Discussion #1: How does your faith call you to love your neighbor?

- Putting My Faith Into Action by serving the least of them – serving women/girls – sex trafficking
- Walk a mile in the other persons shoes
- empathize with the rejected for religious reasons
- “understanding my neighbors circumstances – homelessness/children/hunger
- Loving those who are “different” than me/you
- Help with basic needs – “willing” to listen and respond – unselfishness
- Cast out all fear
- All voices are important and deserve to be heard
- seek understanding – be open to the difficult work
- Not becoming “the enemy”
- acting in kindness & love always
- Be open to conversations
- Be loving even if you disagree
- …the greatest of these is love
- Love of self first
- silence to listen
- Knowing Christ
- apologizing when wrong
- community relationships & listening
- generosity of/to strangers
- treat others the way they want to be treated. – Ask.
- People want to be heard
- Realizing we are all the same – we are children of God
- Love of theology
- Value all equally – whether other race, nationality, gender identity
- service
- physically welcoming others into our buildings (rentals, etc.)
- Advocacy – act of faith and love – immigrants, environment, homeless, etc.
- Deal with others fear (perfect love casts out fear)
- How do you love politicians you don’t like?
- How to love the people hurt by changes that politicians we don’t like are making?
- Using the gifts you have to act locally
- Earn the right to disagree by loving
- Show up. Keep showing up. Show up at unexpected places.
- Take time to introduce ourselves, and get to know our neighbors.
- make time. Do the work.
- Share music with the sick & dying…also talk with them…listen to them…
- Visiting with residents at Abernathy Laurels and an indigent person (poor materially)
- sharing and reaching out to family who are far away
- realizing we walk on sacred ground of those who came before us…
- Being accommodating to others who are trying to pursue their “calls” in life…
• Reaching out to others in their struggles by being in touch with our own struggles…
• Engage people based on the gifts they bring to the table…not their “rough edges”
• Who is our neighbor:
  o Everyone
  o People like only
  o Abraham studies
  o anyone who has a need that I can respond to
  o Person who has something to offer “me”
  o Those who don’t say they need a neighbor
  o No exclusions
  o Anyone comfortable with
  o We can love people without them being part of our inner circle
• Really love people and do our best for them
• responding to others’ needs
• driving for others
• evaluate our finances and the charitable requests – making sure your funds are used wisely.
• Asking why? Why do we need to have charities in a country of abundance? Why do we have the problem?
• How to encourage independence in people.
  o e.g. Exodus Homes
  o letting people know legal rights – training
• Listening
• Pray for neighbor
• Listen
• Welcome
• Ask?
• Listen to each other
• Be authentic in response
  o respectful
  o integrity
• My table vs Our table
• Grow
• Add leaves to the table
• just do it
• act
• find connection
• less judgment
• Look beyond political opinion
• be blind to color – prejudices
• be willing to confront our prejudices
• avoid polarization
• moving beyond “comfort zones”
• become “sanctuary church”
• remember our caring, loving values
• come to terms with being equal!
• forgive!!
Discussion #2: Practices for loving your neighbor in wider community, WNCA, world

- Provide sanctuary
- getting to know people
- stepping out of comfort zones
- become “open & affirming”
- working with families & education within the congregation
- reaching out to students/reading
- just reach out & love unconditionally
- educate about environmental justice issues
- promote voter registration
- reach out to neighborhood children/fill needs
- share to military families & homeless
- feeding/dinners/fellowship
- Room at the Inn – homeless – changed opinions re homelessness.
- distributing bags to homeless – empowering people who are unsure – cultivate youth in programs of assistance
- Meal services to community
- family/friends day – random visitation to church area – publicize services of church
- intentional emphasis on welcome at beginning of worship
- sanctuary churches
- mission trips
- services to homeless children & foster children
- services to persons aging out of foster care
- partnering with other churches, groups, to accomplish change
- educating congregations, especially young people
- Offer sanctuary
- 2 church in same building – separate and blended services
- show love to the wider community
  - backpack
  - $ food
  - “love month” snacks for soldiers
  - 5 for 5 Saturday soup kitchen
  - community social ministries
- Widening the circle
- opening church for weddings – marriage equality
- putting shower and washer/dryer in church
- hosting program for latch-key
- emergency bags for people who are homeless
- reaching out to other UCC churches
- Bible study for inter-church
- coming to the table
- listening
- narrow gate – working with others with vastly different theologies
- small group meetings
- asking a lot of questions
• looking at our resources – what's available
• discussing the answers to the questions until you find consensus
• a lot of prayer
• recognizing and using our variety of gifts
• respecting everyone’s opinions and feelings
• Widening the circle
• promote interracial and interfaith worship experiences and fellowship
• hold seminars on relevant topics for community i.e. racism, immigration, LGBT, and inclusion
• learn to see people through the eyes of God and take action for justice
• focus on children to spread love and justice.
• Model to children. They are future.
• better together than apart
• fostering interfaith dialogue & relationships
• Provide shelter & housing (addressing chronic homelessness)
• provide space for community & self-help groups
• Collaborating with area churches to provide: tutoring, community services/resources, hot meals, necessary health products, food, etc.
• LOVE!
• Providing and delivering meals to children when they aren’t in school/summer
• OCWM – Our Church’s Wider Mission
• Blankets – disaster relief
• socks for needy
• cards for military
• soldiers of cross – helping retired ministers
• Farm café – pay what you can restaurant
• learning opportunities for youth in community
• Corner table in Newton
• safe spaces for youth discussion
• “first families” (help with social services)
• meals on wheels
• coats collection
• angel trees
• F.A.R.M. Café – Boone
• Western Watauga Food Network
• Johns River Mission Trips
• Face to Face volunteerism
• Rooms in the Inn – Women’s Housing
• Family Promise
• Children’s Council Support Group
• 1st Church Endowment (foundation of Carolinas)
• Legacy gifts
• Handicap accessible
• “Out in High Country” – “Out Right Youth”
• LINC (Thrift Store)
• Thrift shop
• Joe’s café
• Support foster children & their families
• support for homeless families
• support for unemployed (tri-cities)
• Ex-offender support (Exodus)
• Nursing Homes
• Do more giving
• be kind. show more love. listen.
• Help carry the weight
• Free pancake breakfast monthly and free evening meal to all who come. Sit with them and get acquainted.
• Food boxes
• give to homeless shelters
• provide shelter
• food insecurity outreach
• baskets for sick and shut in.
• ice cream social for community.
• W. I. S. E. (Welcoming. Inclusive. Supportive. Engaged) Congregation
• Self-care groups for congregation
• John’s River Camp Outreach – financially support
• F.A.R.M. Café (feed all regardless of means)
• Open & Affirming congregation
• Love your own family with their needs – care taking.
• offer a helping hand. Visits
• roll up your sleeves to work and be open to discuss conflict and needs
• Welcome everyone. Accept people as they are.
• Leased part of church to African American group to function as church for them
• clothing facility for under privileged
• organized Laosian church. Finance their mission to Thailand & Laos.
• Provide free Saturday lunch for 3 months seeking to reach homeless.
• “Room in the Inn” Provide shelter for homeless during winter months.
• provide support for Title 1
• Involvement w/ racial justice group
• sanctuary supporting church
• Christian-Muslim group
• Build a bigger table
• open & affirming ministry
• prison ministries
• overseas ministries
• local church partnerships across traditions for broader ministries
• participate with Christ – “get to” vs. “have to”
• Ministry across diversity
• Build relationships with those who think differently
• The practices of “keeping it shut” and curiosity
Discussion #3: Practices for loving neighbors as yourself in Your Community — Your church’s practice to love our neighbors? Partnering/ collaborating in our community?

- Working with Elon Homes – foster care
- UMC backpack ministries
- UCC Charlotte – college students in need – job interviews/clothes
- LINK – missions trips/thrift store/welcome kits for prisoners
- soup kitchen – meals
- household goods for families that have been burned out
- collect canned goods/soup kitchen
- send funds to prisoners at Christmas
- families first – support
- overflow shelter for winter months
- environmental justice issues
- Room in the Inn – house homeless
- Interfaith council in city (Jewish, Muslim, Christian)
- Congregations collaborate to centralize services to meet the needs more efficiently
- Get to know one another, connect and be involved together in outreach ministry
- support members in their activities in the community
- dinner/discussion groups, small, big brunch
- mission moments in services and big brunch for community awareness and be involved in those agencies, etc.
- building & grounds used for community needs – ministry of hospitality & integrated services, etc.
- dreaming about collaborating and growing ministry and opportunities for mental health
- lent services around ministries and outreach
- W.I.S.E.
- Action → show love.
- Being able to collaborate
- being able to approach one another with understanding for what we can offer one another in our church and community
- being able to love, have patience, and be humble with each other
- be able to listen without speaking
- you have to know your neighbor.
- being able to help those in need
- approach other like minded groups/agencies
- Imagination station
- Establishment of more sanctuary churches
- community meals by churches – Lord provides
- Thanksgiving – Friends for Life
- Children’s Models – teaching languages
- Exhibiting love
- Building spiritual leaders
- “Pay it forward
- Demonstrate a Giving Spirit
- More Souls in Heaven
- Realize our responsibility – challenges
- Welcome with: kindness, smiles, listen, helpful, talk with them
• Show love to elderly
• Communication from church
• Being the hands and feet of Christ in community. We will be welcoming to others who believe differently (seekers)
• Fear – finance – giving up something – sacrifices
• Effective communication
• Stop say “it’s mine”
• Identify diversity – look for ways to interact
• we (UCC) need to feel united as a church!
• Finding ways to get to know your neighbor
• interest in our neighbors
• helping hands for those in need
• Involvement with youth organizations – joint fundraisers
• Trunk or treat
• blood mobile
• Connecting to other churches/nonprofits/etc
• Involvement with foster care
• winter coats
• beds through thrift store
• birthdays
• Department of Social Services (opioid crisis → more foster kids)
• connected to hospitals, Rising Hope, YMCA, to help foster kids’ birthdays
• gift certificates for foster parents
• giving kids training in thrift store
• LINC = 6 or 7 churches joining together for projects
• supporting Abernathy through thrift store
• Peacefully unified churches
• actively extend the welcome
• develop & seek out relationships with key community leaders, organizations, churches, non-profits, medical providers, schools, etc. – Canvas the community
• Healing conversations
• collaborate & delegate rather than compete to provide services
• network of churches, non-profits, and county government providing an umbrella of services
• advocacy
• power of an opportunity
• providing educational opportunities
• share and combine resources
• don’t compete for members, build ministries
• pray for others
• ministry of presence
• service – “love is acting others into well-being”
• build relationship – get to know our neighbor
• Be vulnerable
• be willing to move out of comfort zone.
• Seek justice. “Justice is what love looks like in public.”
• ALL people are worthy of our love.
• The practices of “keeping it shut” and curiosity