

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Why and how we do Gospel Communities..... | 2 |
| How we do evangelism and follow up..... | 34 |
| How we do youth ministry..... | 42 |
| How we care for people..... | 50 |
| How we do financial giving..... | 54 |

Key Summerleas Documents

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Core Beliefs..... | 12 |
| Core Values..... | 17 |
| GC Leader Role Descriptions..... | 23-33 |

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.

a) We are **Gospel Centred** because...

- i. 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).
- ii. The Gospel is our model for life (Philippians 2:4-11) and it actually sustains and grows us in godliness (Titus 2:11-12)
- iii. 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)
- iv. 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.**

b) We emphasise **Community** because...

¹ see Appendix 1

² see Appendix 2

³ Good News

- i. 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 (Ephesian 3:10).
- ii. Christian community is an incredibly powerful mission tool and an ideal context for gospel proclamation (John 13:34-35; 17:23)
- iii. 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 vision *to Grow Gospel centred, organic 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. What are GCs?

GCs can be described as ***Small communities that are Diverse, Organic, and Gospel centred.***

a) Why are they small?

i) We are convinced that meaningful relationships are essential if we're 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 centred love for one another can be an incredible apologetic for the 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, safe, 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 Centred?

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 centred 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 centred 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 youth work, 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. Appendix 4 shows part of a real Summerleas GC calendar covering a number of months (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 focus on reading the Bible and praying together.

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 to them to other GC members. However, 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.). In addition it has regular Whole Family Meals (WFM). These are regular, family friendly meals that provide an easy, social, front door to the GC. For more info. on how we do mission and evangelism, please see our How we do *Evangelism and Follow Up* doc (p.33).

c) Service

Our GCs are actively involved in serving at our whole Church Sunday Gatherings. Rather than rostering on individuals to set up, pray, do creche, read the bible etc, we roster on our Gospel Communities and they serve the rest of the Church together in all of these areas.

When it comes time for a GC to serve in this way, the GC's *Communication Director*⁴ will make the community aware of what needs to be done and there will be opportunities for members to volunteer in all kinds of ways.

d) Youth and Children's ministry

GC Youth Opportunities (Youth OPs) and Whole family learning (WFL), are times that are focussed particularly on ministering to the young people in the GC. For more info. on these, please see our *How we do Youth Ministry* doc (p.42).

e) Social

We also schedule time just to 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 GC life looks like.

3. How are they 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 elders 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).

⁴ See Appendix 5

c) Transfer Growth

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

- i) will benefit most in terms of the newcomers bringing diversity and leadership
- ii) 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 centred 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 discontinue 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 one or even two leaders.

We are committed to each GC having a leadership team of four. A Vision Leader, a Youth Co-ordinator, a Mission Co-ordinator, and a Communications Director⁵ Whilst we start with at least four 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 Pastor 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.

7. Can I enjoy relationships with other Summerleas 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.

Bible Texts

Romans 1:16 ¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Romans 10:13-14 ³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

John 1:12-13 ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

⁵ See Appendix 5 for full descriptions of what these roles entail.

Philippians 2:4-11 ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Titus 2:11-12 ¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Ephesians 3:6-10 ⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

John 13:34-35 ⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Matthew 28:18-20¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Colossians 3:11-14 ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Genesis 1:27-28 ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

John 17:20-23 ²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Revelation 21:2-3 ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 ⁷ but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

1 Timothy 4:12 ¹² Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Titus 2:7 ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

Revelation 7:9 ⁹ After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

1 Corinthians 12:14-18 ¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of

smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Ephesians 2:14-16 ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

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.⁶

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....

1. They are happy for our confessional stance to be taught and practised.
2. 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 practise 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.⁷ 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.

⁶ For more details please visit www.crca.org.au/AboutUs/WhatWeBelieve

⁷ 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>

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:

- 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 cancelled 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 beliefs⁸. 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 Gospel⁹ is absolutely central to who we are and all that we do.

1. 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).
2. The Gospel is our model for life (Philippians 2.4-11) and it actually sustains and grows us in godliness (Titus 2.11)
3. It is through the Gospel that we are brought together into a community of Christ-like love (Ephesians 3.6-10; John 13.34)
4. 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.

⁸ For more details please visit www.crca.org.au/AboutUs/WhatWeBelieve

⁹ The good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

1. 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.

2. Christian community is an incredibly powerful mission tool and the ideal context for gospel proclamation (John 13.34-35; 17.23).
3. Community is the proper context for Christians to build one another up in Christ (Hebrews 10.24-25).

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'¹⁰ 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.

1. 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, programmes and patterns for relating allow for and celebrate this slowness, mess and involvement.
2. 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.
3. 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

¹⁰ 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.

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.¹¹

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.

1. *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).
2. 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 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 preaching¹² 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

¹¹ See the appendix 3

¹² Preaching that seeks to explain the meaning and intention of a biblical text.

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! Eph 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.

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...

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

NIV 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.

NIV 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.

NIV Romans 15:7 Accept one another...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIV 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

Example of a GC Calendar

| Date | Event | Location | Leader |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------|
| 17th July | Date Night - Adults only | Kingston Thai | |
| 20th July | Serving @ Church | | |
| 24th July | Classic | Doe | John |
| 31st July | WFL | Smith | Bill |
| 7th August | Classic | Jones | John |
| 8th August | Youth Ops | Doe | |
| 14th August | WFM | Williams | |
| 21st August | Classic | Doe | John |
| 24th August | Serving @ Church | | |
| 28th August | WFL | Smith | Betty |
| 3rd Sept | Youth Ops | Doe | |
| 4th Sept | Classic | Jones | John |
| 11th Sept | WFM | Williams | |
| 12th Sept | F.O.C.U.S. @ UTAS | | |
| 13th Sept | Women's Breakfast | T.B.C. | |
| 18th Sept | Classic | Smith | John |
| 19th-21st Sept | Bruny Getaway | | |
| 25th Sept | WFL | Doe | Mary |
| 28th Sept | Serving @ Church | | |
| 1st October | Youth Ops | Doe | |
| 2nd October | Classic | Jones | John |
| 9th October | WFM | Williams | |
| 16th October | Classic | Smith | John |
| 23rd October | WFL | Doe | Bill |
| 30th October | Classic | Jones | John |
| 2nd November | Setup @ Church | | |
| 5th November | Youth Ops | Doe | |

Appendix 5

Gospel Community Leadership Team Vision Leader (VL)

Role Description

The VL is vital part of the *Gospel Community* (GC) leadership team. They are the person that helps the GC stay on track with the big vision of Summerleas. Their job is to guard the vision and help others understand and remain on board with it.

This should be done in at least 4 ways....

- 1. Observation and listening:** We need our VLs to be both observant, and sensitive listeners. They need to be aware of where people are at in terms of their understanding of the vision of Summerleas and GC life in general. If people are struggling, we would like our VLs to be aware of this and to help people through it. It is essential to note that *VLs should not feel the burden of having to actually solve everyone's issues*. 'Helping them through it' may well mean re-directing them to Dave, Christina, one or all of the elders, or to another person in the GC leadership team.
- 2. Being the primary contact Point:** Our VLs are the 'go to' people in their GCs. if GC members have questions or issues then they should feel free to approach their VL. They are also the primary contact person between the Summerleas elders and the rest of the GC. They are responsible for communicating to the elders on behalf of their GC and vice versa.
- 3. Overseeing the teaching ministry:** We want our VLs to identify and recruit (and if necessary train) suitable men and women from their GCs to facilitate the Bible discussions at *GC Classics*. We would love this to be a shared task as it frees key people up time wise. It also encourages others to take the first step towards GC leadership by taking responsibility for and ownership of their GC. Our ideal is that the VLs will only need to lead classics themselves once every 2 months or so, however, we still need someone to ensure that the other leaders are being faithful to the Bible, and the vision of Summerleas.
- 4. Identify and train potential GC leaders:** A big part of the Summerleas vision is that our GCs grow and multiply. This means that growing new leaders is a constant and urgent priority. Because of this, we need our VLs to identify potential GC leaders (especially potential VLs) and invest in these people so that they can join their GC's leadership team and hopefully become key GC leaders themselves.

The Nitty Gritty

Once a Year...

1. **Identify and recruit a team of people to lead *Classics*.** Ideally this would be *at least* 3 people which would mean you would only need to lead one classic every 2 months. Feel free to give these people a fair bit of flexibility. If they are passionate about a particular book or study etc. go with the passion (provided of course it's Biblical. If in doubt check with Dave).
2. **Communicate with your *Communications Director*.** He or she needs to know who your recruits are so that they can be rostered on.
3. **Identify potential GC leaders from within your GC.** Plan to invest in these people. If someone has the potential to be a good VL make sure that you mentor them, and aim to share your responsibilities with them. If there are a number of potential leaders, organise for the other leaders to do some mentoring as well. *You need not mentor everybody.* Most people only have the time to do one person well (at the absolute most 2).

Once a Month...

1. **Mentor future leader(s).** Of course some months might be so busy that this doesn't happen. However we would love for our leaders to aim to meet with their trainee leader(s) *at least* once a month (if you need help with how to do this, talk to Dave).
2. **Make sure you understand and are on board with the vision and mission of S'leas.** Points 3 and 4 are the best places to address this.
3. **Attend GC Leaders Training Meeting.** About 2 hours every 2 months.
4. **Mentoring with Dave.** About 1 hour per month. This is a time to reflect on how you're going with the role and whether you need help, support, or direction.
5. **Check in with the other leaders.** This need not be a big thing, and could be easily done at a normal GC gathering or GC leaders training meeting. Make sure the other leaders are going ok. Check whether they need help and provide some gentle accountability for their roles and mentoring.
6. **Lead a *Classic*.** Hopefully you will have enough people leading these so that this is not even a monthly job.

Weekly...

1. **Be observant of, and listen to your people.** Try to be aware of how people are going in the GC do they have issues or needs? Are they struggling with the vision or GC life in general?
2. **Be mindful of the quality of the teaching.** It is essential that our *Classics* have a strong Bible focus. Each week think about how your GC *Classics* are going. Are

they biblical? For example are they turning into moaning sessions or becoming group counselling sessions with little or no Bible?

3. **Be approachable and accessible.** Remember we want people to feel able to talk to you honestly and openly.

As Needed...

1. **Help those who are struggling.** Remember this *doesn't mean* that you have to fix the problem. You may well refer the person to Dave, another elder, another GC leader etc. It might even be appropriate that you ask another leader to approach the person initially. Just make sure something gets done.
2. **Handle any Coms.** If the GC needs to communicate something to the elders or vice versa, make sure you pass the information on fairly.

Gospel Community Leadership Team

Mission Co-ordinator (MC)

Role Description

If *Gospel Communities* (GCs) are to be truly Gospel centred, then they cannot help but be focussed on the Gospel Mission. We want our GCs to be communities of light (ie. communities that hold out the Gospel to those who don't know Jesus and demonstrate what it looks like when lived out).

However, it is easy for this part of GC life to slip off the radar. Small groups have a tendency to become inward looking and most people's past experiences of a Church 'small group' have not included this outward dimension.

For this reason, every GC needs an MC! Our MCs keep mission on the radar. *It is important to note that the MCs do not do all of the mission work themselves*, rather they are there to help the *whole community* make mission a priority.

The 4 key areas of responsibility are...

1. **Identify and organise mission activities that the whole GC can engage in.** We would love our GCs to do something Mission focussed *as a whole GC* at least once a quarter. There are some easy suggestions for how you might do this given under 'the Nitty Gritty' section.
2. **Encourage the GC to maintain a mission mindset.** At GC meetings encourage people to share about some of the missional stuff they do (eg. Mainly Music, relationships with workmates, friends, family, etc.).
3. **Keep missional prayer on the agenda.** Make sure that the GC is regularly calling upon God to save the lost, both locally, through F.O.C.U.S., through the Brothersons and the rest of the World!
4. **Communicate with your *Communications Director*.** He or she needs to know when to schedule mission activities.

The Nitty Gritty

Once a Year...

Identify potential GC leaders within your GC. Plan to invest in these people. If someone has the potential to be a good MC make sure that you mentor them, and aim to share your responsibilities with them.

Once a quarter...

1. Identify and co-ordinate a mission activity for the whole GC to engage in.

Below are some suggestions for how you might do this...

- a) By far the easiest way is to help out *F.O.C.U.S.*, or the *Uni Fellowship*. All you have to do is organise for your people to turn up. Even if they are too shy to talk to anyone they will be being an enormous help to these ministries. If you want to know how to connect with these ministries speak to Dave.
- b) The next level up is to speak to Mel de Kievit about serving at a *Mainly Music* event. There are a number of these each year and they always need help catering, serving, or just hanging out and talking to people.
- c) Slightly more involved is to encourage the GC to organise an event with your own GC that you can invite non-Christian contacts to.
- d) Going up another notch, encourage the GC to think about the local area. Where are they already involved? What community groups exist that might appreciate some help? Try to tap into a community event that's already happening or volunteer to help a local non for profit / person in need.

With all of these *the MC should not do all the work*, but rather draw the rest of the GC into the praying, planning and organisation of the activity. For help and suggestions with this, speak to Dave.

2. Communicate with your *Communications Director*. He or she needs to know when events are to take place so they can be added to the relevant Bi-Monthly Roster.

3. MC prayer and share meeting. We would love all of our MCs to get together 4 times a year to share ideas, support and prayer together. Mel Bultman will organise these and let you know when and where they're happening

Every two months...

1. Communicate with your GC. When events appear on the Bi Monthly roster, take the time to communicate with the GC about them. Make sure they understand why the GC does this stuff and how important it is.

2. Attend GC Leaders Training Meeting. About 2 hours per month

Once a month...

1. Mentor future leader(s). Of course some months might be so busy that this doesn't happen. However, we would love for our leaders to aim to meet with their trainee leader(s) *at least* once a month (if you need help with how to do this, talk to Dave).

2. Check in with the other leaders. This need not be a big thing, and could be easily done at a normal GC gathering or GC leaders training meeting. Make sure the other leaders are going ok. Check whether they need help and provide some gentle accountability for their roles and mentoring.

Weekly

1. **Keep track of the people you're reaching through your GC.** The GC will have contact with many non-Christians through family, work, hobbies, friendships and more formal ministries (eg. Mainly Music). Keep a record of these people so that the GC prays for them regularly. Encourage people to think about what the next step for these people is. Is there something the GC could be doing to help love and reach out to them?
2. **Keep International Mission on the agenda.** Make sure the GC at least prays for the Brothersons, Focus, and the Indonesian people groups (weekly Sunday Bulletins will give you the prayer points for these). You should also feel free to get the GC praying more widely.

As Needed

1. **Co-ordinate a Course that clearly explains the Gospel to non-Christians.** You need not necessarily lead or even participate in the course, but we need to have someone who makes sure it happens when we have interested non-Christians attached to our GCs. Mel Bultman can offer training for the *World We All Want* and *Introducing God* courses and Evthoxia Lynch can offer training for the *God and You* course. If you need ideas about how to make this work speak to Dave or Mel B.
2. **Coordinate the discipleship of new Christians.** Again you don't have to do all the discipleship yourself, just make sure that someone in the GC is doing it.

Gospel Community Leadership Team

Youth Co-ordinator (YC)

Role Description

Our vision for *Gospel Communities* (GCs) is that they be *intergenerational* communities. We want them to be places where kids and young people are taught the Bible and where they see the Christian life modelled by older people. We believe that all of our people are called to engage with youth ministry to some extent. The Scriptures call us to love, teach and show hospitality to those in our church families and kids and youth are just as much part of this family as anyone else.

However, it is easy for this part of GC life to slip off the radar, which is why YCs are incredibly important. *It is essential to note that our YCs are not to do all of the youth ministry themselves*, but are instead to make sure it is on the radar for their GC and help others in the GC to engage in this essential ministry.

The 3 key areas of responsibility are...

1. **Identify and recruit people for *Whole Family Learning* (WFL):** We would love the leading of *WFL* to be a widely shared task so that it is not overly burdensome for any one individual. As a YC, your job is to identify those within your GC who could do this, recruit them and if need be organise training for them.
2. **Recruit people for *GC Youth Ops*:** Ideally we would like *everyone* within the GC to be participating in the *Youth Ops*. Not only does this share the load, but it also helps people set aside time to invest in the youth of their GC.

The easiest way to facilitate this is for the *Communications Director* to simply roster people on when *Youth Ops* occur on the Bi-Monthly Roster. However, people need to be on board for this to happen. As a YC, your job is to explain the philosophy behind *GC youth Ops* to those in your GC and find out who is happy to be rostered on to attend.

3. **Communicate with your *Communications Director*:** He or she needs to know who you have recruited for the above roles. It is also important that you be an advocate for the above GC activities and make sure that they are happening regularly.

The Nitty Gritty

Once a year...

1. **Identify and recruit a team of people to lead *WFL*.** Ideally this would be *at least* two people, which would mean you would only need to lead four per year (but by all means recruit more than two if you have the people for it). Feel free to give these people a fair bit of flexibility. If they are passionate about a particular

book, study, style etc. go with the passion (provided of course it's Biblical - if in doubt check with Dave).

2. **Recruit People for GC youth Ops.** The ideal is that *everyone*, takes a turn at this, however it may be that some people just don't want to. Because of this you will need to clearly explain the idea behind *GC youth Ops* to everyone in your GC and ask people if they are willing for the *Communications Director* to roster them on when the *Youth Ops* pop up.

Note: if most people get involved it will really only be a handful of times per year. You should also tell people to feel free to make Youth Ops their main GC activity for that week if their rostered week turns out to be busy (ie. feel free to skip the *Classic / WFL* or whatever else is scheduled if you need to).

3. **Communicate with your *Communications Director*.** He or she needs to know who your recruits for WFL and youth Ops are so that they can be rostered on.
4. **Identify potential GC leaders from within your GC.** Plan to invest in these people. If someone has the potential to be a good YC make sure that you mentor them, and aim to share your responsibilities with them.

Every two months...

1. **Communicate with your *Communications Director*.** Ensure that he or she has included two *WFLs* and any *GC youth Ops* that are to take place within the next two months on the Bi-Monthly Roster.
2. **Lead *WFL / Attend GC Youth Ops*.** Ideally you will not need to do these things even on a bi monthly basis (see points 1 and 2 under 'Once a Year...')

Once a month...

1. **Mentor future leader(s).** Of course some months might be so busy that this doesn't happen. However, we would love for our leaders to aim to meet with their trainee leader(s) *at least* once a month (if you need help with how to do this, talk to Dave).
2. **Attend *GC Leaders Training Meeting*.** About 2 hours every 2 months.
3. **Check in with the other leaders in your GC.** This need not be a big thing, and could be easily done at a normal GC gathering or GC leaders training meeting. Make sure the other leaders are going ok. Check whether they need help and provide some gentle accountability for their roles and mentoring.

As Needed...

1. **Make sure you understand and are on board with the S'leas youth ministry vision.** If you need help with this refer to our *Youth Ministry Handbook*, or speak to Dave or Christina.
2. **Be observant of, and listen to your people.** Try to be aware of how people are going with our vision for youth ministry

- 3. Help those who are struggling.** This *doesn't mean* that you necessarily have to fix their problem; you may well refer the person to Dave, or Christina.

Gospel Community Leadership Team Communications Director (CD)

Role Description

The CD is a bit like the engine room of their *Gospel Community* (GC). Because the GC Church paradigm is relatively programme light, if there is no commitment, planning, or communication in place months can go by with very little happening.

Without an active CD, GCs tend to fall back into just being regular small groups - the kids aren't included, the youth aren't disciplined and mission falls off the radar. In addition, because modern, western life revolves heavily around 'the diary' unless we actually align our diaries to some extent, we will struggle to share life together. This is where a good CD comes in (and I'm not talking about music, though that helps).

The CD has two main areas of responsibility...

1. **The Calendar:** Having consulted with the *Youth Co-ordinator*, *Mission Co-ordinator* and *Vision Leader*, the CD should put together a Calendar that shows what the major GC activity will be each week. This helps the rest of the GC be proactive in prioritising GC life together.
2. **Organise the GC when it's rostered on to host a Sunday Gathering:** In consultation with the GC, the CD is responsible for putting together and circulating a document that shows who will be doing what when it is the GC's turn to host.

The Nitty Gritty

Once a Year...

1. **Liaise with your *Youth Co-ordinator*.** Find out who they have recruited to lead *Whole Family Learning* (WFL) and attend *GC youth Ops*.
2. **Liaise with your *Vision Leader*.** Find out who they have recruited to lead *Classics*.
3. **Identify future CDs.** In consultation with your *Vision Leader*, identify any potential future CDs and commit to mentoring and sharing your duties with them.

Every Two Months...

1. **Liaise with your *Mission Co-ordinator*.** Find out whether any whole GC mission activities have been scheduled for the next two months.
2. **Liaise with your *Youth Co-ordinator*.** Find out when the *GC youth Ops* are scheduled and discuss when to schedule the WFLs (once a month).

3. **Put together a Calendar.** The Calendar should cover at least two months but may cover up to six, depending on what suits the GC best. This should show when all of the main weekly activities are taking place. Each Calendar should include a mix of *Classics*, *WFL*, *Youth Ops*, meals and when your GC is hosting. Around 3 of your calendars should include some kind of Whole GC mission activity. You should also roster on a leader for those events that require one (based on the info you have received from your *Youth Co-ordinator* and *Vision Leader*).
4. **Circulate the Bi-Monthly Calendar.** This should be done the week before the previous calendar runs out.

Once a Month...

1. **Mentor future leader(s).** Of course some months might be so busy that this doesn't happen. However we would love for our leaders to aim to meet with their trainee leader(s) *at least* once a month (if you need direction on how to do this, talk to Dave).
2. **Attend GC Leaders Training Meeting.** About 2 hours per month.
3. **Check in with the other leaders.** This need not be a big thing, and could be easily done at a normal GC gathering or GC leaders training meeting. Make sure the other leaders are going ok. Check whether they need help and provide some gentle accountability for their roles and mentoring.
4. **Organise your GC when it is time to Host a Sunday Gathering.** Find out who is happy to serve in what role(s) and then compile and circulate a document that explains who will be doing what that Sunday. The roles include...
 - Set up / pack up (everyone)
 - Welcoming (one person)
 - Bible Reading (one person)
 - Crèche (three people)
 - Prayer (three people)
 - Pack up (everyone)
 - Morning tea (everyone)
 - Milk (one person)
 - Checklist (one person)
 - Keys (one person)
 - Juice for Lord's Supper (one person when applicable)

How we do...

EVANGELISM AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

At Summerleas, our vision is *to grow Gospel Centred Organic Communities*.¹³ If this vision is to be realised, and our communities are to be truly *Gospel Centred* and *Organic*, then they must be communities that reach out *with* the Gospel (Evangelism) and help people increasingly centre their lives *on* the Gospel (Follow up).

Summerleas is committed to both evangelism and follow up taking place in Gospel Communities. To help facilitate this, an *evangelism pathway*, a list of *proven resources*, and a role (*evangelism and discipleship co-ordinator* - Mel Bultman for 2014) have been created. These are all tools that will be available to our members to assist them in the important task of reaching people with the Gospel.

1. Evangelism and follow up in the context of Gospel Community (GC)

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 for 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.¹⁴

¹³ Please read our *Core Values* for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues> and why they are key to our vision.

¹⁴ 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.

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. However, regardless of how the teaching happens, the rest of the community will work hard at including those they reach out to in normal GC life.

Likewise, when people become Christians, we don’t separate them into a ‘new Christians group.’ We believe that people need to see and experience Christianity, lived out by mature Christians in community, in order to become strong established Christians themselves.

We encourage our GC leadership teams to regularly assess how their people are going (whether they be non Christians, new Christians or more mature Christians) and how to help them move forward in their relationship with Jesus. As with evangelism, the teaching component of following up new Christians may happen one to one, in a smaller discipleship group from the GC or with the whole Gospel community in all within the context of broader GC life.

2. Summerleas Evangelism Pathway (see appendix 1)

Doing Evangelism in the context of GCs can at times seem vague and haphazard. Because of this, our ‘evangelism 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

3. Role of 'evangelism and discipleship' co-ordinator' (see appendix 3)

The role of the evangelism and discipleship co-ordinator (Mel Bultman for 2014) is to maintain the care planner database, to provide support and training for MC's and anyone else who wants or needs it and to ensure that no new member or contact remains unsupported.

4. Evangelistic resources (see evangelism pathway)

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 (study notes with alternative, less comprehension style questions are available), introduces the reader to Jesus by working through a simple bible overview and explores how Jesus fits into that.

'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 Mel Bultman, Dave or Evthoxia Lynch.

5. Follow up / Discipleship resources (see evangelism pathway)

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 on one.

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 apostles creed.
- '*Doctrine*' by Mark Driscoll. These talks on basic Christian doctrine are available at <http://marshill.com/media/doctrine>. The talks are quite long but are available as abridged versions or as short 10 minute summaries.
- '*New City Catechism*' by the Gospel Coalition which covers basic doctrines in a simple manner using an interactive web based program available at <http://www.newcitycatechism.com/>. It works by asking 52 different questions in 3 parts (Part 1: God, creation, fall and law. Part 2: Christ, redemption and grace. Part 3: Spirit, restoration and growing in grace.)

GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

- '*Core Values 1 -4*' These can be found at <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues>, and values 1-4 cover the characteristics of a healthy gospel community.
- '*Call to multiplication, Rev 7:9-17*' by David Lynch is a talk available at <http://summerleaschurch.org/audio> and covers what we are called to as a gospel community
- This Document

Please contact Mel Bultman if you would like to get hold of any of these resources or if you need training in using them.

Bible Texts

Romans 10:13-15 ³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

John 17:20-23 ²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵ But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Appendix 1

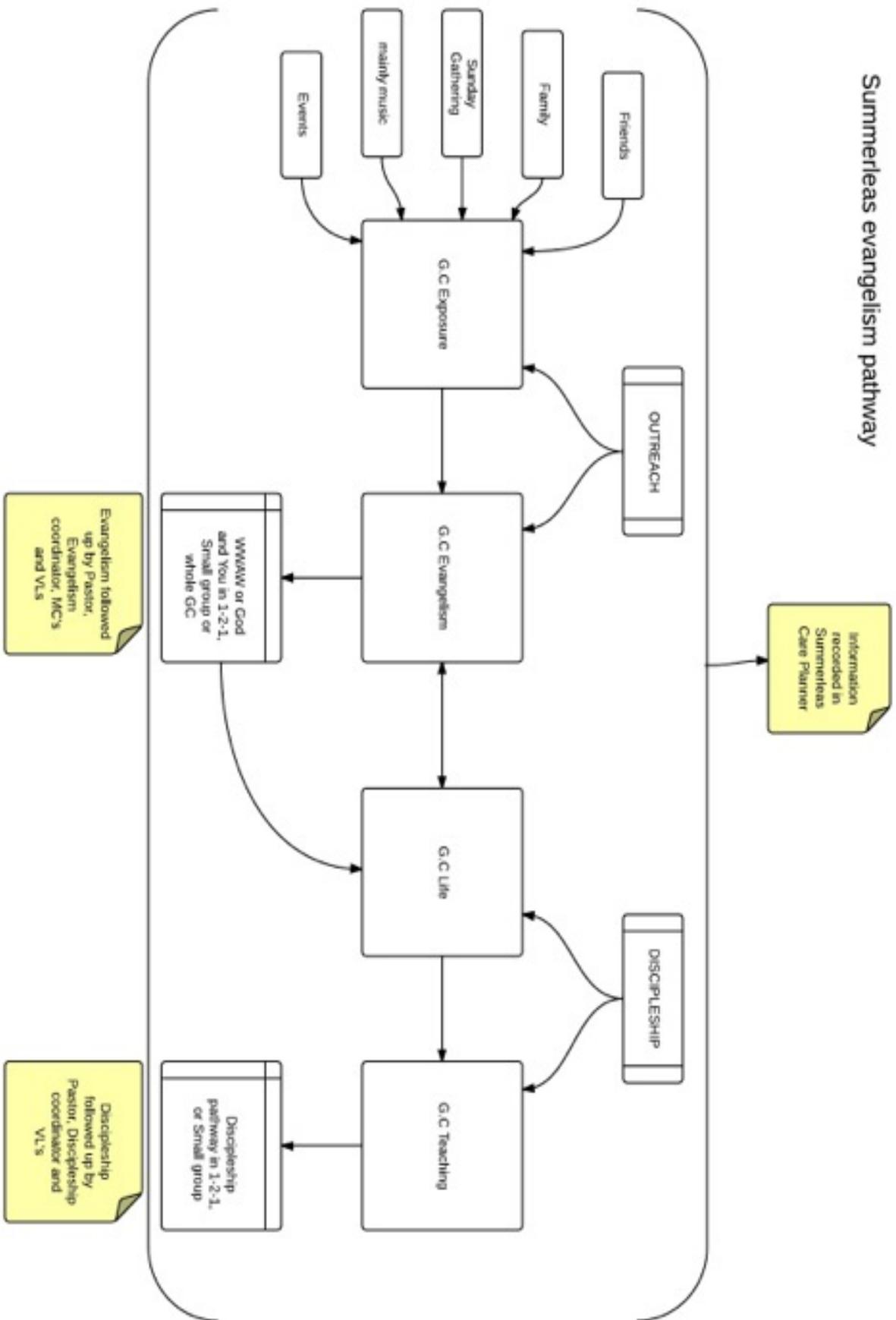


Diagram explanation

- 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, mainly music 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 3

Summerleas Evangelism and Discipleship Co-ordinator

Role Description:

1. Monitor evangelistic and mission efforts at Summerleas as a whole. Collect data and identify key areas of strength and weakness.
2. Help to promote the overall vision for how evangelism should work at Summerleas.
3. In collaboration with the pastor and elders assist in helping the Church to grasp the vision for how mission/evangelism would ideally work at Summerleas. Aid in promoting it as being a vital, exciting and doable part of being a gospel centred Church.
4. With the elders and GC Mission Coordinators (MCs), take steps to address areas of weakness at both the GC and whole community level
5. Meet 4 times a year with the MCs to discuss how their GCs are going in Mission; provide any training, support or resources required; share ideas; and pray together.
6. Provide resources for the MCs to use in evangelism and material for discipleship for the new Christian
7. Identify future Mission Co-ordinators and those who would be gifted at doing 1-2-1 with new Christians

Practical Responsibilities:

1. Maintain Summerleas Care Planner with particular attention to caring for any Non Christian people we have contact with.
2. Meet with MCs at the beginning of the year to communicate the vision and provide the resources and training needed for 'the World we all want' / discipleship
3. Meet with MC's every 3 months
4. Review Summerleas efforts at mission and Evangelism as a whole every 3 months, monitoring progress in weak areas. Discuss with Pastor/Elders and make changes as needed.
5. Invest time into study/research/conferences on this subject

How we do...

YOUTH MINISTRY

Introduction

At Summerleas, our vision is *to grow Gospel Centred Organic Communities*.¹⁵ If this vision is to be realised and our communities are to be truly *Gospel Centred* and *Organic*, then they need to be places where youth¹⁶ 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 S'leas, Youth ministry takes place within three, key, overlapping spheres **Parents, Gospel Communities (GCs) and Sunday Gatherings**. 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 of the S'leas 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*. We will have these available on our bookstall or contact Dave if we've run out. Alternatively, parents can speak to either Dave or their GC *Youth Co-ordinator* for further suggestions.

b) Bible Living - It is vital that our parents practise what they teach to their kids. We need S'leas 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.

2. Gospel Communities

All Christians need the love, support, and teaching of a Gospel centred community if they are to be effectively discipled. This can be clearly seen from the numerous '*one another*'

¹⁵ Please read our *Core Values* for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues>

¹⁶ In this document, 'Youth' refers to kids who are around 9-10 years old through to those who are currently in High School

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 1) 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

i) **GC Youth Ops (see Appendix 2):** Once a month one or more people from your GC will be rostered on to attend *GC Youth Ops* with the youth of your GC. Here all of the youth from Summerleas gather together along with some adults from each GC. They will spend time hanging out as a peer group over supper, before breaking up into small GC groups to pray and study the Bible. If parents would like more details about GC youth Ops, they should speak to their *GC Youth Co-ordinator*.

ii) **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.

iii) **GC Classics**¹⁷: As kids get older and are able to stay up later, we would love to see them involved in GC classics.

iv) **Mentoring:** Once kids hit high school, we would love to see them mentored by an older GC member. We believe that meeting with others to read the bible, pray, and encourage one another in the Christian life is a great habit for all Christians but it can be especially important for young people.

Often adolescence sees young people start to pull away from their parents as they begin to develop their independence. We believe that at this time young people need older, mature Christians in their lives. Often big questions about life and God are on the radar and young people need a trusted, older person to process these questions with in a biblical way. If a GC has high school kids in it, the leadership team (in consultation with the parents) will try and organise a mentoring for them.

v) **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.

vi) **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

¹⁷ 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.

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

i) **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).

ii) **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 Bible, pray, help with kids talks, help with music etc. 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 Vision leader or Youth Coordinator.

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 Focus¹⁸ leaders.

If parents are still unsure, or if there is a divergence of opinion between the parents and Focus leaders then we ask that parents contact Dave Lynch or Christina Flinn (see end of document for contact details).

Before each sermon, during the coffee break, we make special 'Sermon Notes' sheets available to our youth. 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.

¹⁸ Focus is a ministry we run on Sunday mornings for kids who are currently in prep up to the age of around 9 or 10.

We have found this system works best when parents are engaged in encouraging and helping their kids 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.vi)

Some weeks engaging with sermons is hard work for our youth. However, we're ok with this because often sermons are hard work for adults too. We want our kids to get used to the discipline of engaging with God's word, even when it is tough going, and despite the fact that they may not *particularly* feel like it sometimes.

4. Some comments on Peer Group

Sometimes people are concerned that our youth ministry does not provide enough in terms of peer group. This is because unlike churches that have a weekly youth group, S'leas is quite peer program light.

The reason we don't *emphasise* peer programs for anyone (not just youth) is because the Bible's main image for the church is family. Just as we don't consider there to be a problem with any other family that does not have kids the same age in it, neither do we consider this an issue in the Church or our GCs. The church is not first and foremost about providing peer groups, rather, the Bible's emphasis is very much on growth in the context of *diversity* (1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Ephesians 2:11-16; Colossians 3:11-15; Titus 2:3-5).

Having said all of this, we are not 'anti peer group' either (provided that it doesn't become cliquy) and we understand that for some young people it can be beneficial to have regular contact with Christian kids their own age. This is part of the reason we do GC youth ops the way we do. In addition, we would also encourage you to help your kids develop friendships with other Summerleas kids, informally, regardless of which GC they are in.

If in addition to to all this you believe that your child could do with *more* contact with Christian peers, we encourage you to contact Dave. There may well be ways we can coordinate more peer group interaction for your child.¹⁹

5. Contact Details

Dave Lynch (Pastor)

Email: dlynch@crckington.org.au

Phone: 0437 800 079

Christina Flinn (Focus Coordinator)

Email: ncflinn@gmail.com

Phone: 0432 873 986)

¹⁹ Of course our ability to do this will be limited by the ages of the other kids we have at Summerleas (Eg. your child is the only 16 year old and the other kids are all 12 and below)

Bible Texts

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

Galatians 6:2 ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Colossians 3:16 ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom...

1 Thessalonians 5:11 ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Hebrews 10:24 ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

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

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 ¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Ephesians 2:11-16 ¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-- ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and

in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Colossians 3:11-15 ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Titus 2:3-5 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Appendix 1

At Summerleas we don't have a dedicated 'youth team' as such. Instead, 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.

Appendix 2

At Summerleas, we want our Gospel Communities (GCs) to be places where young people experience Gospel Centred, organic, relationships and grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus.

Of course this happens at all sorts of times and in all sorts of ways as people share their lives with one another in community. However, one great way to make sure this ministry stays on the agenda is to make use of our *Gospel Community Youth Opportunities (GC Youth Ops.)*.

Who's it for? *Young People* who no longer attend Focus on Sunday mornings*. *Adults*. If you share a GC with young people who will be attending GC Youth Ops, we would love to have you come along at least once a year too!! (Please don't be shy, it's very laid back, easy and no preparation is required).

What Happens? We will begin by sharing supper and hanging out together in a big group, before studying the Bible. Bible study will mainly happen in smaller GC groups.

When and where? GC Youth Ops takes place at the Lynches' place (10 Nansen Court, Margate). We aim to kick off at 6:30 and be finished by 7:45.

Appendix 3

Summary - How to get on board

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.

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 attend GC youth Ops.
- Volunteer to mentor a teenager.

How we...

Care for people

Introduction

At Summerleas, our vision is *to grow Gospel Centred Organic Communities*.²⁰ If this vision is to be realised and our communities are to be truly *Gospel Centred* and *Organic*, 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.

a) 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 of 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 (1John 4:19-21). Using our GCs as our primary care system acknowledges this biblical emphasis and encourages all of 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.

b) What does this model require?

If we are to use this model effectively it requires...

²⁰ Please read our *Core Values* for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues> and why they are key to our vision.

i. *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.

ii. *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.

iii. *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 community

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

a) *A full time Pastor:* Summerleas supports a full time pastor (Dave Lynch) who is available to meet with people should they request it. It is important to note that Dave has no official qualifications in terms of counselling / psychology / social work. However, he has had experience ministering to people who are struggling in all sorts of areas.

Please note: because our expectation is that care will happen in the GC context, we ask that if you would like extra support from Dave, that you take the initiative and contact him (see section 3 'contacts').

It is also helpful to think through what kind of support you would like. Some people want nothing more than prayer from a distance, others want visits and still others more formal and intense sessions. If you are unsure as to what you want or need, the best place to start is to make contact and ask for an initial chat.

Dave is also a resource for our GC leadership teams. He provides ongoing accountability and training and if a team is confronted with a situation they feel is beyond them, they may contact Dave and ask for his help.

b) *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 Dave, or a GC, 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 Dave.

c) *Broader prayer support:* Every Sunday we distribute a weekly bulletin with a number of prayer points on it, and share in a time of community prayer. In addition, a *Community News Email* is sent out each week which also contains prayer points. If you would like the whole community to pray for you using any or all of these formats please contact Dave or Jo. 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 for you.*

d) *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 will request 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.*

3. Contacts

Dave Lynch

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Jo Nugteren

Phone: (H) 03 6229 3421

(M) 0415 780 752

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Bible Texts

John 13:34-35 ³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 ²⁵ ...there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Galatians 6:2 ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:10 ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Ephesians 4:11-12 ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Ephesians 4:16 ⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 John 4:19-21 ⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

How we do...

Financial Giving

Introduction

At Summerleas, our vision is *to grow Gospel Centred Organic Communities*.²¹ If this vision is to be realised and our communities are to be truly *Gospel Centred* and *Organic*, then they must consist of people who excel in joyful, sacrificial, financial giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7-9 makes it clear that if we centre our lives on the Gospel, then we will, like Jesus, sacrificially give of our riches for the Spiritual good of others.

At Summerleas, we encourage our people to think about financial giving in 3 key ways: **As Individuals, as Gospel Communities (GCs), as a whole Church community.**

1. As Individuals

God has placed us all in different situations, with different interests, families and relationships. We believe that each of us should give financial support to the good things that God has placed in our lives. Because of this, some of us will give to people / organisations / ministries that others do not. We think this is wonderful and it means that Summerleas has an impact in all sorts ways all over the world! However, as you think through your individual giving, we encourage you to make sure that you are **giving to the poor in some way** (Isaiah 58:6-7; James 1:27) whether this be through sponsor kids, aid organisations, local initiatives or personally helping people.

2. As Gospel Communities

Gospel centred communities are places where people look after each other not only spiritually, but also materially (Matthew 25:37-40; Acts 4:34-35; Galatians 6:2,10). We want our GCs to be places where people can be helped financially if need be. Because of this, GC members should be ready and willing to share their riches with one another when necessary (1 Timothy 6:17-18).

In addition, one GC may choose to engage in a missionary activity, support a ministry, or buy a resource together that other GCs may not.

3. As a Whole Church Community

We call on all of our members to help us meet our annual Financial Vision. This is the money required to keep Summerleas operating and growing. Summerleas is a not for profit organisation, so the money we raise for the financial vision goes to funding our running costs, various church ministries, and a number of mission initiatives both local and abroad.²²

²¹ Please read our *Core Values* for an explanation of what these terms mean <http://summerleaschurch.org/about/corevalues> and why they are key to our vision.

²² See the current Financial Vision for more detail. If you don't already have a copy contact Dave.

To set this financial Vision we go through the following process every year as a whole community:

1. Every August The Elders **present a draft Financial Vision** for the following year. This vision is prayerfully put together and is designed to help our church keep growing as it strives to partner with God in his extraordinary, universe changing plans!

You will be asked to consider the proposed Financial Vision, pray about it and give any feedback you may have. You can give feedback by speaking to or emailing Dave or one of the elders. Alternatively, you can speak to one of your GC leaders and ask them to pass on the feedback for you.

2. You will then be asked to **prayerfully consider** how much you can commit to Giving to Summerleas in the following year (2 Corinthians 9:7). This is a decision you must make before God in accordance with the finances he has blessed you with. As you think this through, please trust God when it comes to your giving, we have a God who is a gracious provider so we can afford to be sacrificial (2 Corinthians 9:8,11)!

3. Next you will be asked to make an **anonymous pledge** by the first weekend in September. For a number of weeks we will have pledge forms available at our Sunday Gatherings. Simply write the total amount you have decided to give for the following year on the form and put it in our 'giving box.' Do not write your name anywhere on the form as we want these pledges to be completely anonymous (Matthew 6:1-4).

4. When all of the pledges have been collected, they will be added up and if the total meets the financial vision, the elders will set this vision for the following year. If the pledges are less than what is required, the elders will go back to the drawing board, make adjustments and produce a new Financial Vision.

We know that **people's financial circumstances can change drastically** within a year. We understand that some people might not be able to give what they pledged. However this pledging system gives the leadership a *reasonable idea* of what they can expect and therefore budget for. It also helps our Church family to be disciplined, prayerful and intentional in their giving.

5. The following year we will make regular financial reports available to the Church. These will be made during our Sunday gatherings, in Sunday bulletins, and in our Community News Email so that people are as up to date as possible with how the church is tracking financially.

How do I give to Summerleas?

1. By far the easiest (and our preferred) way for you to give to Summerleas is by setting up a **direct debit**. Often people forget to give when they're away and sometimes people forget to bring cash on a Sunday. If you prayerfully plan what you want to give and then give via direct debit you will ensure that you're giving is regular and that the full amount you pledged actually gets given.

If you would like to give electronically you should use these details:

Account Name: **CRC Kingston**
BSB: **067 026**
Account Number: **2802 2340**
Comment: **Summerleas Giving**

Please make sure you fill the comment line in correctly because your giving will not get to Summerleas without it.

2. It is also possible to give cash. Whilst we don't pass around a collection bag at Summerleas, we do have a 'giving box' that sits on the table next to the main entrance. Simply put your cash in the box and it will go into the church funds.

If you are unable to locate the 'giving box' or have any other questions at all, please contact Dave dlynch@crckingston.org.au, speak with one of the other elders, or chat to one of your GC leaders.

Bible Texts

2 Corinthians 8:7-9 But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Isaiah 58:6-7 ⁶ "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

James 1:27 ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Matthew 25:37-40 ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Acts 4:34-35 ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Galatians 6:2-10 ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ...¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

1 Timothy 6:17-18 ¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Matthew 6:1-4 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work...¹¹ You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.