



THE WAY OF LOVE
Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

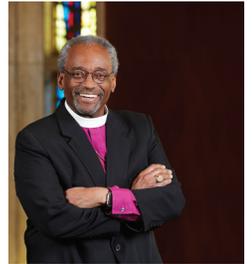
THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

An Invitation from Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry to Practice the Way of Love

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. — **Ephesians 3:17-19**

In the first century Jesus of Nazareth inspired a movement. A community of people whose lives were centered on Jesus Christ and committed to living the way of God's unconditional, unselfish, sacrificial, and redemptive love. Before they were called "church" or "Christian," this Jesus Movement was simply called "the way." Today I believe our vocation is to live as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. But how can we together grow more deeply with Jesus Christ at the center of our lives, so we can bear witness to his way of love in and for the world? The deep roots of our Christian tradition may offer just such a path. For centuries, monastic communities have shaped their lives around rhythms and disciplines for following Jesus together. Such a pattern is known as a "Rule of Life." The framework you now hold *The Way of Love: Practices for Jesus-Centered Life* — outlines a Rule for the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

It is designed to be spare and spacious, so that individuals, ministry groups, congregations, and networks can flesh it out in unique ways and build a church-wide treasure trove of stories and resources. There is no specific order you need to follow. If you already keep a Rule or spiritual disciplines, you might reflect and discover how that path intersects with this one. By entering into reflection, discernment and commitment around the practices of Turn – Learn – Pray – Worship – Bless – Go – Rest, I pray we will grow as communities following the loving, liberating, life-giving way of Jesus. His way has the power to change each of our lives and to change this world.



Your brother in the Way of Jesus,

+ Michael B. Curry

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry,
 Primate and Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church

WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

Early in his ministry, Jesus of Nazareth was surrounded by crowds. He turned and asked, "What do you seek?" (John 1:38). For more than a thousand years, monastics have greeted pilgrims knocking on their doors by asking: "What do you seek?" Today, each of us can pause with the same question. As much as the world has changed, the fundamental human hopes and yearnings that draw us to faith may not be so different. For so many ...

**LOVING
 LIBERATING
 LIFE-GIVING**
the Jesus Movement

WE SEEK LOVE

To know God's love, to love and be loved by others, and to love ourselves

WE SEEK FREEDOM

From the many forces — sin, fear, oppression, and division that pull us from living as God created us to be: dignified, whole, and free.

WE SEEK ABUNDANT LIFE

Overflowing with joy, peace, generosity, and delight. Where there is enough for all because we all share with abandon. A life of meaning, given back to God and lived for others.

WE SEEK JESUS

The way of Jesus is the Way of Love, and that way has the power to change lives and change the world.

THEN COME AND FOLLOW...

THE WAY OF LOVE *Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

TURN

Pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus

As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. — Mark 2:14

Like the disciples, we are called by Jesus to follow the Way of Love. With God's help, we can turn from the powers of sin, hatred, fear, injustice, and oppression toward the way of truth, love, hope, justice, and freedom. In turning, we reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, again, and again.

LEARN

Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.

"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." — John 14:23

By reading and reflecting on Scripture, especially the life and teachings of Jesus, we draw near to God and God's word dwells in us. When we open our minds and hearts to Scripture, we learn to see God's story and God's activity in everyday life.

PRAY

Dwell intentionally with God each day

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." — Luke 11:1

Jesus teaches us to come before God with humble hearts, boldly offering our thanksgivings and concerns to God or simply listening for God's voice in our lives and in the world. Whether in thought, word or deed, individually or corporately, when we pray we invite and dwell in God's loving presence.

WORSHIP

Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. — Luke 24:30-31a

When we worship, we gather with others before God. We hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, give thanks, confess, and offer the brokenness of the world to God. As we break bread, our eyes are opened to the presence of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made one body, the body of Christ sent forth to live the Way of Love.

BLESS: Share faith and unselfishly give and serve

Freely you have received; freely give. — Matthew 10:8

Jesus called his disciples to give, forgive, teach, and heal in his name. We are empowered by the Spirit to bless everyone we meet, practicing generosity and compassion, and proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ with hopeful words and selfless actions. We can share our stories of blessing and invite others to the Way of Love.

GO: Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." — John 20:21

As Jesus went to the highways and byways, he sends us beyond our circles and comfort, to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God with our lips and with our lives. We go to listen with humility and to join God in healing a hurting world. We go to become Beloved Community, a people reconciled in love with God and one another.

REST: Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. — John 14:27

From the beginning of creation, God has established the sacred pattern of going and returning, labor and rest. Especially today, God invites us to dedicate time for restoration and wholeness - within our bodies, minds, and souls, and within our communities and institutions. By resting we place our trust in God, the primary actor who brings all things to their fullness.

FOR DISCERNMENT AND REFLECTION

You, your ministry group or church or organization might begin by reflecting on the questions:

- What are the ways God is calling me to regularly engage in this practice?
- How could – or how do – I incorporate this practice into my life regularly?
- With whom do I need to journey in order to keep a commitment to this practice?

More detailed questions for discernment and reflection, along with additional resources, available at

www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, we follow the Way of Jesus. His way is the Way of Love, and that love has the power to change lives and change the world.

Do you seek a life centered on Jesus? Do you seek to explore and live his Way of Love? How will you or your church, ministry, or network commit to following the Way of Jesus? How could you join or gather a community for practicing Jesus-centered life?

Get inspired online by viewing the comprehensive set of resources gathered from across the church. Develop your own resources, campaigns, and pathways for living The Way of Love — as individuals, ministry groups, congregations, dioceses, and networks. Take part in the church-wide movement. Share your stories and resources.

