

JOURNEY



A Guide to
Taking Your Next Step



January 2026

WHY GROUPS?



The speaker set the scenario: "It's midnight. And the ringing of your phone pierces the silence. The voice on the end of the line calmly explains to you that there has been an accident. You need to get to the hospital as quickly as possible. As you hang up, your mind races to think of someone you could call to care for your children sleeping in the next room. If that's you, who would you call?"

That question exposed a cavernous void in my relational world. I knew no one to call. Over the years I've learned that many people experience that void. People living without extended family nearby. Or moving every two to three years. Or they are so busy they don't have time for friends. How do you fill the void?

I accepted the speaker's challenge and joined a group. And through four decades of doing life in various groups I have learned that we all need community and what it can bring to our life.

Being loved. Group time allows us to be real, be authentic. Good groups will love us as we are and love us enough to not let us stay that way.

Being cared for. We need people to walk with us in the ups and downs of life. In community we get the privilege of helping them, too.

Being challenged. As we grow in a group, we feel safe asking tough questions. Groups empower us to take next steps of growth. They celebrate what God has done in us and through us.

The speaker's question haunts me no more. I am part of a loving caring community. And if the phone rang tonight, I have a group of friends I could call.

Do you?



(continued on next page)

WHY GROUPS?



If you're not in a group I would love to help you find or create one here at West Ridge. Three times yearly new community groups launch and existing groups add new members. I like to call these "on-ramps" and the next one begins January 11, 2026.

Here are some things to consider as you explore this step of growth:

- What day or time would consistently work for you?
- Would you like a group that meets weekly, every two weeks or once a month? Your calendar may be pretty full right now, but what about a few weeks from now?
- Would you prefer a men's group, women's group, a couple's group or a mixed group?
- Do you need childcare?

Think through your questions. Look at your calendar and other commitments to see what days might work best for you.

And let's talk - on Sunday morning, on a phone call, over a meal or a coffee. These are my favorite conversations, so let's talk about what type of community would be best for you!

Greg Bowman
Community & Care Pastor
847.488.1800, x150 (this office line rings through to my cell)
Greg@WestRidgeChurch.com



Using the camera on your phone or tablet, scan the QR code (on the left) and let me know you are interested in a community group at West Ridge!

Existing Groups



Several of our current groups are looking for new members. Take a look at the list on this and the following page to see if any of them interest you.

Checking out a group is not a commitment. It's simply showing interest and curiosity. Your initial visits are like a test drive.

If any group catches your interest, contact Greg Bowman for more details. You can find his phone number and email on the last page of this document.

The group onboarding process will continue through the month of January. After that, these groups will close to build relationships and grow deeper.

Men's Group

- Wednesday evening, weekly meetings at West Ridge. Open to men of all ages

Women's Groups (groups meet in a group member's home):

- Tuesday evening, bi-monthly meetings for women of all ages
- Wednesday morning, monthly meetings for women aged 50+
- Sunday evening, monthly meetings for women of all ages
- Thursday, bimonthly, crafting and conversations

Couple's Group

- Sunday evening, meets twice monthly, couples 30's to 50's

Young Adults

- Thursday evening, weekly, spiritual growth and friendship

Existing Groups



Young Adults

Whether college graduation is just around the corner or you're a young professional in your 20s or 30s, single or married without kids, this might be where you belong! This group is a supportive community of young adults at various stages of life who want to feel more connected to other believers, continue to grow their personal relationship with God, and give back to the local community. While life can often become very busy, this is an opportunity to be intentional about your faith and establish lifelong relationships. We look forward to seeing you at both our casual gatherings and evenings where we dive deeper into the Word together!

DAY: Thursdays

PLACE: West Ridge and online (if you want to stay connected at College or traveling for work)



Marriage Matters Group

Alan and Samantha Snyder lead this couples group - and they offer childcare! The group meets weekly for lively discussions about building a great marriage and the challenges every couple faces. Always open to additional couples - so you won't be the only newcomers!

Meeting Day: Wednesday evening, every week

Meeting Place: West Ridge Cafe

MARRIAGE GROUP



Your Best "US"

Every married couple is unique. They're an US. There are things they like to do, places they like to go, histories that are their own. And whether they are loving their US, wondering if their US is going to make it, or somewhere in between, every couple at some level wants to become their best US. They just may not be sure how.



So while the way we are wired both individually and as a couple may be different....

While our stage of life might be different.....

While our situations may be different....

...there are some great habits that empower every marriage - core habits that come from the Bible and can help every couple become their best US.

Join us for any or all of these one-night events that will strengthen your marriage. **Your Best "US"** is a mix of teaching, small group and couple's discussion times. **Your Best "US"** will be offered 6 times a year with new topics and content each time.

LEADERS: Greg & Connie Bowman

DAY: Wednesday evening, January 28 @ 7-8:30pm

PLACE: The Café @ West Ridge

Future Dates:

March 4, April 22, May 20

WOMEN OF WEST RIDGE



To walk into a group of people you don't know can feel intimidating. Especially when you show up with an expectation of becoming a part of them. That's why Women of West Ridge offers risk free gatherings that begin with a larger group teaching on a relevant topic, then huddling up in smaller groups to discuss and build relationships.



Faith & Fellowship

You are invited to this twice a month gathering, designed to build into your connection with other women and with God. It's a safe place to share, to pray, to learn, and to encourage one another. Each night is a new topic/theme so if you missed out on any nights, you can still come. We meet on the second and fourth Mondays of every month at 7:00 pm at West Ridge. This is a perfect first step in finding your people and digging deeper into your relationship with God.



Women's Special Events

Occasionally Women of West Ridge have fun events that allow for great laughter, food and friendship creation. Everything from bunco to Friendsgiving to serving together in the community. These are great first steps that can lead to lifelong relationships. Please check our website www.westridgechurch.com for up to date info on upcoming events.



Women's Retreat

March 13-15, 2026 at Stronghold Camp in Oregon, IL
Registration begins soon!



Serving Opportunities

Want to give back to our community and support local families? Along with West Ridge Cares we partner with organizations like Fellowship Housing and The Ruth Project.

MEN OF WEST RIDGE



Everything about Men of West Ridge ultimately comes back to relationships. And the best relationships happen in groups where we can know others and grow in our faith journey. Men of West Ridge has a three gatherings (below) – and those gatherings help you to find those few, that band of brothers, who will do life with you.



Tuesday Tune Up (weekly 7-8:45pm, in the Café)

Tuesday Tune Up is a gathering for every guy. This gathering begins with a brief teaching from one of the guys. That is followed by a time in community groups, where men huddle up to discuss the real stuff men face as we live out that teaching. If you are a guy, this might be the best way to take a step one into community. No registration needed - just show up!



Men's Breakfast (Second Saturday Monthly, 8-9:30AM)

There's a lot to love here. A great breakfast. Honest conversation about the stuff every man faces in living out his faith. Each month one guy shares a thought-provoking teaching, and what follows may be the best part of the morning - honest conversations in smaller groups, where you realize you're not alone. It's a great first step into community.



Man Camp (October 16-18, 2026 in Oregon, IL)

Man Camp may be the least churchy church thing ever. We built this all new event for you, and we want the real you there. If you're ok with simply exploring the possibility that there is a God, and that He wants to know you, you'll be good at MAN CAMP. We designed this thing so that guys who are curious about God have a shot at asking their questions and exploring some answers. We also designed it as a rare opportunity for every man to be himself. We want you there—not a fake, more religious version of you.

Mark your calendar today!

SUPPORT GROUPS



DivorceCare

DivorceCare is a friendly and caring group of people who are each going through separation or divorce. They will walk alongside you through one of life's most challenging times. The group is led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. Once registered, you'll gain access to valuable DivorceCare resources to help you deal with the pain of the past and look ahead to rebuilding your life. DivorceCare group participants spend time as a support group viewing and discussing that week's video as well as what is going on in the lives of those in the group.

DAY: Tuesdays 6:30-8:30PM

PLACE: Foundation Room @ West Ridge

REGISTRATION: \$20

FREE CHILDCARE: Register with QR Code (on the left) or at WestRidgeChurch.com/event/divorcecare

DivorceCare for Kids

DivorceCare for Kids (DC4K) support group is a safe, fun place where your children can learn skills that will help them heal. DC4K groups blend games, music, stories, videos and discussion to help kids process divorce and move forward. A parent must be enrolled in DivorceCare in order for their child to be in DC4K.

AGE: 5 YRS - 12 YRS

DAY: Simultaneous with DivorceCare (above)

REGISTRATION FEE: None

SUPPORT GROUPS



M.E.N.D. Support Group (for men and women)

M.E.N.D. is here to provide hope and healing through your journey after the loss of your baby. M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death) is for families who have lost their baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. During group we share openly about our experience of loss and support one another on the journey of healing.

We are so sorry you need our group, but you do not have to grieve alone. Please join us.

If you have questions, you can email Carrie Tudor, who not only leads this group but is also the Chicagoland Director for M.E.N.D. Her email is carrie@mend.org

Day: First Tuesday each month

Place: Atrium Room

Time: 7:00-8:30

SUPPORT GROUPS



Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem.

A.A.'s primary purpose is to help alcoholics achieve sobriety.

Hosted at West Ridge Church, the Wednesday Night Serenity Group (AA) is an open group. The room is handicapped accessible.

DAY: Wednesdays 7:00PM every week

PLACE: Atrium (Room 102) @ West Ridge



Expect A Miracle AFG (Al-Anon)

Al-Anon is a program of hope and help for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking.

The purpose of AL-Anon is to help friends and families recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking of a relative or friend. Our focus is on ourselves, not the alcoholic. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism with a friend or relative, in the present or past. There are no dues or fees.

This group is hosted at West Ridge and is open to anyone in need. The meeting space is handicapped accessible.

DAY: Thursdays @ 7:30pm every week

PLACE: Atrium (Room 102) @ West Ridge



Here's your next step!

If you:

- Found a group from the list that you'd like to try, or...
- Would prefer a recommendation for a group to try, or...
- Would like to come to Men of West Ridge, Women of West Ridge or join a support group, or...
- Are looking for something different than what's here, or...
- Would like to start a group in your neighborhood?

Then there are two simple options for your next step:



email greg@westridgechurch.com



text "group" to 847.488.1761

Greg Bowman, our Community & Care Pastor, will follow up and help you get connected.