



*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2, NRSV*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

On many Sundays throughout the year, we hear the words “walk in love as Christ loved us” just before we say the communion prayer and partake in Holy Communion. Those words are not just a phrase, they are an invitation to know and share in God’s love manifest in Christ. Generosity is a journey, it’s a practice that we learn and nurture within our hearts. It just isn’t in our nature to give away what we have worked hard to acquire or to donate our precious time without compensation. It takes something as radical as Love to inspire us to share our time, talent, and treasure with others. This is a journey we make together, a Walk in Love.

As we have lived with the Gospel of St. Mark this year we have been brought into a world turned radically upside down by the love of Christ. The laws and customs that had been in place for centuries were challenged, power and dominion have been questioned, and a culture hemmed in from all sides by oppression and subjection desperately seeks a way forward. This same love invites us to challenge ourselves and our communities with the Love of Christ used to change the world.

As it turns out, it is not clever politics or force that cause the change in society, but the simplest concept of Love. Jesus causes a revolution of thought and heart by daring to reach out to the outcast and teach others to do the same. He walks in love with the marginalized, with the poor, with the sick, and brings us along with him on his journey. ECA has maintained the practice of helping not only parish members, but those outside our walls in our communities in big ways. We are the parish that prides itself on the phrase, “*It’s what we do*” and we do it so very well.

The most miraculous gift of Love is that it was there within us all along, all we had to do was find it, tap into it, and begin growing it. And look what happened? We learned to share, to give, to volunteer, to accompany others, to feed, to pray, to visit, to strive for change. This year as our Stewardship Campaign kicks off, we will be intentionally raising up stories of how we *Walk in Love* with each other in our congregation. Every year we seek your continued gift of time and talent as we also seek the generosity of your financial gifts. Our ministries are not possible without your continued financial generosity and we ask you to prayerfully consider your support for our 2025 budget. I invite you to share your stories of inspiration and connection with our shared ministry in this place and with each other. I invite you to *Walk in Love*.

Walking with you in Love,

