

# **As Long as it Takes...**

## **Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

### **Opening Prayer – Lucinda**

Good Morning, I'm Lucinda Alton, Prayer Practitioner for Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. Please join me in prayer.

### **Introduction – Sherri**

Good morning. I'm Sherri Dotter, Prayer Practitioner for 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...

Still the body, allow the mind to settle, let yourself be completely at ease as you are carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...allowing the words and music to wash over

### **Chant – Music – *Love, Serve and Remember***

Our theme for 2021 is *Connection*, and the point of focus for the month of February is *Being the Love*. This morning, we'll be taking a meditative journey into the experience of ***Being the Love***. 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 the healing white light of Spirit, holding the breath in for a moment, allowing the Light to fill every part of your being, and then letting it go, allowing the out breath to carry any tension or resistance with it as it leaves your body. Again, breathe in...let it come...and hold it for a moment, and then let it go. One more time...let it come...allow the Light to fill you...and let it go. Now quickly scan the body, head to toe, letting go of anything that does not serve the Peaceful experience of meditation.

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 a peaceful state, where Whole-hearted Devotion 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 sacred services, ceremonies, or rituals...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 title of today's Taizé...**For As Long as it Takes**. So, we are to Be the Love...For As Long as it Takes. But what if it gets really hard? For As Long as it Takes. But what if I'm really stressed out right now? For As Long as it Takes. But what if I'm too busy? For As Long as it Takes. But...But...

There is a saying from the East, "Love is a bird with two wings. One wing is compassion; the other wing is wisdom. If either wing is broken, the bird cannot fly".

In SQ21, The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence, Cindy Wigglesworth offers the definition of Spiritual Intelligence as "the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation".

She originally wanted to use the phrase "behaving with love" until she ran across the aforementioned eastern saying. Cindy writes, "becoming the two pillars of spiritual attainment, wisdom and compassion are the best of the head and the best of the heart coming together in the creation of loving behavior."

I invite you to consider...Am I combining the best of my head and my heart to create loving behavior? What kind of devotional Practices might enhance my spiritual growth and my response to life and the people I serve?

**SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell**

**Sherri**

The word "behave" is also a crucial aspect of this definition because it is pointing to actions. It must show up in how we treat ourselves, other people, animals, the environment... Spiritual Intelligence goes beyond inner spiritual development with the embodiment being visible in our outer experience.

Reverend Diana spoke so simply a few weeks ago, "We allow ourselves to be drawn into the happenings in the world around us...into the drama...into the stories. While we know that there is truly no separation between the material and the spiritual, we tend to lose ourselves...we forget that this is all story...we forget that we are interpreting this story through our own particular lens...we forget that each of us has a different lens, and that mine may not be as clean as it could be...and most

importantly, we forget who and whose we are...that we are integrally connected to one another, to the world, and to the Infinite Intelligence that is our Source. Devotional Practice brings us back.

Sadguru says: "True devotion means becoming the hand of the Divine. Whatever comes your way, you will know how to transform it into something beautiful."

Where do the benefits of immersing myself in devotional practice really show up in my life? In the unexpected difficult moments...in the unpleasant surprises. Whether it's having someone insult me, or behave from road rage on the highway, or something much more challenging and serious, like receiving a diagnosis for myself or a loved one. When I spend time engaging in devotional practice, connecting with my Divine Nature...my Higher Angels...I am preparing myself in advance. I am strengthening my values, making a habit of peaceful responses, or of responding with curiosity, rather than reacting from habit. I am cultivating inner fortitude. When the going gets tough, I'm ready. And in between challenges, life is much more Graceful, Peaceful, and Joyful than it would have been.

True devotion means saying a resounding and unconditional Yes to Life. It means trusting that whatever is before me is *for* me, and taking the time to find the blessing. True devotion means recognizing that there is no separation between the *material* and the *spiritual*. It is all Divinity taken form. And it is my Practice to treat it as such. In this way, devotional Practice begins as I sit in meditation, prayer, and study, and continues throughout the day, making its way into my interactions, relationships, and commitments. It lends quality to the work I do...it enters every act of service...every gift I offer to another. True devotion goes beyond attitude...it becomes a way of walking in the world."

### **Musical Meditation – *When I Pray* by Daniel Nahmod**

#### **Sherri**

The last part of the definition of Spiritual Intelligence is the ability to maintain inner and outer peace in every situation. Cindy writes "I have found that this time-honored spiritual ideal is essential if we are going to act from love. We must hold our wisdom and compassion within a larger container of peacefulness." And no faking it! Just kidding. Sometimes we need to practice restraint, but it can drain our energy. We need to move towards devotional Spiritual practice, study and prayer to develop our Spiritual Intelligence and nurture a kind of "peace that comes from the inside. Inner peace generates outer peace without creating fatigue or burnout. Inner peace is therefore more genuine, and less likely to be rattled in times of crises or stress."

We may have heard ideas ranging from "Be here Now" to "it's about the journey, not the destination" to idea of attaining Nirvana, Spiritual Enlightenment or Awakening. How can all of these be the path? There is a paradox we are asked to hold. In one hand is a restlessness, an urgency, and what mystics have called a "divine

discontent”. We need to reach for and consistently become the best version of ourselves. We do this in every moment, in every interaction, in every choice we make. In the other hand is the necessity of being in the present moment, in allowing the divine to unfold in its own perfect timing. To ask the right questions. To patiently listen for the answer. To trust the process. If we approach our Spiritual development with too much urgency, we will undermine the peacefulness and the wisdom of the process. This could lead to self-judgment which opposes self-compassion.

Embracing this paradox, Cindy explains that SQ21 “doesn’t focus on some static ideal state of ‘the fully developed human’ but on a dynamic process of development. Becoming fully human is not an attainment but a continuous engagement. And the ability to live fully in that engagement is perhaps the most significant spiritual attainment we can aspire to.”

Please know with me that we are perfect just the way we are, and that the unfolding of our fullest and highest self is still in front of us. Feeling calm and urgent at the same time, contemplate the following question:

Am I continuously engaging in the dynamic process of my development? What Spiritual or Devotional Practice or Study would further enhance my engagement?

**SILENCE – 2 Minutes**

**Lucinda – Meditation**

Please join me in taking a deep breath in... and exhale relaxing fully... Feel your body expand as you inhale again deeply... and release, letting go of any tightness or stress... One more time, take a Holy Breath, deeply filling your lungs... and as you exhale, I invite you to bring yourSelf fully present into this meditation... <pause>

Now let your attention rest in the middle of your chest... in your heart area... Feel the energy grow as your heart responds to your attention... Allow that energy to radiate out from your heart into your whole body... Sense it expanding upward... downward... outward to your arms and hands... Allow your entire body to be filled with the energy being radiated from your heart... <pause>

Still feeding your heart area with your attention, allow it to open gently... letting more Love in... letting more Love out... Your heart is a wellspring of God’s Unconditional Love... Let it bubble up within you... Let it flow forth from you... <pause>

Memorize this sensation... this feeling of fully opening your heart... this feeling of Infinite Love... You can bring it back at any time, just by remembering... “My heart is open... I am centered in Divine Love... I am Whole... I am safe...”

As we move into the Silence, memorize every detail of this Wholehearted Openness... **Silence – 5:00**

**Lucinda – 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 February, we ground ourselves in the God Quality of *LOVE*. Being the Love, for As Long As it Takes, offers us a most valuable gift...the gift of Inner and Outer Peace.

Today I invite you into a practice that will help you deepen love. Jesus said that we must love others as we love ourselves.

**What does loving others as you love yourself mean to you?**

**There are plenty of examples demonstrating ways to show love for others. But, in order to love others as ourselves, we must first love ourselves.**

**What does loving yourself look like?**

**As beings on a spiritual path, we have heard about finding ways to be kind to others as a spiritual practice. Random acts of kindness as an example.**

**This week, as you look for ways to be kind and loving toward others, I invite you to look for ways to be consciously kind and loving toward yourself.**

**Music – (*Holy, Holy, Holy* by Karen Drucker)**

**SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell**

**Lucinda - 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.

In his book "Creating the Beloved Community, Jim Lockard says, "As I see it, there are two main reasons to be in spiritual community. One is to develop a culture of love and support for people living their daily lives based on spiritual understanding; the other is to introduce them to the mystical path. Each faith tradition may view mysticism differently, but all have a way of understanding and relating to the mystical aspects of life. The Beloved Community is made stronger through an awareness and ideally an experience of the mystical. It is where the true meaning of being human resides."

We are all connected...we are a Beloved Community. And 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. A group of unique individuals coming together in community to offer each other loving support as we each travel our own path to Spiritual growth.

Our wide-scale **Vision** is ***Practicing the Possible Through Prayer***. We know that Peace is possible, Love is possible, and living from our principles is possible. This is our Work. The **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, it's what we do.

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.**

Our Community is a living, breathing organism. It is an Independent Spiritual Center that welcomes all who are drawn...open to all faith paths, philosophical points of view, and ways of life that support and uplift the grow and evolution of the planet and its beings. As Spiritually Independent beings, we hold Rabbi Jesus as one of the most evolved beings and Evolutionaries to date, and hold his life as an example for our own; we stand on the shoulders of the New Thought Leaders and Transcendentalists before them; and we honor the Perennial and Indigenous Wisdom Teachings of the ages. We take the common threads that run through all Wisdom traditions and carry them forward into something that is free of dogma and is practical for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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***. As a

community, we give thanks for all of life's blessings. Together, we express our gratitude to God and to one another.

We are a relatively new and small but thriving community, excited to share what we have with others. 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**. As a community, we celebrate by giving thanks for all of life's blessings. Together, we express our gratitude to God and to one another.

Mystic Heart is the place that you can join others in moving through the entire cycle and flow of Spiritual Practices, grounding you 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 for one another, and offer gratitude and thanksgiving by our joyful celebration and our act of giving. What a powerful way to spend a Sunday morning.

We want to share what we have with others, so I invite you to invite folks to check out our website. The power of invitation is one of the ways we grow our community.

### **Lucinda – 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 so that we can more effectively plan for our growth and our monthly spending. I would be happy to give you more information.

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!**

**CELEBRATION INTRO When you cry and weep, when you are miserable, you are alone. When you celebrate, the whole existence participates with you. Only in celebration do we meet the ultimate, the eternal. Only in celebration do we go beyond the circle of birth and death. Rajneesh**

Let's celebrate together now by jumping on the Love Train  
**Offertory Video – Love Train feat. Jason Mraz, Chad Smith, Yo-Yo Ma | Turnaround Arts | Playing For Change**

## **Closing Gratitude and Benediction**

### **Practitioner: Brief Invitations**

**Tuesday** (*Tai Chi* with Chris Netto, Please note that Chris's class has changed to Thursday's.) Contact Chris at [standingfirmfitness.com](http://standingfirmfitness.com) for more information.

**Tuesdays, 3:00-4:30 pm** – *The Book of Joy*, a book club facilitated by Michael Bordeaux.

**Thursdays** - *Metaphysical Bible*, on-going, from 3-5 pm with Rev. Diana and Chris Johnson.

Please note the Date Change - **Fridays, 2:00-5:00**, starting March 5<sup>th</sup> – *The Celestine Prophecy: A Deeper Dive*, a class facilitated by Rev. Diana. More information to come.

### **Selected Saturdays:**

**March 6, 10 am – 1 pm** – *Mystic Morning Brew* (Who are you, really?) with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton

**February 13, 10 am-noon.** *Praying in Color:* with Ellie Thompson. We will be painting rocks.

**Sunday Taizé Meditation Experience, 10 am each week.** Limited seating may be available.

All activities and services are available via Zoom. Limited seating may be available. Please check with Rev Diana or class presenter for more details. Check our website, [mysticheart.org](http://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**