement’ <http://thegospelcoalition.org/about/who>

- Utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings
- Complete in its revelation of his will for salvation
- Sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do
- Final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks

We know that because we are finite and sinful, we cannot know God's truth *exhaustively*, but we affirm that, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we can know God's revealed truth *truly*.

The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

Creation of Humanity

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good. They were to serve as God's agents by caring for, managing, and governing creation, and were to live in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker.

Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ and are both called to move beyond passive self-centredness to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life.

Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a special union called marriage. This union establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, and ultimately serves as a picture of the union between Christ and his church.

In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways.

The Fall

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and through him the rest of humanity—by falling into sin through Satan's temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God's own gracious intervention.

We also believe that human sinfulness has affected the rest of the created order. It has been 'subjected to frustration' and this (coupled with ongoing human sinfulness) can make life in this world hard and painful.

The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy anger we stand; the only hope of all human beings (and the rest of the created order) is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

The Plan of God

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them.

We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

The Gospel

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very wisdom. Utter foolishness to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved.

This good news is about Jesus, is centred on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central.

This good news is:

- Biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures)
- Theological and concerning salvation (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God)
- Historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others)
- Apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events)
- Intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved)

The Redemption of Christ

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures.

The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel:

- Was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary.
- Perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father and lived a sinless life
- Performed miraculous signs
- Was crucified under Pontius Pilate
- Arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven
- Is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty
- Is our High Priest and righteous Advocate

We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might be declared righteous in the sight of God. On the cross he paid for our sin, satisfied God's anger, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe.

By his resurrection Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death, defeated Satan, and brought everlasting life to all his people. By his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him.

We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.

The Power of the Holy Spirit

We believe our salvation, is applied to us by the Holy Spirit. We believe he:

- Is sent by the Father and the Son
- Glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ
- Is present with, and in believers
- Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment
- Gives new life to spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith

In him we are baptised into union with the Lord Jesus, such that we are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, adopted into God's family, and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts.

The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

The Church

We believe that God's people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth.

The church is the body of Christ, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, gathering together, sacraments, discipline, and, above all, by her love for God, and her members' love for and commitment to one another and the world.

The Gospel has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one, new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile all types of people to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbours, rather than for self. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

The Restoration of All Things

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels. At this time he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of both those who are justified in Christ and those who are not. Those who are not will face judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, but those justified in Christ will live in eternal blessedness in the presence of God in the new heaven and the new earth.

On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

APPENDIX 2

CORE VALUES

This document is not a complete summary of all we believe. As a Christian Reformed Church we uphold the confessions of the European Reformation and look to these confessions to summarise our Christian beliefs¹⁴. Rather, these core values articulate the key emphases that drive our vision and make Summerleas distinctive when it comes to our life and practice.

1. Gospel Centred

The Gospel¹⁵ is absolutely central to who we are and all that we do.

It is through faith in the Gospel that we enter a relationship with Jesus Christ and become God's children (Romans 1.16, 10.13-14; John 1.12-13)

The Gospel is our model for life (Philippians 2.4-11) and it actually sustains and grows us in godliness (Titus 2.11)

It is through the Gospel that we are brought together into a community of Christ-like love (Ephesians 3.6-10; John 13.34)

The Gospel entrusts us with the mission to go out and make disciples for Christ this side of his return (Matthew 28.18-20)

In summary, for us to be 'Gospel Centred' means that *we find our roots, sustenance, growth and mission in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. Community Emphasis

We place a strong emphasis on community for three reasons:

- A loving Community, rooted in and modelled on our triune God, is what we are created for (Genesis 1.27-28; John 17.20-22), God's ultimate and eternal end for mankind (Revelation 21.3). A Christian community is, therefore, a supremely valuable end in itself. Through its simply *being* it brings great glory to God (Ephesians 3.10). However, this side of Christ's return, we have been entrusted with a mission – to make disciples of all nations. This mission gives rise to the second and third reasons for our community emphasis.
- Christian community is an incredibly powerful mission tool and the ideal context for gospel proclamation (John 13.34-35; 17.23).
- Community is the proper context for Christians to build one another up in Christ (Hebrews 10.24-25).

¹⁴ For more details please visit <https://crca.org.au/about-the-crc/beliefs/129-beliefs-doctrinal-standards.html>

¹⁵ The good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

For all of these reasons, we are committed to building a gospel centred community of love, acceptance, diversity, challenge and encouragement.

3. 'Organic' Growth and Relationships

'Organic'¹⁶ is one of our defining adjectives. At first this might seem strange as the word 'organic' does not appear in the New Testament. However, we use it for the following reasons:

- Although the word 'organic' does not occur in the New Testament, the concept runs right through it. Organic language and illustrations are frequently used to describe the slow, messy and involved nature of Christian growth and community (Matthew 13.1-35; Mark 4.26-29; Luke 6.43-45; John 15.1-8; Rom 11.11-21; 1 Corinthians 5.6-8, 12.12-31; 1 Timothy 3.5, 15; 5.1-2). We want to ensure that all of our strategies, programs, and patterns for relating allow for and celebrate this slowness, mess and involvement.
- At the level of who we are as Tasmanians, 'organic' is a resonant and positive word. Our beloved Island is famous for its organic attractions and produce, from the majestic beauty of our world heritage area to the most humble of artisan sheep's cheeses.
- Because of reasons 1 and 2 the organic / inorganic contrast provides an excellent analogy for the kinds of relationships we aspire to. Fake, artificial relationships are like inorganic vegetables. They look pretty on the outside, are cheap and easy to produce, but are completely flavourless and lacking in nutrients. Organic relationships are like organic vegetables. They require a lot of hard work, they are expensive and from the outside they can appear a giant mess. However, they are better for you and when you bite into them, you are overwhelmed by the flavour. We believe that this fits well with the New Testament's expectations for Christian community.¹⁷

4. 'Outward' Love

We believe it is essential that all Christians relate in a deep and meaningful way to those *outside* the church. This is true for at least 2 important reasons:

- *All people* are precious in God's sight. All have been created in God's image and are, therefore, special and valuable *in and of themselves* (Genesis 9.6). Jesus is clear that loving and serving such people is an essential Christian priority (Matthew 22.39; Luke 10.25-37).
- A deep, Christian love for people cannot help but find expression in an authentic desire for gospel sharing. After all, to share the good news of Jesus with someone is *the* best thing you could ever do for that person. However, the New Testament does not envisage evangelism in a vacuum. Instead, the gospel is best presented in the context of relationships. As outsiders share relationships with Christians, they both witness and experience the *real life* difference the gospel makes (Matthew 5.16; John 17.23; Colossians 4.5; 1

¹⁶ A) characteristic of, pertaining to, or derived from living organisms. B) Viewing or explaining something as having a growth and development analogous to that of living organisms. C) Pertaining to, involving, or grown without fertilizers or pesticides of a manufactured chemical origin.

¹⁷ See the appendix 3 for "Key one another texts"

Thessalonians 4:12; Titus 2:7-10). For this reason, we want to engage with and invest in deep relationships with those outside our Church.

5. Biblical Teaching

We believe the Bible to be God's word and, therefore, the ultimate authority by which we live and shape our lives (2 Timothy 3:16). We believe that it contains all we need to know to grow as Jesus' disciples and that it is absolutely essential for maintaining spiritual life (Matthew 4:4). For this reason we are committed to teaching the Bible to one another in all sorts of ways and within the context of the varied opportunities that life affords. In particular, we are committed to an expository preaching¹⁸ ministry. Through this ministry we seek to intentionally cover every type of biblical genre and take the community as a whole through the entire Bible. We view this preaching ministry as an essential strategy for spiritual growth and it is the major focal point of our weekly Sunday meetings.

6. Sanctification of the Secular

In the Lord Jesus, all of life has been redeemed and can be used for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17-23), this means that even the most seemingly mundane and secular of activities, in and of itself, can be a glorious act of worship! As if this weren't enough, all of life can be reclaimed as a missionary opportunity. As we live out gospel shaped lives, the watching world will see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16; John 17:23; Colossians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:12; Titus 2:7-10)!

7. Utter Reliance Upon God

We understand that we can never succeed on our own! Ephesians 2:3 describes us as by nature objects of wrath. If we don't firmly believe that God and God alone is our only means of living the Christian life, if we start to rely on ourselves, and our strategies and plans then we will fail. Even our preaching ministry is doomed without the work of God (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). If we rely on ourselves, we will fall into legalism and become frustrated, bitter and cynical. Despair will eat away at us as we continually let ourselves down in our attempts to be godly. We will quickly realise that we alone are utterly incapable of growing a church plant and become overwhelmed by our failure. Instead, we aim to be completely and meaningfully dependant on God to prosper his spiritual work amongst us.

This complete and utter dependence upon God must find expression through bold and expectant prayer. Sadly, people see all sorts of things as 'important ministry activities' whilst side lining prayer as an inactive extra that doesn't achieve anything. However, if prayer really does lead to the action of God (Matthew 7:7), then it is *the* most powerful, effective thing we can do.

¹⁸ Preaching that seeks to explain the meaning and intention of a biblical text.

APPENDIX 3

KEY 'ONE ANOTHER' TEXTS

Below is a brief survey of just some of the New Testament's teaching on how Christians are to relate to one another (NIV).

John 13:34 ... Love one another. As I have loved you...

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 15:7 Accept one another...

1 Corinthians 1:10 ...agree with one another...

1 Corinthians 12:25 ...there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

Galatians 5:13 ...serve one another in love.

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens...

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.,

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 3:16 ...teach and admonish one another...

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other ...

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling

1 Peter 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

APPENDIX 4

EVANGELISM PATHWAY DIAGRAM EXPLANATION

- This diagram is designed to show the way we hope to introduce people to Jesus. It begins with them having contact with someone in our Church and then moves on to an experience of Gospel Community. It is in this context that they hear the Gospel proclaimed to them, become more involved in GC life and are then taught, disciplined and cared for in an intentional way. Such a person would emerge (by the grace of God) with a solid understanding of the gospel, basic doctrine and the purpose of gospel community life and mission.
- The left of the diagram begins with the titles friends, family, Sunday gatherings, Summerleas Women and events. These are all contact points that people from Summerleas have with non-Christian people in our community.
- GC exposure and GC evangelism have been grouped under 'outreach'. This is because the New Testament sees both Evangelism (the proclamation of the Good news of Jesus) and exposure to the Christian community as important ingredients in the process of people becoming Christians (Romans 10:13-15; John 17:20-23).
- GC life and GC teaching have been grouped under 'discipleship'. This is because effective discipleship best takes when people are taught by words *and example* (1 Thessalonians 2:8).
- It should be noted that in reality a person may be heavily involved in the social 'life' of the GC and experience some teaching and general discipleship well before they are 'evangelised' through an explicit explanation of the Gospel (via a course etc.).
- The three sections outside the brackets show the checkpoints that we have put in place to ensure accountability and follow up.

APPENDIX 5

WHY YOUTH MINISTRY IS FOR EVERYONE

At Summerleas we encourage *all* of our people to get involved with Youth ministry in the context of their Gospel Community.

You may be wondering why we are so persistent in our efforts to get *everyone* involved in youth ministry, so below are the three big reasons why we think it's so important:

1. Our kids need you!

If you're feeling reluctant about engaging with youth, chances are you don't think you're the youth ministry type. Perhaps you aren't particularly trendy, maybe you're not used to kids, or perhaps you just don't think you've got anything to offer.

Well you may not be particularly trendy or 'youthy', but God is absolutely insistent that you *do* have something to offer! 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 says we're a body. Just as a body is dependent on all of its parts to function, so is our community. We simply cannot do without you because God has made you in a unique and special way to help the rest of us.

The Bible celebrates our diversity and the fact that you're different from others is a strength, not a weakness! Our kids are all different and so they need a variety of adult examples showing them what it looks like for them to live as a Christian. This means we need all kinds of different people ministering to our kids, not just a small group of 'youth ministry types'.

2. You need our kids!

The kids in our church offer you an enormous opportunity to grow in Christlikeness. If you want to grow in gentleness, kindness, patience, self sacrifice, self control, humility, and your understanding of God's word then there really is no better way than by getting alongside the kids in our church, they will help you grow in these areas in ways you would never imagine!

3. Our Church needs you!

Too many churches are propped up by a small group of faithful but utterly exhausted people who do all of the ministry while everyone else sits back and lets them. This is something we work hard at avoiding at Summerleas in all sorts of areas. The reality is that *everyone* is busy, *everyone* is tired, and *everyone* has problems, so why create a massive burden of ministry work for a small group of busy, tired people, when we could all *share* the work and lighten the load immeasurably!

The more we each play our part, the more we look after each other, ensuring that no one gets burnt out or overwhelmed. The result? A flourishing, *sustainable* youth ministry that is doable for busy tired people.