

Dec 5 2023 | Awaken to God's Presence | Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

peace, shalom, prayer, divine, blessing, wholeness, stars, world, heart, meditation, Advent, loving kindness

SPEAKERS

Joelle Wight, Wendy Brian

Joelle Wight 00:00

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

Wendy Brian 00:28

Greetings, sojourners. My name is Wendy Bryan. I am a minister, spiritual director, and spiritual formation specialist in Community of Christ. It's good to be with you today.

In Community of Christ, we have nine enduring principles that guide our lives, our ministry and our stories. These nine principles are All are Called, Worth of All Persons, Responsible Choices, Pursuit of Peace (Shalom), Unity in Diversity, Blessings of Community, Grace and Generosity, Continuing Revelation, and Sacredness of Creation. Today, I offer you a meditation on Pursuit of Peace (Shalom). As we begin, please know that silence in meditation is a gift, it is a chance to listen. From time to time in the process today, there will be silent moments. Let them speak to your heart. You may want some paper and something to write with. As you move through this time with the divine today. Feel free to press pause for those silent moments.

This podcast is scheduled to be released at the beginning of Advent, and I'd like to weave some Advent thoughts of joy, hope, love and peace into this time today, but to also make it a timeless meditation in our quest for Shalom. As we hold this time together today, begin to imagine what peace would look like in your own life, the life of those you love and in the world. Put no restrictions or "This can't happen because..." scenarios in this imaginative place.

I invite you to pause here and sit with your imagination for a few moments as you create this Shalom space. When you're ready, come back to this space to continue.

Now turn your thoughts on walking in this pursuit with the divine. Spend a few moments in prayer as you imagine these Shalom places. Perhaps you may ask God to empower you to better understand how this imaginary place can come to fruition. What small daily steps can you make? What larger steps

will be needed? And where do you fit into this equation? And how might we work with others to bring peace into our communities and into more global communities?

Shalom does not just mean no war. It can be about bringing peace and justice and reconciliation and well-being and wholeness to all creation. Can you hear the divine leading you in a direction to create these? What and where might that be?

As we set the stage for our listening, let's engage together and an adaptation of a spiritual practice taken from the Buddhist tradition called Loving Kindness. This prayer invites us to include the divine and all those people we come in contact with, no matter our relationship to them. If we are to establish Shalom and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace. It is important to look at others with loving kindness.

To begin, find your comfortable space and begin to relax.

Starting at the top of your head down into your shoulders, perhaps roll your neck and your shoulders so your muscles become relaxed. Work your way down into your chest and heart. Be aware of your intentional breathing and the rhythm of your heart beating. Imagine all the others in the world whose heart is beating in that same rhythm and whose breath is flowing in and out as yours is also. Move to your belly. Touch it. Recognize even though your belly may be fed, there are many who may feel hunger in theirs. Briefly hold their hunger. Now move to your arms and legs. As you are feeling your whole body sink into your space.

Let's begin our loving kindness prayer.

First, we will offer a blessing to ourselves. Repeat to yourself these words...

May I be healthy. May I be at ease. May I be filled with peace. May I be loved.

Now imagine those whom you love and hold deeply in your heart at all times. And again, repeat these prayer words...

May we be healthy. May we be at ease. May we be filled with peace. May we be loved.

This time we will extend the community to the people that we meet during the day that perhaps we have no true connection with such as the cashier at the store, or your letter carrier, or perhaps the mechanic that services your car.

May they be healthy. May they be at ease. May they be filled with peace. May they know love. Now we will extend this blessing to those whom we may disagree with or to someone we may be in conflict with. Picture that person or persons in your mind and repeat the prayer.

May they be healthy. May they be at ease. May they be filled with peace. May they know love.

One more time we extend this blessing to those in the world whose lives and struggles we don't know.

May they be healthy. May they be at ease. May they be filled with peace. May they know love.

Now that we have connected with and sent a blessing to others, that they may know peace, hope, joy and love. Let us close with an Advent prayer for peace written by Tiffany T Brian.

Creator, you create stars that lead voyagers across directionless seas to safe islands. You create shepherds who lead sheep across rocky fields, and plains to lush streams. You create the mysterious call which leads migrating creatures, pulling them to places unknown and yet known. You create gravity which pulls Earth around the Sun, to the moon, to the earth, to the tides of the deep sea, and back to the warm sand. You create our hearts to be open to your pull to Shalom. You made us to join you in creating Shalom. We've strived, listened, waited. We have been very patient. And now, we are impatient yet again as we start the new year. Our prayers feel small in the face of injustice, autocracy, and suffering. Our hands feel inadequate. Our efforts at creating wholeness feel rudimentary and clumsy. And yet a tiny star in the expanse of the dark sky brings light. Two stars begin a constellation, and three stars can lead seekers to their destination. May we join you in creating light, filling the world with hope, bringing wholeness to a cracked and fractured world. In the name of Jesus Emanuel. Amen. Shalom, my friends, until we meet again.