

Taizé – Faith in Abundance... Abundance in Faith

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Chris

Chant – *I Have Faith* by Karen Drucker

SILENCE – Bell

Reading – Diana

Good morning. If you are new with us today, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, and I want to welcome you Home.

Our theme for the month of August is *Opening to Abundance*. And this morning, we are going to lead you on a meditative journey focused on *Faith in Abundance, Abundance in Faith...* recognizing that each one of us has 100% faith. The question is, what do we have faith in? Where do we place our faith? Sometimes we forget that we have the choice.

My invitation for you today is to find a place where you can be comfortable and settle into stillness, allowing whatever is happening right now to be exactly as it is... relaxing into this experience, letting yourself be held... letting go of everything else for the next hour. See how still you can be as you allow yourself to be carried away by the meditative tone of Taizé...

Now let's take a couple of deep breaths, and with each breath, allow yourself to settle into the place of Peace, where we are all One... and feel into this moment together, into the gathering of this sacred community.

Visualize with me a global web of consciousness, each of us a point of Light, all connected across the planet, all beings who in this moment, might be sitting in meditation or prayer, might be attending sacred services... acknowledging the Presence of the Divine... consciously connected by our whole-hearted devotion... feeling the collective intention that brought us here... feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening in all of us.

In this holy moment, I acknowledge my deep Faith... my abiding Trust in the inherent Goodness of Life... the recognition that there is nothing missing... that I already have everything I need to be fulfilled.

We often think that need to develop new capacities as we move along this Spiritual Path. We somehow believe that we don't have enough Faith; that somehow, we need to build our capacity to Trust; that others seem to have an easier time having faith than we do. The Truth is that each of us has 100% Faith... we have all the Faith we are ever going to have... all the Faith we are ever going to need. The question I invite you to contemplate is, where am I placing my faith?

Am I placing my Faith in inherent Goodness... in people, in conditions, in the world? Or am I placing my faith in its opposite? You know... people are dishonest, out to get all they can, out to do harm?

Am I placing my Faith in the idea that I am always taken care of, that all my needs are met? Or am I placing my faith in Murphy and his all-too-pervasive law... if anything can go wrong, it will?

Am I Trusting that Life is an abundant and joyful experience, or that there's not enough for everyone to have what they need to live a fulfilling life? And that life is hard?

The Spiritual Principle of Cause and Effect, being expressed as the Laws of Expectation, Attention, and Faith, tell us that wherever we place our faith... that is what we are likely to find. Faith is a quality of God, inherent in each of us as a Divine Gift. We have an abundance of Faith, and that Faith is Powerful. It is busy creating all the time... it never stops. So, I ask you again, where are you placing your faith?

It is important, especially in challenging times, to keep your faith planted firmly in Spirit's Infinite Love, Life, Light, Peace, Power, Joy, Beauty, Freedom, Wisdom, and Abundance.

SILENCE – Bell

Chris – The Siege of Samarkhan – a Chinese Legend

A Famous Mongol general and his troops had captured a large part of Central Asia. By now his troops were tired and far from home. He wanted to press on to capture the great city of Samarkhan, which was defended by five times as many soldiers as his own. He felt certain they could win, but the soldiers were reluctant.

He called them together, and they set up a sacred altar and prayed for advice from their gods. At the end of the ceremony, the general took out a large gold coin and said he would now toss it to see what the gods directed. If it came up heads, the soldiers would win a great victory.

The toss was indeed heads and inspired by the gods, the soldiers went on to easily overrun the city.

Afterwards, a soldier said to the general, "When we have been shown that the gods are with us, nothing can challenge our destiny."

The General laughingly agreed, and then showed him the coin – which had a head on both sides.

SILENCE – Bell

Musical Meditation – *Flow Through Me*, by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

SILENCE – Bell

Diana –

Sometimes it feels like our faith is planted without our participation... It feels like we can't help it. We have been conditioned in ways that have formed habits... pathways in our neurology that have become well-worn. What we were never told is that where we place our Faith is a choice. And once we accept it as a choice and are willing to make that choice consciously, we no longer find ourselves at the mercy of our unconscious choices.

What I have learned in the course of my journey is that there are two ways to come to a deep and abiding faith in God, in Goodness, in Love, and in the Divine Order that runs in and through, and expresses AS, all of Creation... the hard way and the easy way.

The hard way is to use my analytical mind to try to figure out if there is, in fact, some Divine Intelligence; and if so, why I should trust It, how I will know that my trust is bearing fruit? In other words, looking at my world and my experience for proof that trusting in God is taking my life in the direction I want to go. The hard way almost always leads to drama and rarely to peace, contentment, or fulfillment, because it is grounded in hesitation and doubt.

The easy way is to accept that your very existence, and the magnificence and miraculous nature of life is proof enough that the Universe is trustworthy and choose to trust... choose to place your faith in Its Power, Intelligence, and Order. Choose to abide in Faith, in every moment.

I have been told, "You're lucky you have so much faith. That must make your life easier." This is a disempowering way to view faith, as if faith either happens to you or it doesn't. That's not how it works. It is much more empowering to accept that each of us can have a deep and abiding Faith in God, the Good; in the ultimate rising of Good over what we might call evil; in the evolution of Humanity Nature into a more loving and compassionate, generous and peaceful family of beings. But this is a choice. It takes practice and willingness... it takes daring to believe that there is an Intelligence inherent in all of Life, and that Intelligence will not be foiled by human thinking. We are part of it... it is evolving through us, as we evolve.

There is no doubt that the human family and its ability to choose has created some real stumbling blocks for itself, other creatures, and the planet. But I have no doubt that we can (and will) use that same power of choice more consciously to come out the other side of this set of circumstances as a kinder, gentler, wiser, and more spiritually centered humanity... one that is more aware of its Divine Nature and expresses itself in ways that are more in alignment with that Nature.

Does this kind of Faith mean that I always know what the outcome will be? No. Does it mean that I never experience fear, sadness, or uncertainty? Of course not. It means that

down deep, below the human experience of not knowing what the future will bring, I have a sense that everything will be okay, that I will move through whatever comes in the flow of Grace. I recognize that there is a much larger picture being painted than my limited senses can perceive, and I place more Faith in the Higher Vision than in my own sight.

It is not by luck that I am so radically optimistic... this kind of Faith takes Practice... it is my choice. And it can be yours. And if at the end of our days, it proves out that we were wrong, so what? We still win... because in the process, we will have lived more peaceful, contented and joy-filled lives in the process, and that's never a bad thing.

SILENCE – Bell

Chris - *The Law of Faith* by Dan Millman from *The Laws of Spirit*

“Watching the blossoms open to the morning light reminds me of the Law of Faith,” said the Sage.

“Is this law about religion?” I asked.

“Faith doesn’t require a belief in an external God – only a belief in flowers,” she said, smiling. “But if one appreciates flowers, one must certainly appreciate God – not as a belief, but as a feeling of wonder and mystery. The Law of Faith is about trusting in the inherent love and intelligence working through you and all of creation.”

I replied, “Well, I can’t honestly say that I trust everyone.”

The sage laughed. “Practicing the Law of Faith doesn’t mean trusting every person to do the right thing. It has a higher, more transcendent meaning: Faith is the recognition that Spirit works in, as, and through each and all of us – through every person and every circumstance. Faith is also an attitude that whatever happens serves a higher good, despite appearances to the contrary.”

“I wish I were as certain of that as you,” I said.

The sage smiled again. “Faith means living with uncertainty, Traveler – feeling your way through life, letting your heart guide you like a lantern in the dark. There is no absolute security except in absolute faith.

“So, you see, faith is not about being infallible and always having everything go your way. Faith involves the willingness to stretch yourself, make mistakes, and learn from them – in other words, to trust the process of your life. The more you trust Spirit in this way, the more you will work with It directly as a living force in your life.”

Musical Meditation – *One with the Divine* by Gary Lynn Floyd

SILENCE - Bell

Diana Closing

I invite you now to go even deeper into the silence, into the stillness... into the Source of your being, where your deepest, most abiding Faith resides.

Each of us has an abundance of Faith... all we can ever need or want. And when we consciously place our Faith in Goodness and Love, we will find those qualities permeating our experience.

When we place our Faith in Mercy and Justice, we will discover that God's Law is ever-present, and according to Its infallible Nature, each of us receives according to our giving, and for the Highest evolution of our soul... without exception.

When we trust in Spirit's Self-givingness, we find that our every need is met... even before we ask... that there is an Infinite Intelligence and a Divine Order to all that is occurring... and a Wisdom that Guides us every step of the way.

As we practice choosing the object of our faith, taking notice of Spirit's Response, and giving thanks for the countless blessings that shower us every day, we begin to see that even with the challenges we face, Life is Good. Our Faith is well-placed. We are able to trust, more and more in our own inherent Goodness and in the spark of Divinity at the heart of everything and everyone. We are grateful to be alive, and we give thanks.

Diana - Closing Prayer

(Diana)/Offertory – Blessing for the Offering

As I awaken to the God within me and all around me, I see Abundance everywhere I look. I consciously step into that flow of Abundance by this act of giving. I bless this gift, sending it forth to heal and prosper. It is evidence of my deep faith. It does good work in the world and blesses all of Creation. I give from a consciousness of Abundance! And so it is! Amen!

***What Kind of World* – Daniel Nahmod**

Closing Gratitude, Brief Invitation, and Benediction