



# GOOD SHEPHERD EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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The Reverend Andrew T. O'Connor • Rector

Wednesday, July 31, 2019  
Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Last summer I had the joy of being present during the Opening Eucharist of the 79th General Convention when Presiding Bishop Michael Curry invited our beloved Episcopal Church to take up the *Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life* ([youtu.be/rfuRUy5GIEE](https://youtu.be/rfuRUy5GIEE)). It was a truly inspiring moment—and not because it was the announcement of another churchy program, but because it was an exciting call to return to the basics of discipleship. Since the summer of 2018, many people around the Church have discovered the powerful practices of the Way of Love: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest.

As our diocese begins a concerted effort to take up the Way of Love, I want to share this testimonial of our journey with it at Good Shepherd. When I returned from General Convention, parishioners who lead adult Christian formation asked if it would be possible to use the first Way of Love small group curriculum ([bit.ly/2YwagWZ](https://bit.ly/2YwagWZ)) for the fall. I enthusiastically endorsed their plan and away we went, using the materials for adult Sunday School and two small groups on Monday morning and Wednesday evening. At the time, we all expected that the materials would probably run their course after that first nine weeks. We were wrong. The participants in those first offerings were so moved that we wound up turning and returning to the Way of Love throughout the rest of the program year. Why? Because it is *not* another program. It is a way and rule of life for us Episcopal members of the Jesus Movement!

The Way of Love practices are a thoughtful and simple way for engaging in purposeful discipleship. The Way of Love articulates a positive and authentic Episcopal identity. And it has become an ever expanding community of practitioners developing and sharing ideas, curriculum, sermons, podcasts, films, and other resources ([episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love](http://episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love)). In fact, we developed our own Way of Love program for Lent. Called *Wondrous Love: the Way of Love in Lent*, we invited panels of parishioners to share their faith stories in light of the seven practices. It was our best attended Lenten program in years—and we'd love to share it! The Way of Love inspired our stewardship program last fall. This year our vestry is exploring the practices during an expanded time of devotion at the start of meetings. Way of Love was the theme for our Youth Group's spiritual retreat this Eastertide. It is a remarkably flexible framework for formation!

As your fellow parish priest I well know how often we can find ourselves scrambling for something to do for Christian formation. Perhaps you too will find the Way of Love to be a fount of renewal for your people and parish—and even for yourself. I strongly encourage you to join Bishop Bascom and the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas as we begin this journey following Jesus in his Way of Love!

in Christ's Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew T. O'Connor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a cross at the end of the name.

The Reverend Andrew T. O'Connor