

A6 | Awaken to God's Presence: Finding Calm in the Storm | Circles of Blessing
Project Zion Podcast

Joelle Wight

A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times Project Zion Podcasts 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 call 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 Circles of Blessing. Circles of Blessing is a practice that I've seen practiced many places throughout Community of Christ that actually comes to us as an adapted Buddhist practice, blessings of loving kindness. In this practice, we open our hearts intentionally to the different circles of relationships that our lives are part of starting with ourselves, moving to those very close to us those on the periphery of our awareness and finally, a movement of reconciliation as we draw our hearts attentions to those that we feel distant from disconnected from or who have even heard us. And so as we begin this practice, especially in a time when many feel isolated, my hope is that this will deepen and us a sense of connection with ourselves, God and others. Let's take a few moments simply to breathe, opening our heart to the circles of relationship that sustain and shape us each day.

Katie Harmon-McLaughlin

Take a few moments in the silence simply to draw yourself into this time of prayer. Toe open in greater receptivity to the God who is present with us here and now. First, I invite you to turn your attention to yourself. Notice how you are this day. Notice what is happening in your own heart and in the silence you are invited to repeat these phrases. May I be blessed with loving kindness. May I be blessed with health. May I be blessed with true happiness. May I be blessed with peace. At first, you may find it challenging to receive these words, or maybe you're hungry for them. But take a few moments in the silence simply to repeat these words into your own self. As your heart continues to soften and open, may I be blessed with loving kindness. May I be blessed with health. May I be blessed with true happiness.. May I be blessed with peace.

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When you feel ready, you are invited to open your heart even more as we move to the second circle of blessing for someone very close to you. Could be a partner, a close friend, a family member, someone who holds a tender place in your heart. It may even help you to visualize this person as you pray this blessing on repeat, May they be blessed with loving kindness. May they be blessed with health. May they be blessed with true happiness. May they be blessed with peace. Continue to repeat these phrases as you hold this person in your heart in love. May they be blessed with loving kindness. May they be blessed with health. May they be blessed with true happiness. May they be blessed with peace.

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Continuing in a spirit of prayer, we widen our circle of attention and blessing to someone who may be on the periphery of your life, perhaps someone you just know casually or distantly, or is part of a circle of close friends but who you are not particularly close with. Maybe it's a person that in typical ordinary life, you would pass day to day a teacher of your child or a grocery store worker or someone who is part of the scene of your everyday life as a person emerges for you. In this time of prayer, you are invited to visualize them and repeat these phrases silently. May they be blessed with loving kindness. May they be blessed with health. May they be blessed with true happiness. May they be blessed with peace. As your heart continues to soften, open, widen. You are invited to call to mind someone who has potentially hurt you, someone with whom you have tension or unresolved conflict. Someone who perhaps rubs you the wrong way in your daily interactions, or with whom you struggle to be in relationship notice. Who comes to mind for you now and if it feels possible, visualize this person. Imagine these words of blessing, filling or covering them as you turn your heart's attention toward widening and deepening this circle of relationship in prayer. Repeat these phrases in the silence. May they be blessed with loving kindness. May they be blessed with health. May they be blessed with true happiness. May they be blessed with peace.

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And finally you are invited to draw your attention again to yourself, just noticing for a moment what has shifted, softened, opened, widened in you and in the silence, imagining yourself in that same gaze of love and attention and care. Repeat again these phrases. May I be blessed with loving kindness. May I be blessed with health. May I be blessed with true happiness. May I be blessed with peace.

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Take a few deep breaths in the silence and imagine for a moment all the circles of relationship that shape and sustain your life. Simply call to mind for a few moments. Those people that you encounter on a daily basis, those relationships of those who are closest to you and those people that come to your heart now to be held for just a few moments of awareness, blessing, prayer. In the name of the one who was always at work to reconcile all people and all creation into a oneness wholeness peace we pray, Amen.