

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

"Who is my neighbor?" Everyone is my neighbor (Luke 10:25-37) - Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, Question #57

"When do you love your neighbor in the right way?" I love my neighbor in the right way when I do what Jesus tells me to when he said, "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you..." (Matthew 7:12), - Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, Question #58

Amidst all of this past summer's blockbuster movies, a documentary on the life of Fred Rogers, the late host of the children's television show, *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, grossed over \$22 million at the box office, making it the highest-grossing biographical documentary ever! Apparently, I was not the only one whose childhood was positively influenced by this gentle, patient, loving teacher in the red cardigan.

Mr. Rogers consistently taught some simple, yet profound, life lessons, such as:

- Share your love with the people around you.
- Be a great friend on good and bad days.
- The inside matters more than the outside.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Learn to manage your anger.

As Wendy and I settle into our new AZ neighborhood, we are pondering what these same lessons look like in light of what our Lord also taught us in loving our neighbors as ourselves. Do we know our neighbors' stories? Do they have anyone in their lives who are willing to listen and love? Do they know Jesus? How could we serve them and how might we be willing to let them serve us?

"The Gospel Comes with House Key," by Rosaria Butterfield, is an excellent book that looks at what 'radical ordinary hospitality' looks like in a Christian home. It's messy and sometimes costly. It can also be beautiful and life-giving.

As our culture continues to shift more towards a post-Christian worldview, we are left with three possible responses... hide, fight, or love in the power of Jesus. The first two responses come naturally. And there are situations where Christian voices need to be heard, such as the ballot box!

But what does it look like to "love our neighbor in the power of Jesus?" It's about learning how to love our neighbor while at the same time not accepting their conclusions on morality and faith. It's about learning how to listen first and then only speak when we have earned the right to speak. It's about learning how to invite people into our homes without impressing them with our cleanliness or answers. It's about learning how to become a disciple-making movement, right around your dining table or in your living room. It's about showing them Jesus. May we encourage and pray for each other in this shared mission?

Praises and Prayers from around the Pacific Region...

- Prayer for **Andrea Bernard** who was elected as Pacific Region North Women's Ministries President.
- Praise for the elder ordinations of **Elders Dale McLerran and Dave Wills** at Rock of Ages in Seattle.
- Prayer for **Cornerstone Community** in Ferndale, WA as the church begins the process of searching for their next pastor. Praise the Lord for the good and faithful ministry of Bill (Sally) Helland over the past five years!
- Prayer for the upcoming **National Youth Workers Conference** in St. Louis this November 15-18. Ben Miller (Maple Park) and Beau Sibuma (Hope) will be attending from the Pacific Region.
- Praise for the mortgage burning at **Calvary Community** in Fullerton, CA. *Thank you, Lord, for all your people who have given faithfully and sacrificially to make this debt-free moment possible!*

Shared with a grateful heart,



Phil Heiser
Pacific Regional Pastor