

Traveling the Way of Love



Episode I: BLESS

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.

In this episode of Traveling the Way of Love, we visit the Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys. The school, started by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, was founded in 2006 as a response to the “serious educational challenges facing African American boys in the low-income communities east of the Anacostia River.” Named for the Rt. Rev. John T. Walker, first African American bishop of Washington, this school takes seriously its namesake’s legacy; throughout his ministry, from St. Paul’s School in Concord, Episcopal Church in New Hampshire, to the Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono, Uganda, Bishop Walker vigorously believed in education as the doorway to opportunity—and that we as Christians have a responsibility to raise up people to use their God-given gifts.

To teach people—whether they be children in Washington D.C.’s Ward 8, or adults learning a second language in Tennessee, or friends and neighbors at a community meeting around your congregation—is to bless them. Jesus charges us to take those blessings we have received and put them to good use, cultivating them in ourselves and others.

As you watch this first episode of Traveling the Way of Love, how do you see all of the people in this video blessing their communities? Because of their calling, the school’s staff and faculty are blessing students with a stellar education and caring hearts. Because of the generosity of Episcopalians and others in the Diocese of Washington, these boys are blessed with a beautiful, state-of-the-art building and three nutritious meals each day – all at no cost to their families. Because of supportive families and a commitment to the school’s pillars, the students are blessing each other and the wider community—and will continue doing so. How will you and your congregation bless the world on your Way of Love?

This episode made possible by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington in partnership with the Episcopal Church Office of Communication.

After watching **Traveling the Way of Love: Bless**, consider engaging the **Way of Love** with one or more of these suggested practices.

TURN

Orient yourself toward the message of this video by reading the short reflection on the first episode of *Traveling the Way of Love* here: bit.ly/TWOLbless

LEARN

Read Matthew 10:7-8 and meditate on its meaning for five minutes. “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.”

PRAY

Say the Prayer for Schools and Colleges, inserting the name of your nearest schools: O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities [and especially _____], that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WORSHIP

At worship this week, pay special attention to prayers, scripture passages, and other messages about blessing. How many times do we ask God’s blessing on ourselves or our work? How will you accept those blessings and give blessing to others?

BLESS

Visit the National Association of Episcopal Schools’ Asset Map page at bit.ly/NAESmap. Are there any Episcopal schools located near you? Ask your diocese or the school itself how your congregation can partner to help support staff, faculty, and students.

GO

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement, we dream and work to foster Beloved Communities where all people may experience dignity and abundant life and see themselves and others as beloved children of God. Learn about *Becoming Beloved Community*, part of our commitment to the ministry of racial reconciliation. Visit episcopalchurch.org/belovedcommunity to grow as a reconciler, justice-maker, and healer in the name of Christ.

REST

Take a walk through your community, especially noticing community institutions like schools, hospitals, churches, parks, and businesses. Walk without headphones or other distractions, simply noticing the neighborhood. Imagine how God is at work in the lives of those around you.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Listen to an audio recording of Bishop Walker preaching on the importance of children: bit.ly/walkersermon.

View The Episcopal Church’s online photo album from the Bishop Walker School and the National Cathedral at facebook.com/episcopalian.

Learn more about the *Way of Love* at episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove.