

First United Methodist Church

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There's a little jingle I remember from when my children were young. The words go like this; "It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine? Could you be mine?" OK Everybody, Sing Along!!! It's the theme song to Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. The song ends with these words; "So, let's make the most of this beautiful day. Since we're together we might as well say; Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Please won't you be my neighbor?"

This song was sung at the beginning of the show, and then what followed was Mr. Rogers would tell stories and introduce people that showed how we all can be neighbors in our communities and in this world that we live in. We are all connected...or at least we can be.

An unfortunate reality of our world is that we tend to get to know the people in our own little realm of the world and we humans tend to not look much further. We know who we know, we like who we know, and we tend to leave it at that. This is part of the human reality that Mr. Rogers was trying to overcome with his show. He was trying to show that different people, different races, different cultures and traditions all had something of beauty to offer the rest of the world.

Yet, Mr. Rogers was also trying to show that as much as we all may be different, in so many ways we're all the same, in that we want to be loved, cared for, and to be valued. So, Mr. Rogers kept introducing the viewers to new people, new situations, new experiences and singing that same song; "Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Please won't you be my neighbor." You see, what Mr. Rogers kept reminding us, over and over again, is that to be a good neighbor we have to get to know and value our neighbors.

Do you realize that our church building has been at the same location for over 110 years? There have been a lot of neighbors that have come and gone over those years. In fact, many long-term residents of the area would say our neighborhood has changed a lot in the past 50 years. So, a good question to ask, do we know our neighbors? If we as a church believe that God has placed us in our downtown location to make a difference in this neighborhood, do we know our neighbors well enough to build relationships with them, to understand their concerns and what they value in life, so that we can share the journey of life and faith with them? All too often the answer is "no, we really don't know our neighbors."

Thus, a key component of the MCCI Consultation Weekend is sharing community information, including demographic statistics about the neighborhood in which our church resides. In other words, we will have the opportunity to learn about our neighbors. I was surprised when I looked at some of the information about our neighborhood, such as the number of children around our church, as well as the number of people who respond that "faith isn't important." We have great opportunities to be in ministry right here in our neighborhood!!

There is much we can learn about our neighbors as well as what we can do to be a good neighbor. Learning about our community is a piece of what we'll experience on Saturday, September 22 during our Saturday Seminar, which will be held at the church from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Please come join us. By the Way...if I remember right, Jesus had something to say about who our neighbor is. I know that we as a church want to be the kind of "neighbors" that Jesus spoke of. Our message continues to be, "Please won't you be my neighbor?"

Serving Together,
Pastor Keith

This Sunday, Worship is at 9:30 and communion will be offered. Our scripture reading will be Mark 8:34-37.