



A Spiritual Check-in: For You and Your Community

As congregations around the globe are cancelling physical gatherings, many are wondering about meaningful ways to stay connected to God and each other.

We know these times can be stressful and anxiety-ridden for some. Others find the challenge of creatively closing the social-distance gaps invigorating. And some are just so tired of the barrage of information, they need to rest. These responses are all valid. And as varied as the people who make up the communities in which you live.

- *How are you doing right now?*
- *What do you need?*
- *What do the people around you and in your community need?*

We'd like to offer a few possibilities as you discern your response.

Need to re-center?

Embrace Sabbath. While connecting in community is a critical part of our faith, we can also choose to view this as an opportunity to transform loneliness into solitude.¹ How might a break from the normal activities of church life give us a sacred pause to rest, discern, and encounter God in the holiness of our homes and everyday lives?

Weekend Prayer for Peace. Each Saturday and Sunday for the next several weeks you are invited to join us on [Facebook](#) live for the Daily Prayer for Peace at 1 p.m. (CDT) hosted by members of World Church Leadership Council.

Daily Bread. Continue a meaningful journey through the Lenten Season with daily reflections, scriptures, and practices through [Daily Bread](#). You can subscribe to the daily email [here](#).

Need to digitally connect with others?

Join an online Community of Christ gathering. Links to online opportunities for gathering with other Community of Christ members and friends around the world are listed at www.CofChrist.org/online-ministries. Pick one and invite a friend.

Consider hosting an online gathering. Maybe it's a worship or book study group. Maybe it's a youth gathering or just a way to visit and check in with each other. Information can be found in the Pastors and Leaders section of the church's COVID-19 updates page at www.CofChrist.org/covid-19. Find tips from the Mid-Atlantic USA Mission Center on how to build a positive online experience for worship and gatherings and tutorial videos about the Zoom platform.

Need to connect with others offline?

Reach Out. We can use this time to be even more intentional about our relationships with each other, especially the most vulnerable in our communities. Consider a phone call to check in with each other to see how we can be helpful, to provide a space for deep listening as people share anxieties or concerns, or just to be available in a

¹ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*

time when many are missing in-person connection. Priesthood and leaders are invited to coordinate phone calls to ensure that everyone in the community feels connected.

Formation Resources. Many formational resources are already available on the church website for ongoing personal, family, and communal formation. You may choose to have a family worship using the [worship resources](#) as inspiration. If you can't connect online with your congregation, consider a congregational email with a link to a [witness the word](#) sermon. This is a time to utilize many available resources as we find creative ways to stay engaged in personal, family, and communal formation.

*May the “spirit breathe” through us as we connect
in many forms to support each other.*

A Few Recommended Spiritual Practices

Breath Prayer: For many around the world, this is a fearful and anxious time. We are understandably consumed by reports of virus spread and we wonder about what this means for our lives, families, workplaces, and communities. It can help to practice breathing throughout your day. Not only does deep breathing reduce anxiety and help us through challenging moments, it also can remind us that no matter what is happening, we belong to God. Start by simply noticing your breath—turning with awe and gratitude to each inhale and exhale that happens naturally throughout your day gifting you with aliveness. Choose a phrase for each inhale and exhale as a form of prayer. (See below for suggestions.) Let it draw your attention to the divine life breathing through you, sustaining you. Take a few minutes in the silence simply breathing and silently repeating your prayer phrases until the words fall away and you find yourself resting more deeply in the presence of God here and now.

Inhale and Exhale: *Rhythmically breathe a word or phrase from scripture, hymnody, or that has meaning to you. (Example: Breathe in me, Breath of God/ Jesus Christ, Have Mercy/ Be Still, and Know)*

Inhale: *A word or phrase that describes what you yearn to receive.*

Exhale *A word or phrase that describes what you yearn to release. (Ex. Breathe in peace. Breathe out fear.)*

Inhale: *Breathe in an awareness of what is happening around the world.*

Exhale: *Breathe out what you'd like to share with the world. (Ex. Breathe in loneliness or anxiety. Breathe out connection or peace.)*

Holy Attention: Many of us are spending more time in our homes these days. As we practice social distancing, some may start to feel isolated, bored, or restless. Take time each day to wake up to life as it is wherever you are through the practice of Holy Attention. Let your gaze be drawn in gratitude and curiosity to the details around your house or apartment, your yard, or wherever you find yourself. Notice what is beautiful, messy, comfortable, holy, in your sacred ordinary life. Notice what you are grateful for. Notice what you haven't noticed before, or in a while. Take a long, loving look at the space that holds you in this strange and challenging time. Wake up to life as it is happening. Even if it is just a few moments of wakefulness here and there throughout your day, try to be fully awake to doing the dishes, preparing a meal, caring for loved ones, watching the news, engaging new rhythms, or in the spaciousness of more time. *Where is God present and waiting for your attention in life as it is wherever you are?*

Daily Prayer for Peace and Prayers of the People: The Daily Prayer for Peace is a great way to stay connected as a global community in this challenging time. The Prayers of the People invite us to pray for ourselves, our relationships, our communities and nations, and the earth. When I see maps of the virus spreading around the world, I am reminded of how connected we truly are and remember again this foundational practice of my faith. We will be sharing the Daily Prayer for Peace live through [Facebook](#) on Saturdays and Sundays for the next several weeks, but you can participate each day from your own home by following these guides: <https://www.cofchrist.org/daily-prayer-for-peace>

Generosity and Connection: Reaching out in small ways can help us remember that we belong to each other even when we can't be physically together. While we are maintaining social distance make time to write a card, make a phone call, check on a neighbor, or spend time listening to a family member or good friend. Donate to organizations that are helping those in need, locally and globally (including [Community of Christ!](#)).

Margaret Wheatley reminds us,

"To become fully human we need to keep opening our hearts, no matter what. At this time when suffering and anxiety continue to increase... I try to remember to keep my heart open. In my own experience, I notice that I like myself better when I am generous and open-hearted."

–Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future