

A18 | Awaken to God's Presence | Pause, Gratitude, and Thanksgiving
Project Zion Podcast

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 in a spiritual practice of Pause, Gratitude, and Thanksgiving.

As we enter the penultimate month of the year, a lot of emotions circle. So much has happened and so much more will happen in the coming weeks before the years end. Pandemics, wars, changes in family life, loss, disappointments, new jobs, innovative medical advances, gatherings with friends and family. The coming advent and Christmas season will also bring new stresses, joys, and many other things.

Perhaps we can treat this month as one of pause and gratitude.

Gratitude comes from the Latin root, *gratus*, meaning pleasing, welcoming, agreeable. It also is the root of words like grace and involves actions like praise, celebration, and being in contact with the Divine. In its essence, pausing for moments of gratitude can be moments of presence with God.

In our practice today, I will invite us to a simple breathing exercise. I will share a few questions and close us with lyric and scripture.

Our practice is about noticing the brief pause between inhale and exhale that naturally occurs as we transition from one to the other.

Noticing your breath inward and outward there is the slightest of pauses as we transition from inhale to exhale. I invite you into that practice now. Breathing in and out. You don't have to try and make that brief pause longer—but notice it.

Keep breathing in, again noticing that pause. In a moment I will ask a few questions.

As you focus on your breathing, and these pauses, welcome God into this space.

1. What prevents you from being thankful right now?
 - a. Is there even a small bit of that scenario you can express your gratitude?

[Pause and breath]

2. What is something, however great or small, you are grateful for?
 - a. How might you express those thanks, even if it is private?

[Pause and breath]

Let us return to our breathing and those natural pauses that occur.

“Each breath is borrowed air, not ours to keep and own, and all our breaths as one declare what wisdom long has known: to live is to receive and answer back with praise to what our minds cannot conceive: the source of all our days” (CCS 144)

May we take time over the coming days and weeks to pause and notice our breath. When the multitude of things piles up and up, let's focus on our breathing and that brief but divine moment of pause between inhale and exhale.

In our moments of pause, may we be joyful in all things; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 adapted)