

Joelle Wight 00:04

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, or what's going on around you. Take a deep breath and allow your spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

Tyler Marz 00:29

Hi, this is Tyler Marz, Community of Christ minister and spiritual companion. Part of my journey is finding the Divine in everyday life. Today, I invite you to join me as we embark on a nature walk. Nature walks can be immensely calming and full of symbolism. Your walk can be anywhere in nature; a walk around your neighborhood, a hike in the hills, or even sitting on a bench in a quiet city park. Today I am in a peace garden in the middle of a city. Allow us to take a few deep breaths as we begin calming our mind, but not closing our eyes. Breathe in God's presence. Breathe out God's love for the world.
(*pause*)

Tyler Marz 01:43

Let me share the greater image of what I see at first glance. Of course, by sound, you can hear the pitter patter of raindrops around me and yet the clouds are beginning to part and the sun is beginning to cast a lovely warm glow. Bits of blue sky and puffy blue clouds lie overhead. (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 02:19

You can hear the birdsong chirping, the green grass in front of me, the blooms of cherry blossoms on trees, leaves, new growth and verdant grass, a rocky pathway. (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 02:59

As I walk, may my footsteps provide a gentle but constant. (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 03:21

I see a glorious, green, evergreen tree in front of me stretching high up to the sky, yet I see tender, bright green, new beginnings of growth on its ends. (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 03:53

I take a moment to look up through the branches and I find that bird making birdsong. (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 04:12

There's a gentle breeze rustling the branches. As I listen to that bird song, gentle noises communicating to each other, what is God calling to us? (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 04:42

What are we calling to God? (*pause*)

Tyler Marz 04:56

As I continue to walk, I see shoots of blooms coming up, just buds and bright green leaves. What is beginning to bloom in our life? Something glorious? Perhaps something just every day, and maybe even something a bit difficult. All of that is a part of life. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 05:44

As I continue to walk, may you listen to the sounds of the birds, the breeze, and maybe just to touch back to reality, the cars in the background. But we are taking time out from our day to step aside and to tune in to our hearts and our surroundings. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 06:27

I see the bright yellow of dandelions. They always seem to make their way into grass, don't they? And yet, their yellow cheeriness somehow brings a smile. And yet, just past them, I see the bright yellow blooms of daffodils, one of the first flowers to bloom in the spring along with crocuses. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 07:16

The rain has stopped. The sun is shining brighter, providing more warmth. I see purple flowers blooming, gentle, small, but casting a lovely hue. As I walk along this path, I see many things. I see a grouping of trees. I see flowers blooming. I see other bulbs shooting forth their bright green leaves. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 08:07

As I walk along this path, where is it taking me? What am I yearning for, or purpose in my life? *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 08:40

Sometimes, as we walk along our paths in life, we see different things that catch our eyes. Some of them are glorious and beautiful, others perhaps more difficult, but they are all part of that same path. Sometimes it's those difficult things that allow us to appreciate the beauty. I come to a point in my path where there are two ways to go; one to the left and one to the right. Both have different things beyond them. I go left. I see a blooming cherry tree full of bright white and light pink blooms, and yet, the gentle breeze is causing some of those pedals to fall down almost like snow. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 10:07

As I continue on my path, I see more green grass. I see more verdant evergreens. The leafy trees have not yet begun to put on their leaves just yet, though I see a few buds, the hope. As you think about hope in your life, what do you hope for? What is in your heart? Feel free to voice that now. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 11:18

As I continue walking, I see a bridge up ahead. It crosses a small creek that seems to be dry at the moment. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 11:41

The symbolism of bridges, leading from one place to another. Bridges can help us overcome something dangerous, something scary, or simply to get from one point to another a little more easily. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 12:17

This creek bed is dry. If it were full of water, it would be flowing from one point to another. What is a constant flow in our life? Perhaps that's something spiritual, maybe it's our work, maybe it's our family life. What is a constant source of energy and goodness gently flowing? In there is present, the Divine. And yet, now, I come upon a larger creek with water, truly present and flowing this time. The gentle sounds of water tumbling and birdsong. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 13:46

I look for life? What is present. There's green of grass shooting up. There's a tree in the middle of the creek beginning to bring forth green leaves. There's a few ducks floating along. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 14:21

There are always so many things to observe, especially when we stop to just stare at one thing. As I look at this tree in front of me, I see a squirrel climbing down. Where is the squirrel headed? What is the squirrel doing? *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 14:59

If we find our thoughts, during this practice, getting distracted by other things, simply just bring them back to the sounds, the sights of things around you. *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 15:28

I pass an arbor full of grape vines, yet they haven't begun to spring forth leaves or fruits, but I just imagine, in the coming months, being full of life and greenery and sweet, delicious fruits that will provide nourishment to the earth and the life that is here. What provides nourishment and life to our lives? *(pause)*

Tyler Marz 16:10

As I continue to walk, looking at the green trees, the flowers, the new life springing forth, the sun now ducking away behind the clouds, I focus again on my breathing; breathing in God's presence, breathing out God's love for the world and for you. And as we end this practice today, may the peace of God fill you today and always.