

# Traveling the Way of Love

## Season 2



### Episode 1: WORSHIP

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

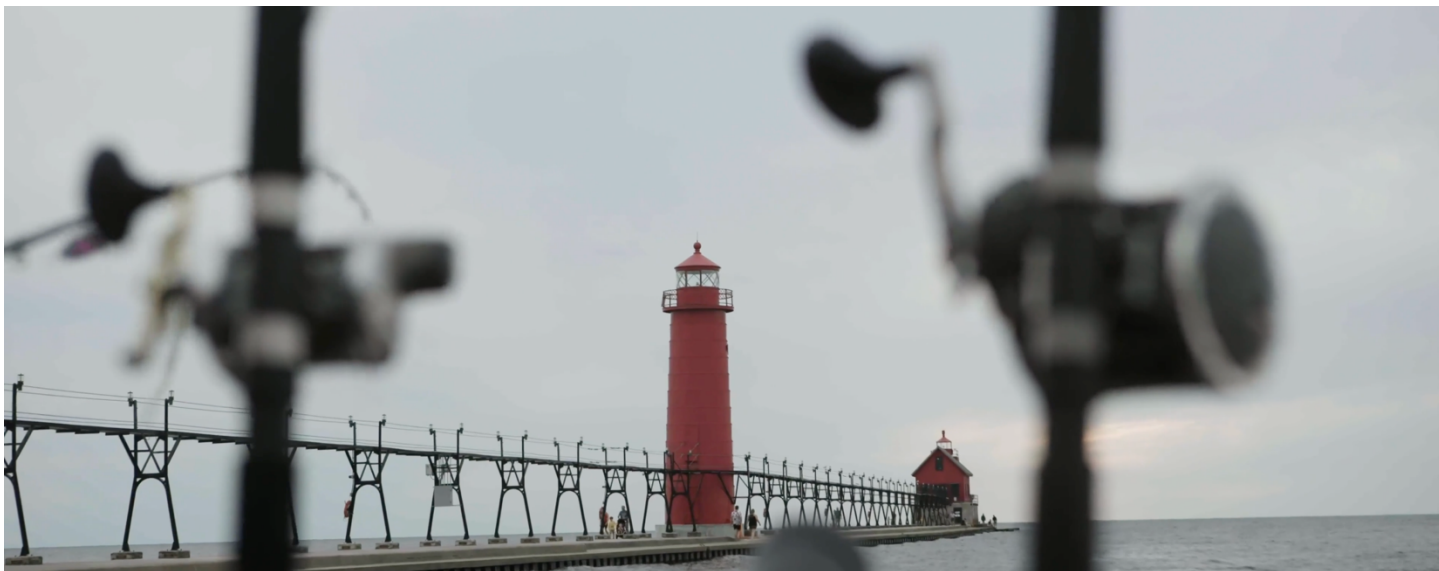
*“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.” - Luke 24:30-31*

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.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, and chats with the Rev. Ryan Hawthorne about what worship means to her. Hawthorne emphasizes that worship is not just a communal practice, but a deeply personal one. She invites individuals to find the worship practices that resonate with their soul, which might include worshipping within a church community. What worship practices deeply touch your soul?
2. The call to gather and worship within the Christian tradition, as understood through the Episcopal lens, is a call to “the collective.” It is a call to come together across generations and all sorts of messy human experiences to pray, offer praise and thanksgiving, proclaim the Gospel, and promote justice, peace, and love. What voices are missing from your worship experience? How could it be a more “collective” experience?
3. Palmer’s former senior warden, Dr. Danna Kurtin, spoke about the importance of curiosity when it comes to practicing worship on the Way of Love. Being curious about our neighbors, other traditions, and the ways God is moving in the world through changing culture are just some of the things that can influence our worship experience. Where might the Holy Spirit be asking you – as an individual or as a faith community - to be curious and to stretch in your practice of worship?

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## Episode 2: GO

Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus.

*“Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey: no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.’ So they departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.” - Luke 9:1-6*

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.

1. In this episode, we have the privilege of hearing from the Rev. Christian Barron, co-founder of the Order of Naucratus. Fr. Christian holds a unique perspective, considering hunting and fishing as sacred activities. He aims to connect local hunters and anglers who have harvested in abundance with those who are hungry. During his conversation with host Chris Sikkema, Fr. Christian draws a fascinating parallel between the work of processing fish protein, often involving a lot of blood, and the work of Sunday mornings during the Eucharist. What are your thoughts on Fr. Christian’s insightful observation?
2. Fr. Christian and members of the Order of Naucratus often engage with people who are not church members or who may not “fit in at most churches but have become part of the Naucratus’ flock.” Through these relationships, they proclaim the kingdom of God in both traditional and unique ways. They bless fishing rods and pray, demonstrating that the kingdom of God is not limited to church walls. Take a moment and reflect—what communities are overlooked in your area? Who in those communities might have abundant gifts to share with those in need but have never been asked or considered?

3. The mission of the Order of Naucrati is “Take, Bless, Break & Give.” These are the actions of Jesus. Repeatedly, throughout the Gospel accounts, Jesus takes food, blesses it, breaks it up, and gives it to the people—often people who have been forgotten, ignored, or looked down upon by polite society. As followers of Jesus and his way of love, this is also our work. How are you challenged to take, bless, break, and give? What boundary may you need to cross to do this?
  
4. Fr. Christian reflects that when the grind of life is hard, going fishing—an embodied activity that requires the use of his hands—is often the best way for him to pray. Sometimes, the boundary we need to cross to follow Jesus is the boundary of a spiritual practice or habit that has become rote. Consider what new embodied practice of prayer or another spiritual discipline God might be calling you to. How can you go there?

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### Episode 3: 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 and again.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits the Rev. Rita Powell and Alden Fossett at Harvard University. Together, they discuss what it means to practice “pausing” in a society that often demands exhaustion as a mark of worthiness. Where in your life could you press pause as part of a spiritual practice of “turn”?
2. When we choose to turn and pause, we have the opportunity to listen to people and places that often are overlooked or exploited. Rita and Alden shared stories of leading their communities to pause and listen to both the natural world and the stories of enslaved people. Whose stories and experiences are overlooked in your context? What would it take to practice listening deeply to those stories and experiences?
3. As the host says, when we can make something right, we are called to do so. The Episcopal Chaplaincy at Harvard hosts a series of meals out on the sidewalk as a way of making right previous church practices that excluded people from entering our doors as full members of our communities. By hosting a meal on the street, The Episcopal Chaplaincy community is turning from a tradition of oppression and gatekeeping toward a way of being that is open, just, and free for all. As you think about your community of faith and personal practice of turning, what action steps can you take to make something right? What outward and visible sign can you signal that reflects a commitment to turning toward Jesus and his way of love?

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### Episode 4: 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.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits the Episcopal Farm Workers Ministry in Dunn, North Carolina. The ministry is a joint project of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina and the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina that works with agricultural workers (farmworkers, meat processing plant workers, and workers from nurseries, packing houses, and poultry, swine, or livestock farms) and immigrant families in rural Eastern North Carolina. When asked about the needs of this community, Lucia Mondragón points out that she has learned that this community needs not just food but also affection.

When you think about donating to a traditional outreach ministry such as a food pantry or soup kitchen, what would it look

like for you to give the blessing of affection in addition to the sustenance of food? How does that challenge or resonate with your idea of “bless”?

2. As Chris reflected, one of the enduring images of the Christian life is that of individuals moving along the spokes of a wheel. We find that as we draw closer to the center—that is, to God—we, by necessity, grow closer to other people. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, and as Chris says, it happens in all sorts of groups and communities. Take a few moments to reflect on the ways that you and/or your faith community are practicing “bless” currently. Are they drawing you and your community closer to God and others? If not, how might your practice need to grow or morph?

3. “When they come, they bring their problems, and we need to hear them.” - Lucia Mondragón. Often, in our attempts to do the most good in the shortest amount of time, our practice of “bless” is stacked with to-do lists and busyness. But do we make

time for listening? Do we make time to value the one story someone needs to share over the 10 things on our agenda? Do we value hearing as much as we value doing? If not, what might need to shift in our practice or understanding of “bless”?

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### Episode 5: REST

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

*“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’” - John 13:3-9*

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.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits with Bishop Audrey Scanlan as they hike a small portion of the Appalachian Trail. Bishop Scanlan recounts her experience of learning how to humbly receive hospitality along the trail during longer hikes. She shares how when we stop doing and start receiving, we can rest in God's presence and love differently. Take a moment and consider—is there a place where you need to stop doing to receive instead? What steps do you need to take to lean into that practice of rest?
2. Host Sikkema comments that when we take time to stop and disconnect from our devices and to-do lists, we are more likely to see where God is present around us. He notes that “stopping is an act of faith.” What do you think of this statement? What does it bring up for you?
3. The spiritual practice of rest, in its various forms, holds a transformative power. For Bishop Scanlan, it manifests in long solo hikes, where she carries everything she needs for survival on her back, and nothing needs to be accomplished beyond putting one foot in front of the other. In

this space, she can release the tyranny of the urgent, allowing her to notice the shape and symmetry of wildflowers and the presence of God all around. What rest practice could you adopt to experience this transformative power? If you don't have one, can you imagine what one might be?

4. Toward the end of the episode, Sikkema comments on the ministry of feeding through-

hikers that the local church had established. As a small church in a rural setting, members chose to rest in who God had created them to be instead of trying to be something different, like a preschool. Resting in our unique identity is challenging for both individuals and churches. What might it look like for you or your church to rest in who you are instead of who you wish you were? How might it change your ministry?



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### Episode 6: LEARN

Reflect on Scripture daily, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.

*"Those love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and 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.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits a group of youth in the Convocation of the Episcopal Church in Europe that includes Aija Rios and Bishop Mark Edington. Bishop Edington remarks on the reality that there is no social reward for being a Christian in Europe. Yet, the youth of the Convocation continue to show up for each other, forming community, praying, and studying Scripture together. What does their witness stir in you? How are you inspired or encouraged by their dedication?
2. While chatting with Chris, Aija shares about a weekly gathering at her home parish called "Wednesdays Within the Walls," which includes Taizé music, a meal, and reading Scripture together, followed by a conversation about the Scripture. From her story, it is clear that people of all ages and walks of life are a part of this weekly community and that all voices are listened to, and that this opportunity to reflect on Scripture within a large group has impacted her life. How could you--or your community of faith--be more intentional about hosting time for reading and reflecting on Scripture apart from Sunday mornings and across demographics such as age and stage of life? What might that look like?
3. In this episode, Chris Sikkema states that it is very hard to be a Christian alone. Perhaps this is because we are not meant to do it alone. From the beginning, the Christian life has been one rooted in community. In our baptismal covenant, we even promise to "continue in the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, and the breaking of the bread."

This includes how we approach studying and reflecting on Scripture. Take a moment and think back on when your mind and heart have been opened to Scripture in the

midst of a Bible study or community reflection. How did you learn to see God's story and God's activity in everyday life from that experience?

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### Episode 7: PRAY

Dwell intentionally with God daily.

*“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.

1. In this episode, host Chris Sikkema visits Holy Apostles, a congregation founded by Episcopalian Oneidas from New York, who settled in Wisconsin on Menominee and Ho-Chunk land in 1822. The first community initially first gathered beneath the trees to worship, a history reflected in Judy Cornelius’ description of prayer as “holy quiet.” Whether during high mass or under trees, prayer allows us to connect with something of God, transcendent beyond ourselves. Where do you experience “holy quiet”? How does God meet you there?
2. Consider the connection between your own prayer practices and the outward and visible signs that accompany them. For instance, like Jennifer Webster, do you find comfort in the scent of incense or the act of burning tobacco as you send your prayers to the divine? What are some of your unique prayer traditions?
3. The Oneida hymns are an important part of Holy Apostles’ prayer life—both communally and individually. Are there songs or styles of music that you find helpful for your prayer life?