

The Big Lenten Prayer Tent

Our last practice comes to us from Chris Sikkema

*Chris Sikkema, Manager for Special Projects in The Episcopal Church and a member of Calvary,
Rochester*

Even though this winter has been a cold one, I still love taking time out of every single day for some kind of recreation and exercise outdoors—time away from my desk, my work, social media, the internet, and other stressors. And because my mind tends to wander, I've found neighborhood prayer walks to be a really helpful spiritual practice that combines my desire to get better at prayer and my desire to think about things other than productivity. It's a simple process, based on our Anglican understanding of the parish (congregation) serving, well, the parish (neighborhood).

It's a simple process: you walk around your neighborhood, and ideally your congregation's neighborhood, simply noticing what's happening and being in conversation with God. As I walk—or bike, or run—I pay attention to the people and things I see and have an interior, stream-of-consciousness prayer. Lord, bless this family heading in for their hospital appointments—keep these children safe and learning—bless the dead in our memorial garden—help us be bold and caring enough to feed these hungry people—set a fire inside my heart to draw people to you. It takes practice and can feel awkward but rest assured that no prayer is a waste of time. As you keep going, you'll find you know the neighborhood better. And then you'll know the neighbors better. And then you'll begin to know what God is already up to in the neighborhood, waiting for you to come along.

You can learn more about neighborhood prayer walks, including how to adapt them for the church year and how to include other people when it's feasible and advisable, here:

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/evangelisminitiatives/neighborhood-prayer-walks/>