

THE GOAL: Love God AND Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

We talk a lot about “goals” in the Stewardship Committee. We track dollar amounts and number of pledges received, hoping and praying that the figures set as goals can be met. We shout, we cheer, we celebrate the progress made week by week. Always, however, the real bottom line is THE GOAL from Luke 10:27: Love God AND Love your neighbor as yourself. Everything GCPC does is oriented around this three-part commandment.

When I read in a previous newsletter about the Pew Research Center for Religion and Public Life’s survey on why people go to church, I wasn’t surprised by the top “very important reason”. The most frequent response “To become closer to God (81%)” speaks to the “Love God” part of the commandment and that is good.

The next three most frequent reasons listed are: “So children will have a moral foundation (69%)”, “To make me a better person (68%)”, and “For comfort in times of trouble/sorrow (66%)”. But I wonder, where is “Love your neighbor as yourself” in this list?

I think the second and third parts of the commandment “Love your neighbor as yourself” are essential to GCPC's ministry and part of why we are growing in numbers and ministries. We see the church as a source of comfort and a source of challenge. Because Jesus tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, people here are stepping out into the world, opening our eyes to injustices, and challenging ourselves to constructively engage those injustices. We are not content to stay within these walls. We seek out ways to interact with the larger world and share God’s abundant love and transformative power. We are here because GCPC is a supportive community of God- AND neighbor-lovers, a very special place. Thanks be to God!

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