

Sermon for Christ Church, Spotsylvania, VA  
Proper 27, Year B, November 11, 2018  
The Rev. Bill Queen, "The Way of Love Rule of Life"  
Hebrews 9:24-28

our Collect of the Day and reading from the book of Hebrews both refer to Christ's second coming, a theme which we'll hear a lot more about during the upcoming Advent season, only three weeks away; the Hebrews reading closes with a reference to Christ's followers "eagerly waiting for him;" but it doesn't, in this passage, elaborate on what they were supposed to do while they were waiting; and since we are still waiting for Christ's second coming, it may be well worth our while to reflect upon what it is that we are expected to be doing while we are waiting for Christ's return

the Episcopal Church's Baptismal Covenant, which we renewed in last week's All Saints' Sunday services, is one helpful framework which gives one set of answers this question of what we are expected to be doing; you've heard me refer to it often in my sermons, and I'm sure I will again

but our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, has put together an even more focused and foundational approach to answer this question of what we're all supposed to be doing; it is called "The Way of Love;" let me be clear that this is not some brainchild of Bishop Curry, not something new he's come up with; what it is, is a kind of *Reader's Digest* condensed summary of Jesus' old teachings and example, but presented in a new and simple way that's easy to grasp and to follow; I've given you a bulletin insert [see p. 4] which presents it graphically on one side, and its components in a descriptive list on the back; this will look familiar to those of you who attended our Forum two Sundays ago, as this was part of one of the resolutions that was discussed and passed at our Diocesan Convention

"The Way of Love" not only summarizes Jesus' teachings and example, it has translated them into a rule of life; there are different rules of life which have been used as important tools throughout Christian history, by clergy, by monastics, and by lay people alike; what a rule of life does is give you a checklist of activities along with a time frame for doing them; you'll notice that this rule presents a mix of activities, some done on your own outside of church and others done in or through church with other people; there is also

a mix of some daily, some weekly, and some 'whenever you need to' activities; and like every rule of life, its purpose is to help keep you focused on doing activities which lead to a well-balanced spiritual life, which lead to a strong relationship with Christ, and which lead to good relationships with other people, believers and non-believers alike

so let's walk through this rule of life together briefly; look at the color cross and segments; think of this like a clock face; the segment "Turn" is where we begin; then we move through the segments that follow, clockwise, each representing an activity that builds upon the previous activities and prepares for the activities that will follow; and like a clock, once you've made the circle you keep repeating it, you re-"Turn" and continue through it, again and again

the text below the cross is a list giving a very brief summary of each kind of activity and its time frame; each one is general in scope, purposely giving each person lots of leeway to decide exactly how you will approach each one; your decisions for each of these are best based on what you have the time to do and really will plan to do; and on what you have the desire to do; and if you want more detailed information, you can search the web for the Episcopal Church's website on "The Way of Love;" pray about it first to help you make good decisions about what to undertake; and you don't have to do it alone, either in planning for what you will do or in carrying them out; talk it over with your spouse, your family, your friends, fellow parishioners, Margaret, or me; here's my brief take on each activity

**turning** is our heart's, and mind's, and soul's commitment and re-commitment to keep our life engaged in intentional spiritual practices; all of this hinges on our desire to know and love God more and more, and to be an active part of God's plan

**learning** provides us the raw materials for growing in faith; we read scripture to see how God worked in the past, with other folks, better enabling us to see how God is working now, with us and with the people around us

**praying** is the necessity to speak to and to listen to God; no relationship can grow without good two-way communications

**worshiping** moves us temporarily out of our self-focused lives; it gives us an experiential foretaste of being in God's presence; it is our dress-rehearsal for heaven

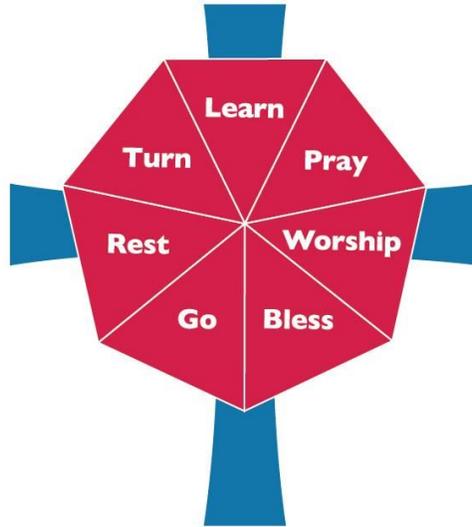
**blessing** is the way that God uses us to carry Christ's love and Christ's work to make a difference in the world around us; what we do in God's name blesses others, and leads them closer to having a relationship with God in their lives

**going** is our putting the embodied presence of Christ, through our bodies, into the kinds of places Jesus himself chose to go to and be with while he was on earth; and those were always the places where the neediest of people were to be found

and finally, **resting** is God's gift, and a reminder that we can't do everything at once nor by ourselves; we have to step back, recharge our physical bodies and our spiritual energies, to be able to better re-turn to all of the other activities again

please, take this insert home with you; do not give it to the usher on the way out of church; it will not do you any good if you leave it here in church; take it home and put it on your fridge or someplace else where you'll see it every day; mark it up with whatever ways you have decided to carry out these activities

and let me give you a warning; if you seriously engage yourself in this, or in any other, rule of life, be prepared that God will work in your life in new and in deeper ways than you have previously experienced; that is a given; if you seriously engage yourself in this, or in any other, rule of life, be prepared that God will probably do unexpected things to you and with you, and will lead you to do things and to go places you may never have thought you would; but that's a good promise; that's an exciting promise; that's a promise of God's unimaginable blessings for all of us while we are "eagerly waiting" for Christ



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

**TURN:** Pause, listen and choose to follow Jesus. 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. We reorient our lives to Jesus Christ, falling in love again, and again.

**LEARN:** Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus’ life and teachings. 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 daily. 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. 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. 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. 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.

**GO:** Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus. Jesus 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.

**REST:** Receive the gift of God’s grace, peace, and restoration. God invites us to dedicate time for restoration and wholeness - within our bodies, minds, and souls, and within our communities and institutions.