

## **Oneness with God**

Peggy Kaufmann – Sunday, July 11, 2021

Morning Message at “Church-in-the-Park” service, Thacher State Park

Good morning everyone! First, I want to say that doing this talk is a HUGE stretch out of my comfort zone. I chose this challenge for 2 reasons. First for my own self-growth, and second because as Board president, I want to share more about myself and my spiritual journey so that you, as members of my Unity family, can know me better.

I also want to say that it's only because of Unity that I was even able to consider giving a talk like this. It took me months to commit to doing the message. And this is nothing I would have ever been able to do before finding my voice here at Unity. So, thank you to the whole community for being loving and encouraging, and making it possible for me to feel that I have something to share.

My talk is about some of the things I'm working on. So, it's what I also need to hear. The main theme is about how to pray, and how to use the prayer process to shine our light in the world.

Growing up, one of the problems I always had with organized religion was the idea of bowing down to a god out there somewhere. That always felt like an archaic, superstitious tradition to me. And then the idea that there is a God out there who can take care of us if we ask and if we're good never jived for me either. That couldn't be true with all the suffering in the world. I grew up going to a Methodist church, but then I totally rejected organized religion of any kind. However, I always searched for a deeper meaning to life.

Then as a young adult, I became a socialist. And the Marxist idea that religion was the opiate of the masses made a lot of sense to me. I could see how praying to some being out there to fix things, instead of being active in the world was a way to keep people asleep. I learned to become militant – to fight **against** war, against pro-lifers, against nuclear energy, and capitalism. The fight was focused on the enemy and on separateness. It was ego driven and negative.

Then marriage and having two kids happened. I moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Albany. And in the process of having kids, I became aware of the need to become healthy in ways that I hadn't before. I started working several 12 step recovery programs, which I continued to do for over 30 years. I still resisted the concept of "God". I used the term higher power and used the recovery groups as my higher power at first. I looked to something OUTSIDE of myself for help.

When I came to Unity, I had softened enough to the concept of God that I could accept that there is some kind of higher power, a spirit that flows through everyone and everything. And Unity always felt open, loving and accepting of me, no matter what my beliefs were.

As I've continued to learn and grow spiritually in Unity, I've learned the concept that God is Oneness. This really makes sense to me. God is within us all. Not a BEING. But the essence of all that is. *God is the Divine nature and power within us all.* Or as Eric Butterworth puts it, "God is in us as the ocean is in a wave. The wave is nothing more nor less than the ocean expressing as a wave."

There is no one out there to pray to – only a universal flow to get into, a spiritual energy to pray from. And we can choose to access that divine power and energy simply by getting quiet, opening to it, and connecting with it.

I don't know about you but I've always struggled to make that happen (getting quiet and connecting). I know that the books and songs that are most meaningful to me are all about spiritual connection. I feel that what I want most is to "go to the mountain top" and to feel the oneness with spirit. Yet I've always resisted it. I've had difficulty consistently making time for it. And I've come to realize that at least part of this is that I learned to be a "*human doing*" rather than a "*human being*".

I've been learning more about affirmative prayer from Linda Martella-Whitsett's book, "How to pray without talking to God". The concept of affirmative prayer really speaks to me and it describes what I think I've always believed but didn't consciously know. As she says in this book, "Those of us who feel constrained by time usually also have internalized messages about our worth in relation to our accomplishments. *We believe that if we do enough, we will be enough*". That's me! I have always had the strongly held belief that I need to be doing good in the world, and the more the better.

But maybe the most useful thing I could be doing to make the world a better place starts with sitting still and connecting with spirit. So, my lesson now is to unlearn the idea that I need to always be doing, and to learn to just BE. I know that this is what I long for, and that everything else stems from this connection. LMW also says, “We only resist what we most desire when we feel incapable of living up to the spiritual demand of our high calling. Persistence in prayer is our best chance to become equipped for being the light of the world.”

Her denial and affirmation for this are the following:

“I **deny** the power I have given to time, to limit what’s possible for me to accomplish. I **affirm** that I AM limitless Divine order, suspending time as I wholeheartedly do all that is mine to do.”

LMW also says: “Our true nature is divine. Our human identities and circumstances are changeable. Our personalities are like a mask that conceals the true, spiritual, I AM. We consciously construct an external identity. But we can choose to live from our Divine Identity simply by claiming it and realizing it. The Divine is the invisible good we can choose to make visible.”

Prayer is about being empowered by our Divine capacity. When we view ourselves as only human, we pray to God from a consciousness of powerlessness. But when we realize our divine identity, we pray from Divine Consciousness, and we claim and assert our Divine identity so that we can live more fully from it.

In this way, “we are the answer to our prayers, as we realize that prayer is not a plea for a particular outcome, but a calling upon ourselves to realize what we are to BE in a circumstance.” We are active co-creators with our Divine wholeness.

If I am one with God, and God is Love, then I am Love. So, I claim Divine Love as my true nature.

Wherever I am, God is – an ever-flowing current of oneness with all.

To quote Rev. Jackie Hawkins, “We can cultivate this and use it in the world. If world leaders used their spiritual power and consciousness, we wouldn’t have wars and inequality.”

Patricia Pearce speaks of the concept of sacred or transcendent activism, which comes from the spiritual understanding that we are all one. No one is the enemy,

and the energy of resistance is ego driven. It fuels separateness. It's time to transform the story of separateness, and to let go of judgement, both of self and of the other. When we transform our insides, we show up differently in the world.

So, when we go out into the world to make change, we focus on what we're for, not what we're against. Activism in the world begins with love and oneness. We are all connected. Everything has to come from this. This is how we become the light of the world.

Our purpose here on Earth is to be awake and to be love. The universe needs us all to wake up to this now. We are all ONE and there is only LOVE!

Here is LMW's recommended format for daily prayer.

**Relax** so you can concentrate

**Concentrate** so you can meditate

**Meditate** so you can realize

**Realize** so you can appreciate

**Appreciate** so you can relax.

As we learn to be still and meditate, there is a gradual spiritual consciousness taking place, even if we don't feel it at first. We are **building spiritual muscle**.  
**So let's practice building our spiritual muscle.**

***\*\*Meditation\*\****

I'm going to end with a prayer from the book, "How to Pray Without Talking to God":

"I look to the beauty of all that is around me, and all that is within me, and all that I am. Everywhere I look, I behold wondrous Divine order. I know the sun rises every morning, even when I cannot see it for the clouds that cover its shining. I too am Divine order. The light I AM is always shining, even when clouded thinking obscures my view. I shine brightly today, joyfully observing Divine order in everything and everyone." Amen. And so it is.