

Always Part of Something Larger...

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Lucinda will set the intention to open heart and mind, welcoming whatever is to be awakened today.

10:04 Introduction –Diana

Good morning. My name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. I begin today by welcoming you Home...Home to our Community, and Home to your own Mystic Heart.

I invite you now to get comfortable and settle into the stillness of Taizé, bringing your awareness into this time and place...letting go of everything that has come before this moment... relaxing into this experience, feeling yourself grounded in the here and now...letting yourself be held...

The body and mind are completely still, the soul is completely at ease as you allow yourself to be carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...allowing the words and music to wash over you...

Chant – *Get Ready, My Soul* by Daniel Nahmod

Our theme for 2021 is *Connection*, and the point of focus for the month of January is *Immerse Yourself*. This morning, we'll be taking a meditative journey into the experience of knowing that we are *Always Part of Something Larger*...as a way to *Immerse Yourself* in meaningful *Connection*. By offering Taizé each week as our primary form of Sunday Devotion, we are honoring the Spiritual Practices of Meditation and Prayer. And by completing each meditative experience with Gratitude Practice and Joyful Expression, we are honoring the Spiritual Practice of Celebration.

Let's begin by taking a couple of slow, deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling slowly...breathing in Peace, and breathing out any tension that may still be present in your body. As you take the next few cycles of breath, scan the body, head to toe, letting go of anything that does not serve the Peaceful experience of meditation. Consciously allow the muscles in the face to relax...

Allow your breathing to be a natural, gentle flow...and then slow it down just a little bit more. We allow the breath to carry us inward, settling into an open-hearted state, where Deep Listening is the dominant tone, where there is only here and now...feeling into this moment together...attuning ourselves to the high vibration we are creating.

As we slip fully into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge our connection with all Life. The Consciousness that permeates and expresses as all that is, is finding a point of expression in you, and in all other beings. Sense with me a global web of

consciousness, each of us a point of Light...all beings, all over the world who, in this moment, are sitting in meditation or prayer, or attending their own sacred services...all of us in unison, acknowledging the Presence of the Divine...consciously connected by our common purpose...feeling the collective intention that brought us here...feeling the deep communion with that which is bigger than we are...feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening within us...

By consciously connecting with all of life, our collective Work here is empowered... healing has begun...Wholeness is revealed.

To begin our path of contemplation this morning, I turn to the work of Mark Nepo. In his *Book of Soul*, he says this: "No matter what we're going through, faith in life means believing that there's always more beyond the condition of our understanding – the way the rest of the Universe whirls beyond the light of any given star. In just this way, we're always part of something larger than our condition, and the circumstance we're in – real and consuming as it can be – is not the condition of the Whole".

What an important thing to remember at this time in our human story, in our cosmic story. We are always part of something larger. There is always more going on than meets the eye. There is always more to the story than our limited perception can experience.

He goes on to remind us that "We all struggle between the narrow condition of our understanding and the vastness continuing around us. As soon as we succumb to our narrow condition, whatever it might be, as soon as we stop receiving life, we begin to paint everything with the color of our trouble. This is how we can listen to another without truly hearing them, how we can touch something beautiful and overlay it with where we've been or where we think we're going and miss its beauty. Under the press of our particular condition, we can end up drifting into the past or the future, while stepping about as a ghost in the moment at hand."

And so, as a way of stepping more fully into this present moment and becoming more awakened to the Joy and the Beauty of life, more aware of the miracles that surround us, we expand our Vision. We begin by looking within, to the vastness of inner space, acknowledging the Life Force that powers every atom, every cell, every organ, every system of our bodies...the same Life Force that moves through us as thoughts and feelings, connecting intellect and heart...and sparking our curiosity, opening our awareness, to the mystery that we are. We take a moment now to savor the mystery...

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Diana

We turn now to the world outside of our own body. We live as part of a vast cosmos that started 13.7 billion years ago, that went through a process of cosmological

evolution, a radical process of development, the organizing itself into galaxies and solar systems, ultimately giving rise to biological life...photons, elements, atoms, molecules, minerals, plant life, animal life, human life, self-reflective human consciousness, and the birth of culture. And this evolution continues...

There is an Intelligence at work...a great Mystery that appears to be orchestrating this vast unfolding...by Its inherent need or desire to express and experience Itself...through Its natural Laws, Its Spiritual Principles, Its Inherent Tendencies. As part of It, we play a part in this Mysterious Process. Our self-reflective human consciousness with its ability to choose helps to direct the flow of Spiritual Energy...with our thoughts and intentions, motivations and feelings, words, and actions, we create the molds for Spirit to fill.

We set causes in motion and the Great Mystery corresponds with an effect. Sometimes we do this consciously, all too often unconsciously. There is something at work here...we cannot deny it. We do not know exactly what It is or how It works. We cannot know...perhaps we are not *meant* to know...Its Totality with our limited perception. We sense that we are not separate from It, that It infuses and surrounds us, that we are one with It. And in our heart of hearts, we know we can trust It.

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

Diana

We are always part of something larger. When we consider the implications of our Oneness with Spirit, we can see that each of our lives impacts the Whole. What I do matters to the big picture.

This week we celebrate the birthday, life, and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a man who knew that he was part of something larger than himself. He believed, and often spoke that “involving yourself in something bigger than yourself was transformative.” The interesting thing is that we are already involved in something bigger than ourselves...the word *involve*, from its Latin roots, means rolled into, or enfolded. And so, recognizing our oneness, and the impact we have on one another and on the planet, is more about awakening to the Truth of what is...and living in a way that serves the Whole.

Modern Spiritual Teacher and Visionary Craig Hamilton invites us to consider the importance a human life takes on when we step into the awareness that we are part of one forever changing Event called Life...not as some abstract concept, but literally...that every choice we make creates an effect that ripples out, we know not how far. As part of one living Consciousness that is forever evolving toward complexity, cooperation, and unity, he stretches us beyond the comfortable as he invites us to consider this idea:

“In every moment, I am either helping to move this evolutionary process forward, or I am holding it back. In every moment, I am either helping to move this evolutionary process forward, or I am holding it back.”

In a powerful way, he is saying we are always part of something larger.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes

Chris – Meditation

I invite us now to take a deep, cleansing breath in... and exhale fully... Again, inhale deeply, feeling yourSelf expanding... and exhale, completely letting go of all tension or worry... Once more, deeply breathe in, expanding your awareness of your connection with God and all of Creation... and release as you give yourSelf completely to this communion...

Each of us is a spark of Divine Awareness... a glowing jewel in the Global Web of Consciousness... Like the gems in Indra’s Net, we are all connected to one another in Spirit... Everything we feel, think, say, and do affects the Whole Web... As we join together in Conscious Communion, we support each other in ways we are only beginning to imagine... Feel your way into the Web, expanding your abilities to sense your Beloved Community connecting with you... Feel the presence of God and one another...

As we connect with each other in Spirit, we come into a greater realization that we are indeed One... We are each a part of something much larger: The Body of Spirit... We belong together... not *to* each other, but *with* each other... We are the hands, feet, and heart of God in the human realm... What we do matters greatly...

Let us continue to expand our sense of connectedness, our consciousness of unity, our Love and Compassion for one another, as we move into the Silence...

Silence – 5:00

With grateful hearts, we give thanks for this time of deep connection... For the support of our Beloved Community... For the opportunity to express our Divine Selves in service to one another... Centered in gratitude, we accept this Divine Gift.

Thank you, God, for everything...

Please affirm with me that our thoughts, words, and actions align with our deepest spiritual intention, and that we are all inspired daily to give full expression to the gifts given us. The light of our souls shines brightly as we express powerful spiritual qualities in the world.

Remaining connected and centered in this expanded awareness of our Oneness, we listen to the Divine Wisdom as it speaks through Rev. Diana this morning... Open to hearing the insights that are uniquely ours to receive... We receive them now, with open minds... open hearts... and deep gratitude...

Diana – Invitation to Practice

Continuing with the meditative tone of Taizé... we recall that we are giving our focused attention to one quality of Spirit each month. These qualities are all present and available, within us. Attending to these Qualities allows them to grow and expand in our experience, being revealed in every area of our lives, more and more of the time.

For the month of January, we ground ourselves in the God Quality of *Peace*. Being deeply at Peace, no matter what is happening around us, offers us a most valuable gift...the gift of Contentment.

Mother Teresa writes that “if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” There is a deep Peace that comes from knowing we are not alone...from knowing we are always part of something larger. But there is also a responsibility. Once again, Craig Hamilton summarizes this responsibility in his “Orienting Principles of an Evolutionary Life.” I invite you to take in these first two ideas...simply consider them as possibilities.

Here is the first one: “Life is not fundamentally about me. I’m part of a cosmic, universal, unfolding evolutionary process.” Breathe that in for a moment.

He follows with this second idea: “My life isn’t my own to do with as I please; I’m beholden to something bigger. I have a responsibility, even an obligation, to other people, to life, to the evolving process, to God. I’m beholden to evolve beyond ego and become the most awakened, enlightened human being that I can possibly be, because that is what’s going to be of greatest service to this process.” I don’t know about you, but somewhere deep inside, deeper than the surface level of my egoic reaction and resistance, I sense Truth. My soul knows that this is so.

How might life be different if everyone took these as the Truth and lived accordingly? I think we would create Peace on Earth. I believe in my heart of hearts that it’s only a matter of time.

I invite you to spend time this week considering these ideas.

And to help establish yourself in the Quality of Peace, you may enjoy this affirmation:

I Am a Peaceful presence in my world.

Peace fills my body, my mind, my heart, my soul as I serve a Higher Good.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell

Diana - Moving into Celebration

I invite you to gently bring your awareness back to your body...to your senses...to the atmosphere in the room. As you feel ready, allow your eyes to gently open and take in whatever is before you. Move your body a little bit if you’d like, to reconnect your awareness to our shared space.

In order to make our time together complete, we gradually step into gratitude. We give thanks for this prayerful experience, for this time in group meditation and contemplation. We are so deeply grateful to have Spiritual Family, a Spiritual Community, to share our lives with.

The word *community*, from its Latin roots, means *common*. It is fitting that the word *community* also contains the word *unity*. It is in *community* that we can discover, acknowledge, and *share* in our Oneness.

In *The Book of Joy*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu says that “We are wired to be caring for the other and generous to one another. We shrivel when we are not able to interact. We depend on the other in order for us to be fully who we are.” As social beings, we can only express fully in relationship. This is a piece of our Spiritual evolution that we cannot do alone.

So, what a blessing to have a community to grow with...a community that reflects back to us *our* growth...*our* experience...that supports us and brings its caring and compassion to our lives...people of like mind, that we can talk with...and people to receive our Service in the world.

As you may know, the Mystic Heart Mission we are fulfilling in the world is this: ***Living from our Divinity, we empower our lives, and create authentic, loving Community through heartfelt Study, Service, Celebration, and Prayer.***

The words *authentic, loving Community* are there on purpose...at the heart of our Mission. It's who we are and what we're about.

Spiritual Community is also important in the fulfilling of our Purpose:


We endeavor...


 to live physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually empowered lives...

 to bring our most authentic selves in service to others...

 to honor and experience the Divinity of all beings...

 to experience the miraculous nature of our world and everything in it...

 to recognize and live from our Unity...

 to practice Love in order to bring Peace to our world.

We have so much to share. Our classes and book studies offer tools for individuals who are seeking personal and spiritual growth. Our Sunday Taizé offers the opportunity to share in Prayer and Meditation...but also in ***Celebration***. Together, we give thanks for all of life's blessings. Together, we express our gratitude to God and to one another.

Celebration is a vital part of our Spiritual Practice. The sacred scriptures of the world tell us that celebration is not only important, it is a holy, creative act, an act of worship

and devotion to the One Source. By celebrating, we bring our awareness to the Joy that is inherent in us, our Divine Birthright, a quality of Spirit that is ever available. So, I thank you for joining us this morning for our time of devotion...of honoring the Divine, honoring Life, honoring ourselves and honoring one another...and sharing in the joy of Life together.

I like to think of the time we share each week as an opportunity to move through the entire cycle and flow of Spiritual Practices, grounding ourselves in the Six Pillars of a Spiritual Life. In one short hour each week, we open in prayer, move into meditation, are given food for thought and tools for growth, serve the community by our willingness to be present, and offer gratitude and thanksgiving by our joyful celebration and our act of giving. What a powerful way to spend some of our Sabbath time.

We want to share what we have with others, so I invite you to invite folks to check out our website.

Blessing for the Offering

And now, we offer you the opportunity to share your financial Good, in support of the Work we are doing in the world. You can go to **mysticheart.org** to use our Donate Button or to find our mailing address.

We also have a Gracious Giving Program for those who would like to make a heartfelt monthly commitment of support.

As we move into this time of giving, please take these words into your heart, feeling their True Meaning, and knowing how much we appreciate your gifts:

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!

And keeping in mind that in the book of Ecclesiastes, it says there is, "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance," let's join Jerry and Jeri as they celebrate life...*Dancing in the Moonlight*.

Offertory Video – *Dancing in the Moonlight*

Closing Gratitude, Brief Invitation (List Only), and Benediction

Tuesday (*Tai Chi* with Chris Netto, Tuesdays at 10 am on Zoom. Contact Chris at standingfirmfitness.com for more information.

Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 pm – *The Book of Joy*, a book club facilitated by Michael Bordeaux.

Thursdays - *Metaphysical Bible*, on-going, from 3-5 pm.

Fridays, 2:00-5:00, starting February 5th – *The Celestine Prophecy: A Deeper Dive*, a class facilitated by Rev. Diana. More information to come.

Selected Saturdays:

Saturday, January 23, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm – *Dear Self: A Day of Insight* with Rev. Diana (a day retreat)

February 6, 10 am – 1 pm – *Mystic Morning Brew* with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton.

Sunday Taizé Meditation Experience, 10 am each week.

All activities and services are available via Zoom. Check our website, mysticheart.org, for more information and for all of our Zoom links.

Closing Song: *Love Be with You* by Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service