



THE GATHERING

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND CHRIST

Cell Groups

(2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)

Springbrook: 9:30 AM at the Springbrook Municipal Building, call Kevin and Kelly Kehoe (613) 395-4346

Stirling: 10:00 AM at 25 Demorest Rd, call Beth and Bill Devries at (613) 395-0227

Belleville: 9:30 AM at 39 Cooke Crt, call Jack and Jan Harris at (613) 967-6419

Kingston: (Monday evenings) 1338 Princess St, call Terry and Dawn Harris at (613) 531-5283

Youth: (Wednesday evenings), 7:00 PM at the Hub, downtown Stirling, call Beth Devries at (613) 395-0227

Other Opportunities

Study of Daniel, Tuesdays 7:00 PM, 38 Mount Pleasant Rd, Stirling, call Esther Noel at (613) 395-3402

Men's breakfast at the Hub, Every Saturday, 7:30 to 9:00 AM, call Barry Cooper at 613 395-5990

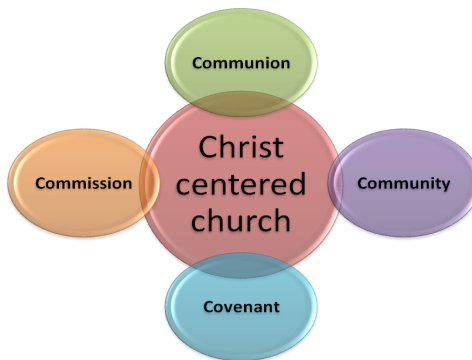
The 4Cs: Community...Love one another

Before his crucifixion, Jesus spent a lot of time reassuring his disciples for what lay ahead. He knew that fear would grip them, perhaps even paralyze them as they would apparently lose sight of the one they saw as their Messiah. In the midst of this preparation, Jesus spoke to them about the external sign, the hallmark of the change He was ushering in.

In John 13:34-35, He expresses this hallmark as a command that would signal to the world the reality of the transformational power of the Kingdom of God taking hold in our world: *"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to*

*the world that you are my disciples."*This is the backdrop for our second "C"; Community.

We, as followers of Christ, believe we are called to develop sustaining, and life giving relationships with



one another. In the midst of these relationships, the reality of the Kingdom of God taking hold in our lives is manifested to our families, friends and neighbours.

The writings of the epistles and letters to the first communities of believers give us of sense of what a sup-

portive "community" of believers can be if it invests in the efforts of enacting this love that Jesus requested.

Take the letter to Romans as an example: The author, the apostle Paul, had experienced the antithesis of love. Before encountering Christ, he was devoted to destroying communities of followers of Christ. His meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus transformed him totally. In Romans, this ex-hater of followers of

Christ, transformed by the love of Christ, invites his readers to enact lives filled by the love Christ requested of his followers.

In Chapter 12 of his letter, look at how he describes a vibrant community: In verses 4 and 5, *(continued on p. 3)*

Upcoming Events

December 13-14: Journey to Bethlehem, 5:30-9:30 at Sydney Baptist Church info: 613 965-0700

December 14: Christmas celebration at the Springbrook Municipal Hall, contact Kelly Kehoe for information (613) 395-4346

December 17: Teen coffee house, 7:00PM at the Train Station in Stirling, for info: Ashley Vader

December 22: Stirling Community Dinner, Anglican church at 5:00PM, see p. 2 for information

Prayer Challenge

Pray for your friends, family and neighbours, ask God to help them see how close He really is.

The Stirling Community Dinner will be held as usual Monday, Dec. 22nd at St.

Johns Parish Hall starting at 5 p.m. The only difference is, is that The Gathering will be taking an active role in this years dinner...There is a sign up sheet at the back of the church today or if you missed it, please email Jan Harris at jhar-ris1976@sympatico.ca or call her at 613-967-6419 to see how you can help. There is no charge for the dinner, however, dona-

So Who's Coming To Your Place For Dinner? *Thoughts on Hospitality by Lisa Barber*

"We really should have our neighbors over for dinner". Mel and I had been saying this for years and we were finally going to make it happen.

It is common for Mel and I to chat with our neighbors while we are outdoors. Our driveways are only separated by a thin row of scratchy bushes and a few tall maples. We can practically see right into each other's homes as our doors and windows face each other at close proximity. And though I would say they are "wonderful neighbors" the truth is that I hardly know them. In fact, even as I was phoning to invite them to dinner I was frantically thinking of what greeting to use, as I did not even know the wife's name! Now how pathetic is that??

I managed to invite them for dinner without embarrassing myself and within a few hours they were making

their way across the driveways to our back door. There was one small awkward moment when they were taking their coats off that I wondered how we would talk to each other now that there was not a little bush between us. Mel quickly seated our guests at the kitchen table and we jumped into something we could all enjoy and relate to – food!

Surprisingly conversation flowed easily. We had so many interesting things to talk about – mainly ourselves! We slowly moved from the table to the fireplace during the evening. And as it came time for them to leave I sensed that the quality of our driveway conversations would now be at a new and deeper level.

"Practice Hospitality!" With the same stroke of the pen the Apostle Paul also instructed us to "be devoted to one another in love"; "to never be lacking in zeal serv-

ing the Lord; " to honor others above ourselves"; and "to bless those who persecute us." (Romans 12: 9 – 14) Pretty hard-core stuff!

Though we often think of hospitality as serving meals in our homes, we must understand that it is much more than that. Hospitality is first and foremost a "way of being". The Apostle Paul required that elders "be hospitable" – not just in action, but in character. (1 Tim 3:2, Tit 1:8)

As we develop a heart of hospitality we will become a people who are inclusive. We will be quick to invite others into our lives and relationships. We will become generous with our time and our personal possessions. And wherever we are we will create a safe place where others can belong and experience acceptance. Wow!

Did you notice that I said, "Wherever we are"? That's



right – hospitality is something we can practice everywhere! Hospitality certainly happens when we invite people into our homes, but it also happens when we invite people into our conversations and activities. Anytime we invite others to come near us so we can share our lives with them – we practice hospitality.

The Christmas season is often a lonely and depressing time for people. Tradition says it is a time for families and communities to celebrate their relationships by enjoying festive (continued on p. 3)

Who is doing what at The Gathering?

Working with the youth: Beth Devries, (613) 395-0227

Intercession: Jane Aman (613) 395-3869

Pastoral care: Alicia Lott (613) 395-5342 , Jan Harris, (613) 967-6419

Phone Chain: Avril O'Brien (613) 478-6461, Esther Noel (613) 395-3402

Worship/Music: Sandy Norman (613) 398-8695, Bill Devries (613) 395-0227

Technical Gear: Kevin Kehoe (613) 395-4346 , Barry Cooper (613) 395-5990

Projection and computers: Vince Brintnell (613) 395-0613

Name the Hub

Our meeting place needs a name... We would like one that reflects the informal relational style of our church family and that invites the broader community in. If you have any suggestions, please let Jane Aman know.

Suggestions to date: The Hub, The Gathering Place

(Community... continued from p. 1)

he encourages them to consider the reality of how connected they are because of the grace of Christ: *"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."*

He speaks to them about authentic appreciation of one another in verses 9 and 10 within the context of prizing what is good. He entreats them to take pleasure in noticing each other's value and goodness: *"Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other."*

The apostle Paul also equates love with action. We can't remain indifferent to the troubles of our fellow followers of Christ but are called to take action to help in those

difficulties. Look at what he says in verses 13: *"When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality."* He ends this verse by encouraging people of the church to open their homes to one another.

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul raises the stakes by declaring that we are to submit to one another (Eph 5:21).

We, in The Gathering, thirst to enact the reality of God's Kingdom taking root today. Our commitment to live as a community of believers who truly value one another, who support one another in times of difficulty and need, who live out the reality that we are truly connected to one another and are blessed to bless one another sends that signal Jesus was speaking about to his followers: *"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*

Mark Norman

**DO YOU HAVE KIDS
INTERESTED IN
SUMMER CAMP?**

If your child is between 11 and 20 and would like to go to Graphite bible camp in august of 2009, you can call Christine at 395-5990 before December 9. If the child has not gone before I will need your address and phone number.
thanks
Christine Cooper

(Hospitality, continued from Page 2)

meals together and laughing while they play games, sing songs and tell stories by the fire. In reality, however, these activities simply do not happen. Or, if they do, they are marked by hurry and stress – reminding many of how distant and shallow their relationships are.

What a great opportunity we have in this coming month to minister to our friends, neighbors, family and even strangers by practicing hospitality.

Here is what you can do:

- At social events include those around you in your conversations.
- In group conversations, stop and explain the important details to someone who is not familiar with the story being told or the issue being discussed.
- Invite others to join in your activities – whether it's everyday things like going for a walk, or special things like a community event.
- Invite your neighbor in for coffee (you may need to delay other plans in order to make time But be assured that kindness has it's own timely rewards :-)
- Think of people you want to get to know better, or that might be alone for most of the Christmas season – invite them into your home for a meal, or have them join your family celebrations.

Be confident in knowing that having a spotless house, a well planned menu or refined social graces are NOT important for providing true hospitality. You, your home and your community will be safe and welcoming places if you are authentic and at peace. Be yourself and simply share what you have. And always be receiving and extending forgiveness so that the grace of God can abound to and through you.

Stirling Community Cupboard: Bring non-perishables with you to our cells and to our meetings

Over the next few weeks, we would like to ask you to bring non perishable food items to the Celebration or to the office. We hope to contribute as much as possible to restocking the shelves of the Community Cupboard as Christmas approaches.

Don't throw out your aluminum pop cans

André Froment is on a mission, he wants to help fund our next project in Kenya by collecting aluminum cans and your loose change. Bring your empty pop cans when we get together and empty your small loose change in the container at the back of the gymnasium. All funds will be contributed to the building project in Kenya.