

Turn

Pause, listen, & choose to follow Jesus

Prayer before Meal

O God of peace, who has taught us that in returning and rest we will be saved, in quietness and confidence will be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies and souls, bless our conversation this evening, and grant us strength to respond to attend to the needs of our faith that we may be strengthened to be love in this broken world, all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Everyone gathers a plate.

During dinner:

Check-in (15 minutes)

For the first session, we recommend asking the questions below. Don't move along to the next question until everyone has either answered or passed. Be sure to re-invite those who passed at the beginning to see if they would like to add anything before you move on to the next question. Don't forget to use the mutual invitation method for check-in.

1. What is your name and religious background, and how long have you been a part of this faith community?
2. Why did you want to participate in the Faith and Friendship dinners and what are you hoping to experience?

Scripture after the meal has finished.

Exodus 3:1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.' But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you." ' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you": This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

And/or

Acts 2:37-42

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Background for the Discussion:

Turning- the first and most basic spiritual practice – is what makes the Christian life possible. Turn is gentler way to talk about a harder churchy concept: repentance. One of the key concepts in Jesus’ message, repentance comes from the Greek word *metanoia*. It means “change of mind”. *Metanoia* means a deeper transformation, a completely new way of thinking. Turning is not a one-and-done endeavor. Anglican Christianity understands turning as something we do in big and in small ways every day. 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 with Jesus again, again, and again.

Starting the Discussion

- Tell a story about a time you got physically lost. How did you find your way again?
- Tell a story about a time you changed your mind. What did it take to change your mind? What happened after you changed your mind?
- What is your experience of Lent? How do you feel about Lent? Why?

Questions for Discussion

- Tell a story about a time you realized you were spiritually lost and had to find your way back to God. What made you turn back toward God?
- When everything goes wrong, what practices help you to turn again and again to Jesus Christ and the Way of Love?
- When is a time you turned in a way that helped you grow in your faith?
- What keeps you from turning more readily?
- What might you do to turn in new ways, more often?
- What specifically do you need to turn away from in your own life? What do you need to turn toward?

Practicing the Way of Love

Hand out a copy of the “Practicing the Way of Love” worksheet.

Remind everyone that a modest change sustained over time is better than a dramatic but unsustainable change.

Check-out

Ask one of the following questions.

- What did you notice about our time together?
- What will you take away from our conversation today?
- Describe our time together in one word.

7:15pm Compline

Learn

Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life & teachings

Prayer before Meal

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies and souls, bless our conversation this evening, and grant us strength to respond to attend to the needs of our faith that we may be strengthened to be love in this broken world, all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Everyone gathers a plate.

During dinner:

Check-in (15 minutes)

Using the process of mutual invitation, check in with Faith and Friendship dinner participants' Way of Love practices by asking one or more of these questions:

- What's been working well with your "Turn" practice? What hasn't been working well?
- What did you learn about yourself? About God? What adjustments might support you in the Way of Love?
- What has surprised you about your "Turn" practice?
- Name a gift that your practice has given you this week.

Scripture after the meal has finished.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

And/Or

Romans 12:1-12

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

And/Or

Philippians 4:8-9

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Discussion (45 minutes)

Background for Discussion:

We can always learn something – all of us, no matter how old or smart or well-read we are. Priests-and lay folk-are still learning all the time, or at least we should be. Learning about our faith – especially by engaging the scriptures but also by participating in liturgy and theological traditions- helps us grow. 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.

Starting the Discussion

- What is your favorite passage of Scripture? What does it mean to you?
- Have you ever tried to read the Bible all the way through? Describe your experience.
- If you could share a meal with any person (other than Jesus) from Scripture, who would it be? What would you ask that person?

Questions for Discussion

- The Catechism says that “God still speaks to us through the Bible” (BCP 853). How has God spoken to you through Scripture? How does God speak to the Church through Scripture?
- What is your favorite story about Jesus? What about it speaks to you?
- How does hearing the stories of God working in the world in Scripture help you spot God working in the world today?
- When is a time you learned in a way that helped you grow in faith?
- What is the sermon you have always wanted, but have never heard, preached? What Scripture would you use?
- How has your approach to understanding Scripture changed over time? Has this changed how you relate to God and others?
- What ways of reflecting on Scripture are the most life-giving for you?
- What gets in the way of making time to read and reflect on Scripture during your day? What is one thing you can do to set aside time for Scripture?

Practicing the Way of Love (10 minutes)

Some recommendations for Learn:

Read the Scripture from the Daily Office Lectionary found online through various websites. Take up a Bible reading plan. Read a daily devotional, practice lectio divina, or listen to a podcast that includes scripture such as “Pray as you go.”

Check-out (5 minutes)

Ask one of the following questions.

- What did you notice about our time together?
- What will you take away from our conversation today?
- Describe our time together in one word.

7:15pm Compline

Pray

Dwell intentionally with God each day

Prayer before Meal

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies and souls, bless our conversation this evening, and grant us strength to respond to attend to the needs of our faith that we may be strengthened to be love in this broken world, all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Everyone gathers a plate.

During dinner:

Check-in (15 minutes)

Using the process of mutual invitation, check in with Faith and Friendship dinner participants' Way of Love practices by asking one or more of these questions:

- What was adding "Learn" in your practice like? What did you learn about yourself? About God? How are your other Way of Love practices going?
- What's been working well with your "Learn" practice? What hasn't been working well? What adjustments might support you in the Way of Love?
- What has surprised you about your "Learn" practice?
- Name a gift that your practices have given you this week.

Scripture after the meal has finished.

I Samuel 3:1-10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." ' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

And/Or

Luke 11:1-13

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.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

And he said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.” And he answers from within, “Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.” I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

‘So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

And/Or

Psalm 25

Of David.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust;
 do not let me be put to shame;
 do not let my enemies exult over me.
Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
 let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
 teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
 for you are the God of my salvation;
 for you I wait all day long.
Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
 for they have been from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
 according to your steadfast love remember me,
 for your goodness' sake, O Lord!
Good and upright is the Lord;
 therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
 and teaches the humble his way.

And/Or

Psalm 86

A Prayer of David.

Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
 for I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;
 save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord,
 for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.
In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.
There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.
Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name for ever.
For great is your steadfast love towards me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

And/Or

James 5:13-18

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

And/Or

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

Discussion

Background for Discussion:

There is nothing wrong with praying to God with our hopes, wants and desires – or our hurts, dreams, and fears. The point of a maturing prayer life is not to cease one kind of prayer in order to take up another, but rather to develop a rich prayer life that is for our own needs, for the needs of the world, and for guidance.

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

Starting the Discussion:

- When do you feel closest to God during your day?
- What is your favorite way to pray?
- Share a story of how prayer has impacted your life.
- Which person of the Trinity do you most often address in your prayers?
- What is your favorite way to pray?
- Share a story of how prayer has impacted your life.
- Which person of the Trinity do you most often address in your prayers?

Questions for Discussion:

- What part of the Lord's Prayer are you drawn to right now? Why?
- In the story of the boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 3, Samuel confuses the voice of God with the voice of Eli. Have you ever mistaken God's voice for someone else's? Or, have you heard God through the words of others?
- The Book of Psalms includes many psalms of thanksgiving, as well as psalms of lament. What changes when we can pour out all of our life, the good and the bad, to God?
- What does "God's loving presence" look like in your life? Or what could it look like?
- Kathy Staudt, a spiritual director and seminary professor likes to say, "Five minutes of silence a day is the spiritual equivalent of flossing your teeth." How can you foster silence and receptivity to God in your own life?
- What intentional prayer practices center you in God's presence, so you can hear, speak, or simply dwell with God? How do you invite God to dwell in you? If you don't know about intentional prayer practices, where could you get more information?
- What stands in the way of a more active and consistent prayer life? What are simple (or not so-simple) changes you can make to be more present to God throughout your day.

Practicing the Way of Love

Some recommendations for "Pray":

Set aside a specific period of time for experiencing contemplative silence, doing contemplative writing, using prayer beads, walking and praying, practicing Ignatian prayer, praying by coloring, or praying the Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families (Book of Common Prayer, p. 136). (You also might list a practice you are already engaged in that gives life to you.)

Check-out (5 minutes)

Ask one of the following questions.

- What did you notice about our time together?
- What will you take away from our conversation today?
- Describe our time together in one word.

7:15pm Compline

BLESS

Share faith, and unselfishly give and serve

Prayer before Meal

O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies and souls, bless our conversation this evening, and grant us strength to respond to attend to the needs of our faith that we may be strengthened to be love in this broken world, all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Everyone gathers a plate.

During dinner:

Check-in (15 minutes)

Using the process of mutual invitation, check in with participants' Way of Love practices by asking one or more of these questions:

- What was adding "Pray" to your practice like? What did you learn about yourself? About God? How are your other Way of Love practices going?
- What's been working well with your Way of Love practices? What hasn't been working well? What adjustments are you thinking about?
- What has surprised you about your Way of Love practices?
- Name a gift that your practices have given you this week.

Scripture after meal has ended.

Genesis 12:1-4

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 32:22-30

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.'

Matthew 10:5-15

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out

demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town.

Matthew 25:31-40

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Acts 3: 1-10

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.'

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Discussion (45 minutes)

Background for Discussion:

Christians are meant to go out and bless people as we love God and love our neighbors. The reality is that we are all in need of help, help that only God can give. When we help others, it is God who confers the blessing, and that blessing is conferred on all of us. Practicing blessing means that we will transgress some of the rules of our culture. 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.

Starting the Discussion:

- What is the best gift you have ever been given? Why was it so special?
- Who was the first person who told you about Jesus?
- Name a time you were blessed. What happened? How did you feel?

Questions for Discussion:

- What have you been freely given? What can you freely give? (Matt 10:8, NIV)
- Where is God already working in your neighborhood? How could you partner with God to bring about blessings and love for those around you?
- Who in your life could you invite to join you in the Way of Love?

- God gives us gifts so that we can share them. What are your spiritual gifts? What are the ways you share them with your community of faith and your community at large? (1 Cor 12) What else have you been gifted?
- What things get in the way of sharing your faith? What things get in the way of sharing God's blessings? Are they the same things, or different?
- What is one practice of generosity or compassion you could commit to trying this week?
- What are the ways the Spirit is calling you to bless others in your community?

Practicing the Way of Love

Some recommendations for "Bless":

- Begin regular volunteer shifts at a local nonprofit, check on a shut-in neighbor, invite a different neighbor or colleague to coffee each week to ask about his/her life and concerns, practice sharing how God has been working in your own life, consider any specific and concrete way your life can bring life and joy to others, or take on a practice of stewardship for creation such as composting. (You also might list a practice you are already engaged in that gives life to you and others.)

Check-out (5 minutes)

Ask one of the following questions.

- What did you notice about our time together?
- What will you take away from our conversation today?
- Describe our time together in one word.

7:15pm Compline

Go

Cross boundaries, listen deeply, and live like Jesus

Prayer before Meal

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies and souls, bless our conversation this evening, and grant us strength to respond to attend to the needs of our faith that we may be strengthened to be love in this broken world, all this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Everyone gathers a plate.

During dinner:

Check-in (15 minutes)

Scripture after meal has ended.

Isaiah 2:1-4

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 61:8-11

For I the Lord love justice,

I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge

that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Psalm 41

To the leader. A Psalm of David.
Happy are those who consider the poor;
the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble.
The Lord protects them and keeps them alive;
they are called happy in the land.
You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.
The Lord sustains them on their sickbed;
in their illness you heal all their infirmities.
As for me, I said, 'O Lord, be gracious to me;
heal me, for I have sinned against you.'

2 Corinthians 5:16-20

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1 John 4:16-21

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am

sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!” And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.”

John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

Discussion (45 minutes)

Background for Discussion:

The core mission of the disciples, of you and me and everyone we know who calls themselves a Christian, is to go and make disciples. Jesus does not intend for his followers to keep to themselves, to stay in familiar or comfortable places. One aspect of go as a spiritual practice is that we have to keep moving, even when that means leaving things behind. We must go into our neighborhoods to learn the needs, hopes, and concerns of the community around us. We must go and listen to the cultures around us. 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.

Starting the Discussion:

- Who is your most unlikely friend? How did you become friends?
- Where do you feel Jesus’ absence most keenly in the world?
- Tell a story about a time you went beyond your comfort zone.

Questions for Discussion:

- Name a time you experienced reconciliation. What had to happen before the reconciliation could occur? How did that reconciliation change your relationship with others or God?
- Where does reconciliation need to happen in your community? How would reconciliation change your community?
- What would love, justice, and the truth of God look like in your community?
- How could you faithfully discern where reconciliation needs to happen?
- What is one thing you could do this week to heal your world?
- To what new places or communities is the Spirit sending you to witness to the love, justice, and truth of God?

- What needs to change in your own life to make you more open to seeing and engaging with the needs of the world?

Practicing the Way of Love

Some recommendations for “Go”:

Identify a community or culture that is unlike your own and learn about them either by attending an event, reading, or speaking to a friend or acquaintance in that group. You might also take a prayerful walk through a neighborhood or space shaped by a community or culture different from your own. (You also might list a practice you are already engaged in that gives life to you.)

Check-out

Ask one of the following questions.

- What did you notice about our time together?
- What will you take away from our conversation today?
- Describe our time together in one word.

7:15pm Compline

Adapted from [way_of_love_small_group_curriculum.pdf \(episcopalchurch.org\)](#) and The Way of Love A Practical Guide to Following Jesus by Scott Gunn.