

Mission Moment: Love Together
October 8, 2017



Good morning. I'm Katrina Lewison and these are my girls, Marlena, Elsa and Ida. This is stewardship month, and the stewardship committee asked the Lewison ladies to share how the church has helped us to fulfill the mission of the church—Particularly, how does the church help us to “love together”.

When we moved to town six years ago, our family attended church for nearly four years at another location. It was nice, thriving church, but I felt that something was missing. When I sat in church, I actually felt angry and down-trodden. I couldn't put my finger on what exactly was missing. So my wonderful, patient husband Tyler, said, “Why don't you write down your church criteria...and then you'll know what might be missing for you.” So here is my original list:

- Age appropriate Sunday school
- Other school-age kids
- Women can have a leadership role
- Woman can be a pastor
- Regular stewardship in action
- Christian doctrine and examples
- Mutual Accountability –people check in with me to see how I'm doing if I'm not at church
- Open and welcoming to all people

After visiting other churches for a year, we came here. Right away, I could see that this church was different. It's in the first line in our mission statement –Love unconditionally. To love and accept others unconditionally as God loves and accepts us...and by example, to encourage others to do the same.

Now, on my original list of church criteria, this church checks a lot of boxes—female pastor, check. Other kids, check. Women in leadership roles, check. Open and welcoming to all people. Check. And...mutual accountability. Check. I feel like there is an accountability aspect to our church, from the time I walk in. I am challenged by this church, from the time I walk in and to love and accept others unconditionally as God loves and accepts us...and to an example in my daily life and actions, to encourage others to do the same.

For me, this means that I have a responsibility to set an example on how to love unconditionally --to my children, my co-workers, my neighbors and other community members. I wanted to give you a couple example of how I've been challenged recently, and how thinking about this church, helped me to stop, slow down, reflect, and take a path of love...patience...understanding. Instead of a path of self-interest.

In going door to door, to drop fliers for the upcoming local election, I try to maximize my time and go as fast as possible (note—self-interest!). I came across a man who really wanted to talk to me. Since I was alone, my creepy-man meter was on high-alert. But I lingered, took a deep breath and listened. What came next was a story about how he had recently lost his son in Afghanistan. If I had only been concerned with my own time and self interests...I would not have taken the time to listen and give love to this man. God puts people in places for a reason. I was able to share with him some of my own experiences of loss in combat! God put me there for a reason!

Now...I will turn it over to my girls and they will tell you how the church helps them to love together:

Marlena: Church helps me to find a voice and show love to my friends even when we don't have the same opinion.

Elsa: I am an acolyte....and can show love to others by doing this.

Ida: Mary Poppins taught me that a spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down.

On behalf of our family, we are so happy that this church helps set an example of how to share love!