

A2 | Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm | The Welcoming Prayer
Project Zion Podcast

Joelle Wight

A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times, Project Zion Podcast offers this series of guided practices to help you connect with the Divine no matter where you are, what's going on around you. Take a deep breath and allow your spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

Katie Harmon McLaughlin

Hi, this is Katie Harmon McLaughlin with Community of Christ Spiritual Formation Ministries.

And this week we will be exploring the spiritual practice of Welcoming Prayer.

Welcoming Prayer is a prayer that comes to us from the centering prayer tradition, and it's a way to pay attention to what is happening within us. Noticing how God meets us in the exact conditions in which we find ourselves. Welcoming Prayer has three primary parts. First, we spend time simply listening in observing our own interior state. Second, we welcome whatever thoughts, feelings or sensations are present with us right now as we are. And third, we spend a little bit of time simply letting go or noticing what we might be starting to let go.

Katie Harmon McLaughlin

In preparation for this time of prayer, I invite you to hear the words of the Sufi poet Rumi from his poem, "Guesthouse". This being human is a guesthouse. Every morning, a new arrival, a joy, a depression, a meanness. Some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all. Even if they're a crowd of sorrows who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice. Meet them at the door, laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

Katie Harmon McLaughlin

As we enter this time of prayer, I invite you to begin by drawing your attention to your breath and notice your physical being. How is it that you come into this time of prayer? Tense, relaxed? Open or closed?

Katie Harmon McLaughlin

For a few moments, I invite you to just listen in the silence. To turn with curiosity towards your own inner life. Noticing the thoughts, feelings or sensations that pass through or get caught in the moments of silence. If you feel restless or bored, be curious about it. If you feel relaxed at ease calm, just simply notice and appreciate in the silence. Notice what you're bringing into this time of prayer and what's happening in you right now. Perhaps by now you have started to notice what's happening in your own inner life. Spend a few moments now welcoming whatever comes welcoming whatever feels especially present in you right now, it may be joy, fear, questions, tiredness, boredom, longing, presence, anxiety, distraction. All of it is worthy of

your attention and you are invited to simply notice and welcome staying present as you welcome with what is most really in you.

Katie Harmon McLaughlin

And finally notice what you may be invited to let go, something that may be crowding your open presence to God, something that might be diminishing. You let go a little, or even just for now. If you can't let it go, see if it might shift just a little from the center of your focus and awareness to the periphery for a few moments. See if you can touch into that place beneath every thought, feeling or sensation where the reality of God is even now pulsing with presence as a constant invitation. Rest in the silence for as long as you need, and when you are ready, close your prayer with a simple word of gratitude for this presence that is always available to us even when we can't see or perceive or feel it made this time of prayer deepen and you and awareness of your wholeness in God. Amen.