Episode 5: PRAY

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.

In this episode of Traveling the Way of Love, we walk and talk with the Rev. Canon Katie Churchwell, creator of Pop-up Prayer and Canon for Community Outreach at the Cathedral Church of St. Peter in St. Petersburg, Florida. This ministry, started in the shadow of a terrible hurricane and in the midst of harrowing isolation, brings people from around the world into prayerful relationship with God and each other, all through Facebook Live. What began as a short-term ministry of presence has developed into a regular offering and community devoted to prayer.

The episode’s discussion addresses the challenges of prayer – fears about praying for the wrong thing or not using the correct posture, uncertainty about how often we should bring our joys and concerns to God. We also hear about the benefits of prayer: a closer relationship with God and each other, a response to all the good things of this life, a calmer heart and mind to better see the work ahead of us – and so much more.

As you watch this fifth episode of Traveling the Way of Love, we invite you to take time this week to practice praying. Whether you pray in formal phrases or half-formed thoughts or allow the Spirit to intercede in sighs too deep for words, whether you pray alone or with a group, whether you pray before every meal or you haven’t prayed in years, think this week about the small steps you can take to respond more regularly to God in your life.

This episode is made possible by Forward Movement, 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**
The catechism in the Book of Common Prayer details seven different kinds of prayer: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition. Read about them on page 857. Where do you see an opportunity to grow in your prayer life? What do you notice about the definition of penitential prayer?

**BLESS**
Keep a prayer list for friends and family this week and earnestly follow it. If folks request prayer – or even if it just sounds like they could use prayers on their behalf! – write their names in a journal and commit to praying for them at the end of the day.

**LEARN**
Read the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) in three different translations and meditate on its meaning for 10 minutes. Try the King James Version, the New International Version, and the Common English Bible, all available at biblegateway.com.

**GO**
Depending on where you live, it may be countercultural to pray in a public setting. Try saying a simple prayer, silently or aloud, while you are out to dinner. Pray for the hands that harvested and prepared your meal; pray that the meal might be strength to you as you cross boundaries, listen deeply, and try to live like Jesus.

**WORSHIP**
At worship this week, consider your posture while you pray. When do you kneel or stand, if you are able? What do you do with your hands? Does your congregation do anything special while saying the Lord’s Prayer? What attitudes toward God and each other are communicated in those actions?

**REST**
Pay special attention to how you pray this week and commit to adding one more occasion of daily prayer – short or long, perhaps before having meals or going to sleep. After a week, take time to pause and reflect. In these prayers, have you gotten a better glimpse of God? If so, consider how you can build on that prayer in the future. If not, try a different kind of prayer for the following week.

**OTHER RESOURCES**
Download the Small Group Reflection Guide at iam.ec/prayreflectionguide and use it with your community.

Grow your own rule of life through Living the Way of Love in Community, our nine-session small group curriculum at iam.ec/wayofloveincommunity.

Discover the joy of Pop-up Prayer at facebook.com/popupprayer.
Learn more about the Way of Love at episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove.