

Awaken to God's Presence | Continuing Revelation

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

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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 Brian. I'm 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 Continuing Revelation. As we begin, please know that silence in meditation is a gift. It is a chance to listen. From time to time in this 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.

As a faith movement, continuing revelation has been a foundational belief since the church's inception. From the book *Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message and Beliefs*, we read about Continuing Revelation. It says, "Scripture is an inspired and indispensable witness of human response to God's revelation of divine nature. God graciously reveals divine will today, as in the past. The Holy Spirit inspires and provides witness to divine truth. In humility, individually and in community, we prayerfully listen to understand God's will for our lives, the church and creation."

That's a lot of words. But what does this all mean to your soul? Do any of these statements resonate with you? Take a moment to jot down what speaks to you in these statements. Simply put, God still speaks to us. God still guides us. God's still desires a connection with us to direct us in our daily lives. The question is, are we listening? And how do we discern God's voice? How do we know that what we

think we hear comes from the Divine or from our self. That discernment that shapes our response to life is formed with prayer, meditation, and time in community.

Currently, as this podcast is being written and recorded, we as a church are listening to hear what God has in store for us next as a faith movement. With the announcement of Steve Veazey, our prophet/president's retirement at the next World Conference, we've been asked to individually and collectively discern who should next lead the church. Quorums, orders, and groups have formally and informally gathered to pray on this topic. Collectively, through this discernment, the process of our enduring principle of continuing revelation is lived out before our very eyes.

In her book, *Discernment: A Path of Spiritual Awakening*, Mary Rose Doherty writes, "discernment cannot be separated from our everyday life. In a spiritual life, every decision we make goes through a process." The more we practice our spiritual life, and walk with the divine, the easier it is to make those revelatory decisions that require deep and extended listening.

In 2004, Grant McMurray, then President and prophet of the church gave this council which is now part of section 162 of our Doctrine and Covenants. "As a prophetic people, you are called, with the common consent of the people to discern the Divine Will for your own time, and in the places you serve. You live in a world with new challenges, and that world will require new forms of ministry." In 2007, Steve Veazey, gave this council, "God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace God revealed in Jesus Christ." And again, in 2010, "All those all who have actively engaged in prayer discussion and discernment about important issues in the church's life, are commended for your faithful response, your disciplined effort to open your lives more fully to God's Spirit, in response to the call to be a prophetic people has become a blessing to the entire church. The spiritual yearning for light and truth has created a favorable environment for the spirits movement." And again, from Grant McMurray 2004, "Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward." We become revelatory together. We discern individually and together. And together, we are a prophetic people, for the larger church body, for our communities, and our own lives. I've done a lot of talking today, more than I'd like to, I just wanted to set the stage for this important enduring principle in our spiritual practice.

I invite you to read sections 161 through 165 of the Doctrine and Covenants, when you have time to read them slowly, and digest how they are guiding us and what it means in our own lives. But for today, we will practice a listening prayer. Deep listening. Silent listening. Extended listening.

Today we will practice centering prayer. It is a prayer such as this that opens our hearts and our minds, to live with the divine in all aspects of our lives. It is a time when we empty all the clutter in our heads to make space for the divine as we sit in silence, not thinking about anything, just being present with God. I'm going to challenge you to set aside 20 minutes. You could start with a shorter duration if you'd like. But the purpose of this prayer is to learn to spend extended prayer and listening time. So I encourage you to give it a try.

Begin by making yourself comfortable in your space. Think of a word or phrase that can come to your mind that you will repeat when a distraction occurs during these 20 minutes to refocus that mind on listening. One example might be, "be still," but you can pick your own. Offer a brief starting prayer to

give your intentions to God, set a timer and sit in silence. When a thought comes to you, and it will, acknowledge it and release it, say your word or phrase and reap return to your silence. When the timer sounds, express your gratitude for a time with the Divine.

Most often you will experience nothing in the moment. But as you continue this practice your awareness of the oneness of all creation will expand. Set your timer and pause the podcast. We will close when you are finished.

[Pause]

When you are ready, come back into the space again with a few deep breaths. To close today, here are these words from Henry Nouwen, a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, author, theologian and modern day mystic. He says, "Active waiting is being open to the promise yet to be fulfilled. Patient waiting is staying in the present moment. Expectant waiting is trusting that this long process will bear fruit. This is my prayer for you as we sojourned together a bit