

## Second Church: An Experiment in Fellowship

### The Question

For many people, the worship service - First Church - is their only experience of church. What would happen in a congregation if it also had **Second Church**, a chance for people to connect more deeply with each other, and to connect that First Church faith with their Monday-Saturday “real” lives?

### **Would it make a difference to the congregation?**

Working with the Christ Church in Gardiner last year, Darreby and Michael Ambler came up with several small group experiments to see what worked best to knit people together in a way that made a difference to them.

They are bringing the most successful of these groups to St. Bart’s as they work with us to create Second Church 2.0. The hope is that we will all learn together ways of invigorating fellowship that we can bring to the wider church next year.

### The Groups

Two groups are forming this fall with a third group forming later in the Fall, offering different levels of commitment. We encourage everyone to try one. No need to sign up ahead of time.

### **Storytellers:**

A circle of 8-12 people meets to share stories from their lives. There are different prompts every week, such as “Describe someone who was a role model for you.” Or “Name a gift of yours that you love to use and tell us a story about when you were using that gift and what it felt like.” You can come to tell a story, or just to listen, with drop-ins enthusiastically welcomed.

**Led by:** Michael to begin, and eventually new leaders.

**Time and Date:** Storytellers will meet for an hour after the service in the Chapel. We’ll gather 15 minutes or so into coffee hour so folks can catch up and grab a bite to eat before we meet.

Interested? We’ll gather for our first round of stories on Sunday September 17th.

### **Account-a-buddies:**

Four to six buddies will gather as a team to give each other accountability and support for getting one hard thing done in their upcoming week (anything is fair

game...buddies in Gardiner chose everything from turning off their tablets by 9pm, to navigating Medicare forms, to saying “no” to an overreaching friend.) Goals can change from week to week, reflecting the challenges the buddies are facing that week.

**Led by** Darreby to begin, eventually with new leaders.

**Time and Date:** Account-a-buddies teams will meet with Darreby for an hour after the service upstairs in the Library. We’ll gather 15 minutes or so into coffee hour so folks can catch up and grab a bite to eat before we meet.

Each team will last 8 weeks, with an option to continue.

Want to be a buddy? Come on Sunday September 17th, where we’ll meet to see how many people are interested. If we have more than 6 people, Darreby will launch a second team a few weeks later. (Eventually, the first buddies will be able to lead new teams!)

Later in the Fall, we’ll introduce:

**Wayfinders:**

Four to six teammates go on a weekend retreat to listen for where God seems to be calling them next. From that discernment, they each choose a goal. This is followed by 8 meetings every week or two to help each other bring their goals to life.

**Led by:** Darreby

**Time:** The first Wayfinders Team will launch late October (with a break for the holidays) ending in January. If there is interest, two more Wayfinders teams will launch mid-winter/spring.

Interested or for more FAQ go to <http://wayfinders.me/church>.

You can also reach out to Darreby and Michael directly at [darrebyambler@gmail.com](mailto:darrebyambler@gmail.com) or [mamblerjr@gmail.com](mailto:mamblerjr@gmail.com)

Testimonials from Gardiner:

*“I am so thankful for taking the leap out of my comfort zone to join Account-a-buddies! I have been blessed to have become friends with some amazing people. The support I have been granted - as well as being able to support - this wonderful group of people is immeasurable! It has been a joyful, spiritual, and humbling experience.”*

*“As a newcomer, Storytellers has been an excellent way to meet people whom I would not have otherwise... We discovered that even in an ordinary parish in an ordinary place in an ordinary state, there are some extraordinary stories, and everybody has them.”*

*“It’s probably safe to say that most of us have asked the questions, “What am I called to do?” and “What is God’s plan for me?” Well, if you want to explore the possibilities, consider joining a Wayfinders team and plan to have fun! Two months into our journey together, the six of us have been turned loose by Darreby to continue to share our individual pursuits, celebrating accomplishments as well as difficulties. Getting to know each other in an intentional and spiritual way is truly a gift.”*

