

Go, therefore, and make disciples
of all nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the holy Spirit, teaching them
to observe all that I have commanded
you. And behold, I am with you
always, until the end of the age.

Vậy anh em hãy đi và làm cho muôn
dân trở thành môn đệ, làm phép rửa
cho họ nhân danh Chúa Cha, Chúa
Con và Chúa Thánh Thần, dạy bảo họ
giữ mọi điều Thầy đã truyền cho
anh em. Và đây, Thầy ở cùng anh em
mọi ngày cho đến tận thế.



Our Day 2 destination was St. George Catholic Church in Beacon Hill, where we were welcomed with a delicious meal and had the chance to hand out t-shirts and cookies.

photo: Rita Alcantara

Nine Days of Cookies & Kindness

JIM HALL

The last day was the hottest. Sweat outlined the message on our t-shirts as we headed toward the capitol dome in Olympia, handing out homebaked cookies to anyone we met along the way. The

homeless encampment we passed took three full bags and one man ran up and gratefully swapped out his dirty shirt for one of our new ones, admitting that it had been a long time since he had worn a clean shirt.

After the previous eight days of walks that varied from 8-15 miles per day, our final effort was one of the easiest, only about nine miles with no hills to climb,

and we were energized by knowing that our family and friends would be meeting us at the finish line.

Bob and I have been best friends for over 50 years and—wanting a way to do *something* in this topsy-

turvy world—hatched the idea for this walk way back in January, inspired by the example of the Buddhist monks who walked for peace over 2300 miles from Texas to Washington, D.C. Our walk became the *Kindness Walk*, with an open invitation for anyone to join us for a mile or a day from August 12-20, 2026. For some reason, even though we didn't design the walk as religious, we thought it would be meaningful to reach out to different faith communities and see if they wanted to become our destinations for each day of our walk. Turns out they did. Congregations of Quakers, Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Episcopalians, Interdenominational, Lutherans, and Latter Day Saints all found common ground with our message, welcoming us in countless different ways, wearing our t-shirts, and affirming our belief that reaching out to others with kindness is not only loving but healing.



photo: Chris Hall

So let me set the scene for you. Imagine pushing a set of plastic drawers strapped to a \$20 thrift store cart 90 miles along sidewalks and shoulders. The top drawer held bags of cookies. The bottom two drawers held *beKind doGood* t-shirts. With dear friend Scott waving to almost every car zooming by, we would keep an eye out for pedestrians or people working or shopping nearby and offer a cookie. My approach was usually something like, “Good morning, we’re walking for nine days handing out homemade cookies. Would you like one?” Or if it was a worker in a hard hat I’d often say, “How can you go through the day without a homemade cookie?”

Almost everyone took one (or more). One guy took seven. And those hundreds and hundreds of cookies opened up conversations, inviting people to ask what we were doing. I’d usually say, “We’re just two best friends who decided to walk for nine days and our only message is this: (pointing to t-shirt).” Almost everyone thanked us, though Bob talked to one guy who gave him the side-eye, suspiciously asking, “What’s your angle? Everyone has an angle.”

Bob is 71 years old and has a body shaped by regular, rigorous exercise and a lifetime of running. My 73-year-old body is shaped by irregular, reluctant exercise, grilled cheese sandwiches and only a couple of months of training walks. I knew that the walk would be a breeze for Bob but I made sure to stock up on Tylenol (and the Advil that Bob bought for me along the way). My legs ached enough that several nights I had trouble sleeping, but thankfully I felt better in the mornings.

Two best friends taking a walk turned into so much more. Dear friends Beckie and Scott came all the way from Utah to drive our support vehicle loaded with tubs of t-shirts and cartons of cookies. Beckie drove most days because Scott decided to walk alongside us for seven of our nine days, even with blisters! He often strode out ahead and waved to all the cars driving by.

The hundreds of homemade cookies were baked by friends and family and kept fresh in our freezer until the walk started. We even got a couple of bags baked by 73-year-old Matt who admitted that it was the first time he had ever baked cookies. (They were peanut butter—my favorite—and I feel quite guilty that I sampled a large number of them even before the walk started.)

And then there were perhaps 2-3 dozen friends, family and faith community members who got a

t-shirt and joined in for a mile or a day. Our dear friend Lance not only offered overnight hospitality but walked three full days with us. Step by step we found our way with each other, listening to stories and handing out t-shirts and cookies.

We live in a world that often seems confusing and increasingly designed to divide and distance us from those who look, love or live differently than we do. The walk we did was our way of coming home to each other and to ourselves. All Bob and I did was to dig down through all the debris and distractions to the cornerstones that have guided our lives for over 70 years and take that message on the road, inviting others to join in. We are forever grateful for the countless kindnesses shown to us along the way.



photo: Jim Hall

Rabbi Jesse Epstein from Temple Beth Am moved us to tears with his blessing for our walk. Here is an excerpt:

May every step take you not only farther down the road, but a little closer toward one another.

May you meet strangers with curiosity, difference with humility, weariness with patience, and every person along your path with the recognition of their sacred human dignity.

May you speak words of kindness, and may you have the courage to turn those words into deeds.

May you not only do acts of chesed, lovingkindness but learn, more and more, to love chesed — to become people who instinctively seek opportunities to care, to accompany, to listen, and to help.

May you listen deeply to the stories you encounter along the way.

May you carry some of those stories with you, and may you leave something of your own hearts behind.

May the Holy One send blessing upon the work of your hands — and, for these days, upon the work of your feet.

May you find grace, kindness, and compassion — in the eyes of the Holy One and in the eyes of every person you encounter.

May you be kind.

May you do good.

May you walk humbly.

And may you discover, mile after mile, that peace is not only the destination toward which we walk.

It is also a way of walking.

DAY ONE



Heading out from North Seattle Friends Church in Shoreline after a sweet sendoff from many friends, some of whom joined us for a few miles.

DAY TWO



Just before heading out in the morning from Temple Beth Am in northeast Seattle, Rabbi Jesse left us with a very touching message and blessing created specially for our walk.

DAY THREE



Rita and Robert (and others) from St. George Catholic Church on Beacon Hill sent us off in the morning with breakfast, drums, and smiles.

DAY FOUR



Dr. Shayk Yahya welcomed us to the Muslim American Youth Foundation in Burien, fed us a delicious meal, and introduced us to some of the boys.

DAY FIVE



The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Federal Way fed us when we arrived, then sent us off the next day after inviting us to the morning service.

DAY SIX



Urban Grace Church in downtown Tacoma is amazing, as was the warm welcome by pastors Jonathan and Bianca.

DAY SEVEN



Foot washing followed by a delicious meal at Christ Lutheran in Lakewood.

DAY EIGHT



The Nisqually LDS chapel in Lacey greeted us with food, a blessing, and an original song about our walk based on a poem by Bob and composed by dear friend Lance.

DAY NINE



So sweet to have all our family and friends at the finish line in Olympia!