

1. What are we doing at Lower Mountains Anglican?

We gather to proclaim Christ

In all that we do, as we gather small and large, regularly or for one-off events, at our locations or beyond - we do so to proclaim Christ. That marks us out as Christians.

Jesus is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. (Col 1:28)

We serve in Mission and Ministry

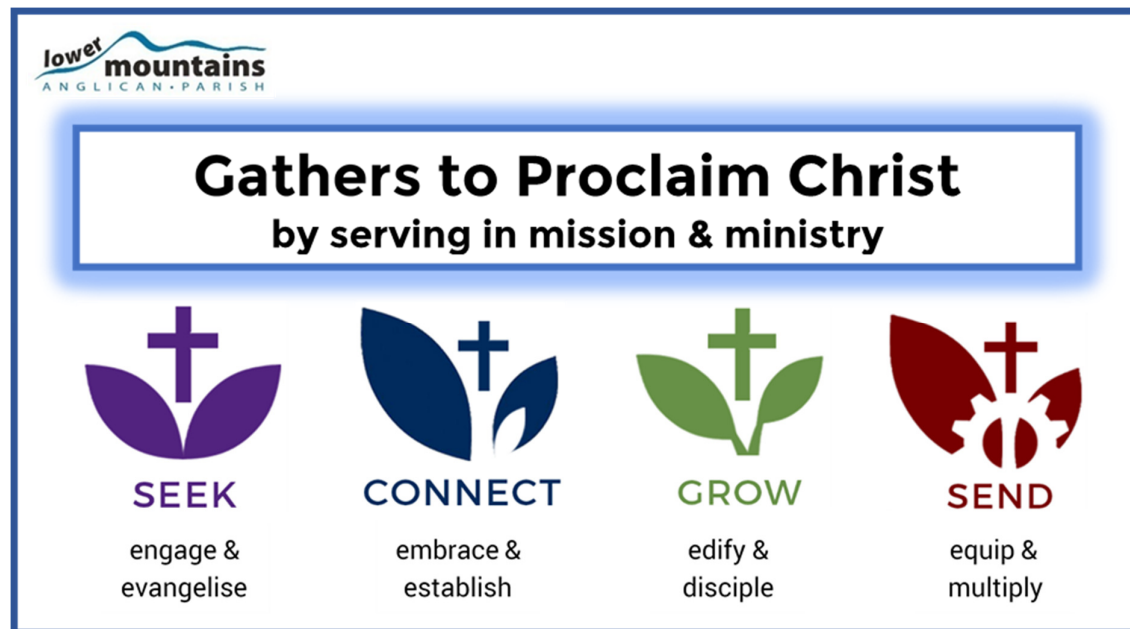
We serve with one another. And together we serve God, his people and his world in gospel proclamation. In doing so we hope to cultivate a culture that is all about *mission* and *ministry* by the saints.

In serving Christ, we serve people

In the first instance, LMAP serves *people* from Valley Heights to Lapstone. Our community.

In serving Christ, we serve his purposes

What that might look like in practice is broad and varied and so to simplify, we serve by *seeking out, connecting in, growing up and sending on*.



2. What part does Growth Groups play?

3. What is the purpose of a Growth Group?

Discussion Questions:

- a. What motivates you to serve as a Growth Group leader?

- b. What motivates the members of your group to attend and contribute?

- c. If you were to ask the members of your group ‘What is the purpose of us meeting as a Growth Group?’ – what do you think they would say?

Growth Groups (and our other ‘Grow’ ministries) exist as a smaller expression of Lower Mountains Anglican Church - where the Bible is central - and where the group can explore, discuss, understand and apply God’s Word – in order to prayerfully grow one another in Christian ministry and mission. These ministries are also the best place to offer deep and intentional pastoral care.

a. Studying the Bible Together

Colossians in 2:6-7

So then, just as you *received* Christ Jesus as Lord, continue *to live* in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Paul wants to keep everything Christ centred:

To _____ Christ as Lord

To _____ with Christ as Lord

- 1:5-6
- 1:7
- 1:9
 - the result (1:10)...
- 1:23
- 1:25-26
 - 1:28 ...
- 2:3
- 3:16
- 4:16

For all the good things that we can do to build others up in our church and growth groups and ministry groups – we must do the things that see the Christ of scripture proclaimed and taught – and we won't do that if our ministries are not intentionally looking to dive deeply into God's word.

b. Building Relationships together around the Word

There is often a tension between 'building relationship' and 'studying the Bible'

Question:

Relationships are fundamental to Christianity. Growth Groups are a great place for developing and deepening relationships. What might be the dangers of stressing 'community' in Growth Groups?

A good relationship is clearly seen in the Godhead. God is a relational God in the three persons of the Trinity and as demonstrated in his creation of humanity. Yet we know, that sin distorts and destroys relationships. What restores those relationships (with God and with others) is what is proclaimed in the gospel as revealed in God's word.

Although the overarching purpose of our Growth Groups is to grow in our knowledge and love of God, loving one another is both *a means* to growing in Christ and *a result* of growing in Christ.

c. Growing in Knowledge of God - prayerfully

Our relationship with God is much more than knowledge – it is a relationship of thankful dependence upon him, as expressed most clearly in prayer.

Exercise: Summarise what you learn about prayer from the following verses in Colossians and how this might look in a Growth Groups:

passage	Summary	Growth Group implication
1:3-5		
1:9-14		
2:1-2 (NB: struggling = prayer)		
3:15-17		
4:2-6		
4:12		

d. Serving the gospel together

Finally, as we *partner* together in the ministry of the gospel our Growth Groups aren't the only context in which we serve in ministry and mission.

Exercise

Where is LMAP Spiritually Strong? (Rightly commended)	Where is LMAP a little blind? (if honest, could do with a kick up the butt)	Implications for my Growth Group
How are we going at <i>Seeking</i> out? (<i>engaging</i> and <i>evangelising</i> those who don't yet know Jesus)		
How are we going at <i>Connecting</i> to? (<i>embracing</i> and <i>establishing</i> people as they come into faith)		
How are we going at <i>Growing</i> up? (<i>discipling</i> and <i>edifying</i> Christians)		
How are we going at <i>Sending</i> on? (<i>equipping</i> and <i>multiplying</i> Christian saints to grow God's kingdom)		

So, four features of a Growth Group (or 'Grow' ministry):

- a. Studying the Bible together
- b. Building relationships together around the Word
- c. Growing in knowledge of God - prayerfully
- d. Serving the gospel together

Reflection:

What has been most helpful for you?

What next for you?