



LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

Fall Mini-Series ■ October 28-November 18, 2018

Jesus spent most of his life in the small “backwater” town of Nazareth. Here he grew up, worked, and was schooled in rabbinic Judaism. Here he developed empathy for the poor, the broken, and the downtrodden. Here he tapped into the human need for hope in a God of love. In this ordinary place, Jesus’ extraordinary vision for the kingdom of God evolved.

Let’s imitate Jesus and fall in love with our neighborhoods. Let’s see beauty with fresh eyes, and develop a vision for how we can be agents of love, peace, and hope right where we live. For the next 4 weeks, let’s together explore how we can serve, befriend, and celebrate our neighborhood the way Jesus did.

Day of Service ■ Sunday, November 4

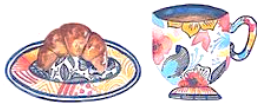
In week 2 of this series, we’ll meet practical needs in our neighborhoods through a Day of Service. We’ll gather at 9AM at Cedar Ridge for a potluck breakfast, and then go out in groups to serve. Ideally, we’ll serve close to where we live.



Take time to explore possible projects in your immediate neighborhood. Is there a stream, park, or school where trash needs picking up? Neighbors who need help with raking leaves? A nursing home, shelter, or other facility in need of friendly faces and helping hands? Gather a group of friends, and let us know about the project (info@crcc.org) so we can send other volunteers your way.

As in years past, there will also be a number of on-site and off-site service opportunities at Cedar Ridge.

Following his miraculous resurrection, Jesus returns to the backwater of Galilee and serves breakfast on the beach for his friends.



*Jesus said to them,
"COME LET US HAVE BREAKFAST."*
JOHN 21:12

1. Read John 21:1-19. What strikes you most about this story? With whom do you most identify, and why? Why do you think the writer of John's Gospel adds this story as an epilogue?
2. Why do you think Jesus goes back to his home neighborhood of Galilee in this story? What does this say about Jesus?
3. Read John 1:35-51. What connections do you see with the above passage? What does Nathaniel think about Galilee? What do you think Jesus thinks about Galilee, and why?
4. What do you think about your own neighborhood? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it? What caused you to move there?
5. Jesus reaches out with forgiveness to Peter in the story in John 21. What is your relationship with your neighbors like? Have you any strained relationships? Do you need to forgive anyone, or need to ask for forgiveness? How could you create a better atmosphere between you and your neighbors?
6. Jesus serves his neighbors breakfast on the beach. What are some practical ways you could serve your own neighbors?
7. Spend some time praying for your neighborhoods. Invite God's presence and take some time in silence to picture your neighborhood and imagine ways you could serve.

Take a Prayer Walk Around your Neighborhood



Set aside some time to prayerfully walk your neighborhood—maybe with others from Cedar Ridge who live close by; or with your children, if you have any. As you walk, think about the sights, sounds and smells of the neighborhood.

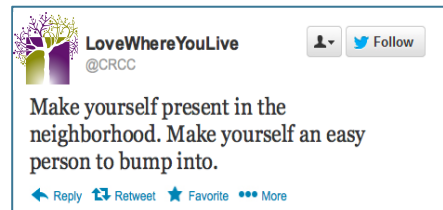
Reflect on the following: Are there places in your neighborhood that you wouldn't go? Why? Where are the places of life, hope, beauty or community? What evidence of struggle, despair, neglect and alienation do you see? What sense of connection do you feel to your neighborhood as you walk through it? In what ways do you sense God's presence where you live?

Sunday
November 11

Befriending our Neighborhoods

John 4:1-30

Jesus crosses all kinds of social barriers to connect with someone his culture considered an outsider. He vulnerably asks for assistance and engages in conversation in a deep and vulnerable way.



1. Read John 4:1-30. Jesus seems to deliberately start a conversation with this Samaritan woman despite having to break social taboos to do so. Who are the outsiders in your neighborhood? How do you feel towards them? How might you connect with them?
2. Why do you think this woman goes to the well in the hottest part of the day? What tactics do people employ to avoid one another in your neighborhood? Why do you think that is?
3. What are the 'wells' in your community: places where people are likely to run into one another? Do you avoid or frequent these places?
4. What are some ways you can make yourself more accessible and available to your neighbors? What daily habits could you change to make this possible?
5. Are there any neighborhood events, gatherings, places or social groups that you could support, or where you could be a positive presence?
6. Two weeks ago we looked at a passage in John 21 where Jesus serves. This week Jesus asks for help (a drink of water). Are there ways you could ask for help from neighbors or ask if they need help as a way of creating a spirit of mutual care and support?
7. Spend some time praying for your neighborhoods. Take a moment to think about specific people and invite God to show you ways you could be a friend.

More Ways to Engage in your Neighborhood

- Shop locally and talk to store staff
- Eat at local restaurants
- Sign up for your local listserve or Facebook group
- Attend a talk or join a class at your local library, museum or community center
- Join a local amateur sports team
- Participate in community festivals
- Join or start a book club



Sunday
November 18

Celebrating our Neighborhoods

John 2:1-12

In this story, Jesus participates in a community celebration. When the wine runs out, the hosts face public humiliation. Jesus abundantly but quietly provides, allowing the festivities to continue, and others to take the credit.



1. Read John 2:1-12, preferably in *The Message* version of the Bible. Imagine this story from the perspectives of the different characters. What do you think Mary, Jesus, the servants, and the host felt throughout this narrative?
2. Why do you think Jesus went to this wedding of two unnamed, presumably poor people? What does this tell us about Jesus? What does this tell us about how we should live as followers of Jesus?
3. There are many stories of Jesus eating in people's homes. To what extent do you think this was (i) a cultural norm, (ii) a discipleship strategy, and (iii) a source of joy for Jesus? What makes you think this?
4. In many places in the Bible, we are instructed to offer hospitality (1 Peter 4:9, Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, etc.). In what ways have you shown hospitality to your neighbors in the past? What difficulties did you have to overcome, and what worked well?
5. How could you show hospitality to your neighbors in the coming weeks? Could you invite them round for drinks or a meal? Join them for an activity you know they enjoy? Ask them to our *Advent in the Barn* event?
6. Spend some time praying for each other to deepen your relationships with your neighbors.

Advent in the Barn ■ Saturday, December 1 ■ From 3 to 6PM

Invite your neighbors to join us for hay wagon rides, s'mores making, cookie decorating, fair trade gift shopping, and more. Sing along with traditional Christmas carols, while sipping hot chocolate, mulled wine or spiced cider in our historic barn.

