

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Luke 10:25-37 New International Version (NIV)

25 *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

26 *"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

27 *He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

28 *"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

29 *But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

30 *In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. **31** A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. **32** So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. **34** He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

36 *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

37 *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:29 "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR"

Some have said: "You cannot define neighbor. You can only be a neighbor."

Many believe the cancellation of large group gatherings, including church, is fear based. While there is some fear in this "pandemic," the decision to close church for several weeks is rooted in "being a good neighbor."

John Vianny, an 18th century pastor said, "Being a good neighbor is the desire of greater good for everyone."

Many of us may struggle with not meeting together, but it is for the greater good. Our sacrifice, our disruption of tradition, our humble concern is being a good neighbor.

Hopefully, we will not be like:

A group of neighbors gathered for a campfire and marshmallow roast. The marshmallows were handed out and placed on sticks. Suddenly, sirens were heard, and fire trucks raced by. The neighbors got up and raced down the road, where they saw a neighbor's house in flames. When they arrived, the neighbor, whose house was burning, was shocked and hurt to see them arrive with marshmallows and sticks in hand.

We must be good neighbors, sensitive and concerned for the well-being of all. The choice to not meet might not be popular, financially sound, or good for future attendance, but it is "being a good neighbor!"

When you read Luke 10:25-37, a few things jump out:

1. The neighbor stopped for his neighbor. We are willing to stop our routine for our neighbors.
2. The neighbor approached his neighbor. We are willing to stand together for the greater good and for our community.
3. The neighbor got down next to his neighbor. We are willing to listen to our neighbors' concerns and fears.
4. The neighbor picked up his neighbor. We are willing to make the effort and take risks of picking others up.
5. The neighbor took his neighbor to shelter. We are willing to help build a safe place emotionally, spiritually, and physically for our neighbors.
6. The neighbor provided for his neighbor. We are willing, even at our expense, to provide and contribute to our neighbors' well-being.

Not who is my neighbor, but AM I A GOOD NEIGHBOR!?

A long time ago, I noticed an older woman wandering in a parking lot. I thought it was strange, so I approached her. All she could say was, "They left me, they left me." I looked around and saw no one and decided to walk with her into a store and call 911. On the way, an older man came up and yelled, "I told you to stay in the car!" He then explained she had dementia and was very confused.

I could have ignored her, driven by her, and not gotten involved. I had no obligation, no responsibility, no moral code! Yet, I got involved because I do not want to be part of a community that does not care about one another - a community where we do not know how to BE a neighbor to our neighbors.

The proof is in our ability to see and ACT TOGETHER, to identify our neighbors, and more importantly, be a good neighbor to them.

Over the next few weeks, there will be many opportunities to be a good neighbor - to be like Christ in a difficult situation. There will be many opportunities that need people who are willing, ready, and able to "be a good neighbor."

During this "pandemic," there will be many opportunities to "BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR." We are called to be Christ in this difficult situation and bring hope and peace to our neighbors. God wants us to be

people who are willing and able to be good neighbors. I believe we, at North Park, are being called to action. So, be a GOOD NEIGHBOR! 