

Taizé – Gratefulness... Caring... Action

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Chris will set the intention to create a space for Communion

Chant – *So Many Blessings* by Steven Walters

SILENCE – 1 Minute - 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...Home to our Community, and Home to your own Mystic Heart.

Our theme for the month of November is *All is Blessing*. And this morning, I am going to lead you on a meditative journey entitled *Gratefulness... Caring... Action*. Last week, I spoke about *celebration and rejoicing* as an important form of Spiritual Practice. And of all things, I defined the word *Purgatory* according to its original usage... as a period of purification in which one might make corrections, bring back balance, and regain a sense of Wholeness and Unity.

One of the most important ways to bring balance, harmony, and healing to our lives, and to our world, is through the practice of Wholehearted Gratefulness. It is in the Great-Fullness of the Heart that caring and action are born.

I invite you now to get comfortable and settle into stillness, allowing your awareness to move more deeply into this time and place... relaxing into this experience, feeling yourself anchored in the here and now... letting yourself be held... letting go of everything else for the next hour.

Let your body, mind and soul be completely at ease, becoming absolutely still as you allow yourself to be infused with the meditative tone of Taizé... no need to hold onto the words that are spoken... just allow them to wash over you...

Now let's take a couple of slow, deep breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth, and if you feel comfortable doing so, allowing your mouth to open just a little bit, allowing the muscles in your face to relax... settling into an open-hearted state, where Gratefulness is the dominant tone, where there is only here and now... and feel into this moment together, into the gathering of this sacred community.

Together, let us acknowledge our connection with all Life... visualize with me now 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 common purpose... feeling the collective intention that brought us here... feeling the deep devotion to that which is bigger than we are... feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening within us...

Margaret Wheatley tells us, "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

As we are faced by the challenges of our time, it is easy to become jaded, cynical... even hopeless. At times such as these, we can find solace... we can offer our loving contribution to the healing of society and the planet by simply caring.

In the silence of your own heart and mind, say it... I care. Feel it... I care. About all that is happening and changing in our world... I care. Do you notice a change? Is there something awakening in your heart?

When I hear the words *be careful*, may I know that this is not a warning that danger may befall... but rather, it is a reminder to allow my thoughts, words, and actions in the world be *full of care*.

When I "affirm that life matters, (my) actions can be nothing other than deeply sourced and wholehearted." (A Network for Gratefulness)

SILENCE - Bell

Diana (from Dr. Stephen Post, author of *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*)

"Every great moral and spiritual tradition points to the truth that in the giving of self lies the discovery of a deeper self. When the happiness, security and well-being of others become real to us, we come into our own. Creativity, meaning, resilience, health and even longevity can be enhanced as a surprising byproduct of contributing to the lives of others. This is perennial wisdom, and science now says it is so."

Gratefulness opens my heart and leads to caring... as I notice the many blessings in my life, I am shown what I deem important... what I care about. Caring leads to tending... tending to what matters most is my way of continuing the flow of blessing and making the world a more loving and peaceful place. When this great-fullness sparks me to the action of tending, I am engaged in Sacred Service... in serving God by serving another. And in this sacred act of service, my life is enhanced, for we are all One.

SILENCE

Musical Meditation – *We Shall Be Known* by MaMuse.

SILENCE – Bell

Diana – (from *Waking Up to What Is...* by Kristi Nelson)

“Gratefulness offers a merciful path for walking through life with our eyes and hearts wide open. It supports us to attend to the potency of what is life-affirming, beautiful, and moving in our exact moments of broken heartedness.

It invites us to sit with paradox in more fully noticing the magnificence of humanity as we face the mire. It asks us to live with poignancy, holding the concurrent truths that life is both extraordinarily precious and stunningly fleeting...

Gratefulness keeps us awake and activates our hearts toward greater clarity and courage. Being awake in this way, we become alert to, appreciative of, and alive for the things that matter to us. We attend to life and act on its behalf instead of waiting for life to attend to us.

Gratefulness suggests that everything in life warrants our greatest presence. And presence is precisely what makes us available for perspective and a sense of possibility, the agency of which fuels energy, imagination, and innovation to help us build a more hopeful future...

“The ability to wake up to another new day – one with which we will surely need to wrestle and reckon, but one that will teach and transform us, one we will be able to influence and impact, one in which we can always declare and share love - *this* is the unpromised gift for which to be grateful. This is the opportunity not to take for granted. Because if we are truly awake, we know that one unpredictable day, we will simply not have the gift of another day – a day such as today, with all of its beauty and pain, opportunity and beckoning possibility.”

SILENCE – Bell

Diana – Practices to Cultivate A Grateful Day

What if, every day this week, I was to choose a gratitude practice as the focus for my day?

What if... Several times each day, I took the time to look at the sky — to notice the changing clouds and colors... to say *thank you* aloud to the sky and its varied elements. How might this change my experience of the moment?

What if... several times each day, I looked directly into the face of another and simply smiled without words. What might happen? What would it feel like to show appreciation for someone? What would I feel in my body? In my heart?

What if... before going to bed for the night, I were to write down all the things I did to leave the day better than you found it, showing deep appreciation to and for myself?

What if... I was to go for a walk and notice all of the natural and human-made wonders that give me a sense of “awe.” What might the impact be?

What if... I was to offer a heartfelt thanks to the All-That-Is for the gift of nourishment, and for all of the hands that it took to put the food on my table, at every meal?

What if... I was to send a thank you card in the mail to someone I love? Or leave a thank you note on the pillow of my beloved? What seeds of love might be planted by this simple act?

And what if... I began the day by writing a thank-you note to God for five things in my life... and what if I decided to thank God for five new things every morning... never repeating? How might this change my perspective? How might this change my life?

Musical Meditation – *God Bless Us All* by Jan Garrett & JD Martin

SILENCE – Bell

Diana Closing

In the silence we can become grateful for what is before us... for the many blessings in our lives. And we can choose how we will choose to show, to the Source of All That Is for the many gifts in every moment.

We can choose how we will give thanks for those people and circumstances that we appreciate and enjoy.

And we can choose how we will acknowledge and give thanks for those that have grown us... are still growing us... by offering us opportunities to have compassion, forgiveness, and love...even in the light of challenge.

It has taken every person, every circumstance, every experience in my life to bring me to this glorious moment. I give thanks for all of it... thank you, Infinite Intelligence for my life.

Closing Prayer

As we close our service this morning, we take the time to mindfully acknowledge the abundance of Life... knowing that there is One Source, pouring Itself forth as all of Creation... expressing Itself intentionally and perfectly as each and every being. As I turn to that One, I Am so incredibly grateful.

As I turn to that One, I know that Its Presence, Power, and Intelligence is what I Am.

As I consciously place my faith in that One, I recognize all of Life as an incredible blessing.

As I offer myself whole-heartedly to the work of giving thanks for all that I have been given, I am showered with blessings... ever-growing, always multiplied by my gratitude... by the attention given to acknowledging the One in all that I have, in all that I see.

In knowing this Great-Fullness, feeling deep gratitude, and offering thanksgiving, I am a beneficial presence on the planet, I am lifted up; and as I Am lifted, so are we all lifted... for truly, we are One.

As I lean into the Radiant Light, the Infinite Intelligence, Divine Wisdom, Powerful Presence, and Limitless Love that is God, I cannot be led astray; for it is by God's infallible Law that my life unfolds.

As I choose to know with all that I Am that all is well, I align myself with God... I Am at Peace.

And so we, as part of a global web of gratitude, give thanks for all of the blessings of this day. We give thanks for the presence of mind that allows us to live each moment fully and mindfully.

We acknowledge the Goodness of Life... and we consciously stand in the flow of Grace that lifts us and carries us on our way.

In deep faith that Divine Order guides the cosmos and all of Creation, I release this prayer...to continue its Good Work... and knowing it is so, I let it be. And so it is. Amen!

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!

Offertory Video – *Lean in Toward the Light* – by Carrie Newcomer

Closing Gratitude, Brief Invitation, and Benediction