

LCA House Churches – FAQs

What is a house church?

A core group of Christian people who share in a common life...like a family committed to one another and God.

Why are we starting house churches now?

Lake Country Alliance Church (LCA) exists to encourage faith in Jesus while cultivating order, beauty, and abundance primarily in Lake Country. We do this by empowering God's royal family to walk in freedom and fullness. Empowerment looks like providing structures, environments, and support through which people can share their experience of the spiritual disciplines (e.g. prayer, engagement with God's Word, acts of service, etc), be mutually edified, and grow into greater Christlikeness. In our post-Christian culture, rife with shifting values and uncertainty, we believe that an effective, biblically sound way of empowering our community of believers is to develop Christ-centred, closely-knit groups of individuals who share life together, intentionally getting to know each other and God more and more.

What does a house church look like?

House churches will look different in different contexts; and our own house churches may themselves develop over time as the Spirit leads. However, for now, here are some distinctives of an LCA house church:

- 15 people max
- Demographically mixed (i.e. varying ages and walks of life)
- Meets formally once a week on Thursday evenings in someone's house
- Based on Acts 2:42, contains the following elements:
 - A potluck meal
 - Social interaction—community-building
 - A “worship service,” during which 5 Practices occur:
 - Candle: A candle is lit
 - Song: God is worshipped through various means—music, art, readings, etc
 - Scripture: God's Word is heard and considered (Scripture and the Apostles' teaching)
 - Lord's Supper: Participants partake of the Lord's Supper
 - Prayer: God's people pray
- For a more thorough explanation of the house church model we are exploring, please take a look at these [Simple Church videos](#).

How is a house church similar to a home group?

Home groups (also called small groups, cell groups, and life groups) have existed for many years in the North American church as a primary way for believers to enter into community more deeply. House churches are similar in these ways:

- Small groups (15 people max)
- Meeting at someone's house on a weekly basis
- Scripture, prayer, and community are foci
- Enjoyed in addition to the weekly corporate worship service

How is a house church different from a home group?

Here are the key ways in which house churches are different from home groups:

- **Increased level of commitment to the group.** Members see the group as “my people.” The expectation is that the group’s interactions will not be restricted to a single evening but will occur in other ways throughout each week. Members are really “here for each other:” spending time together, praying with and for each other, keeping each other in the loop on important developments, and supporting each other in practical ways as needed.
- **Contributors, not just consumers.** Members are not participating merely to get their own needs met (e.g. good biblical instruction, spiritual nourishment, comfort); they realize that each person in the group has something to offer and a role to play. Some of the ways members contribute might be:
 - Bringing food to share
 - Cleaning up after a meal
 - Hosting
 - Reading from the Scriptures
 - Administrating
 - Playing musical instruments or singing
 - Curating musical selections
 - Sharing pertinent works of art
 - Telling stories
 - Pastoring
 - Encouraging some to loosen up and others to get serious
 - Facilitating biblical exploration
 - Leading in prayer
 - Providing practical items like toilet paper and candles
 - Sharing the dreams and excitement of youth
 - Offering the wisdom and steadiness that comes with age
 - Listening well
 - Trend-setting in courageous vulnerability
 - Modelling authenticity
 - Inspiring joy and celebration

- **The use of liturgy.** During a house church's weekly gathering, there comes a time when the food is put away, the chit-chat dies down, and everyone gathers together. A candle is lit as the focus turns to the Lord. Reminiscent of a corporate worship event, words like order, adoration, prayer, scriptural meditation, and celebration could be used to describe this time. While the Bible will be read and expounded upon, this time is less like a Bible study and more like a communion of the saints.
- **Yes—children, too!** Members understand that wonderful things happen when old and young participate in life together—and this means including the kids! The children aren't just sent off to do something else but are invited to participate (as much as they can) in all aspects of the gathering, with members believing that the Holy Spirit can speak *to* them and *through* them as much as anyone else.
- **Guests are welcome.** House church members are able to invite neighbours or friends to join them to taste and see that the Lord is good. House churches are not “closed.”
- **Multiplication.** House churches, similar to strawberry plants, are able to multiply as leadership capacity allows.
- **Outward Conscious.** House churches are also on the lookout for ways to link arms with one another to serve locally and (possibly) internationally.

Why will LCA be doing both house churches and the Sunday worship service?

Meeting together once a week is not an effective way to develop mature disciples of Christ. We believe two to four meet ups per week with your local church is healthy. We recognize that implementing house churches represents a paradigm shift for many. Continuing with the corporate worship event on Sundays while adding Thursday night house churches displays our commitment to grow in loving fellowship and Christlikeness. In addition to providing reassurance through the familiar, it's our hope that house churches will be able to enhance more deeply what the Lord is doing in our midst, with the help of such aids as sermon study guides and greater opportunities to use our specific spiritual gifts to build one another up.

How will the leadership of the house churches work?

House Churches are shepherded typically by a minimum of two House Church Pastors (HCPs) who report to the Lead Pastor, who in turn shepherds the HCPs. Along with a House Church Host and a House Church Administrator, the expectation is that many in the group will share various aspects of leadership. Once a month, the house churches do not meet at their regular time so that the HCPs can meet together as a group with the Lead Pastor in order to receive ongoing training, support, and mutual edification. The house churches will continue to operate under the authority of the LCA leadership and, by extension, the Canadian Pacific District and the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada. Ethical behaviour, psychological safety, and theological accountability are high values that will be promulgated, guarded, and monitored.

How does one join a house church?

Those interested will submit a request form online. Requests will be considered for a house church based upon the current sizes and dynamics of existing house churches. Talking to an HCP or expressing a preference for a particular house church does not guarantee that you will be placed in the house church of your choosing, but we'll try our best to honor requests. You are also able to request to be in a house church with other specific people.

We believe house churches are for everybody. However, we recognize the high levels of commitment and contribution may be deterrents for some. We encourage you to take time to pray about this decision. For those who feel compelled to sign up now, click [HERE](#).

Are house churches for LCA members and adherents only?

No. It's our intention to leave space in each house church, with a view to members inviting neighbours and friends into the group over time.

What happens when a house church grows beyond maximum capacity?

No sudden decisions will be made. As a house church approaches its size limit, the HCPs will discuss with LCA leadership next steps—i.e. whether and when the group might form a new house church and who might be the new HCPs. This process will be executed with much prayer and careful consideration.

Where can I learn more about house churches?

We are leaning heavily on the Simple Church house church model, founded and led by Andy Lambkin in North Vancouver, BC. To learn more about Simple Churches through videos, click [HERE](#) or to check out the website, click [HERE](#).

How will house churches work during COVID restrictions?

House churches work best in person. However, that doesn't mean that we can't get started by simply getting to know each other. Therefore, we plan to start slowly by having the HCPs get to know those who express interest in being part of a house church. This could include a conversation with a HCP through...

- Video calls (E.g., Zoom, Facetime)
- Phone calls
- Outdoor walks

Request to be part of a house church by clicking [HERE](#).