

The Courage to Love...

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

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

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...

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 you...remembering why we are here on earth to begin with...To Love, Serve, and Remember...

Chant – *Love, Serve, and Remember* by John Astin

Our theme for 2021 is *Connection*, and the point of focus for the month of February is *Be the Love*. This morning, we'll be taking a meditative journey into the experience of finding the *Courage to 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... allowing the breath to settle into a natural, gentle flow...and then slow the breath just a little bit more...carrying us inward, to a peaceful state, where Whole-hearted Love is the dominant tone, where there is only here and now...feeling into this moment together...attuning ourselves to the high vibration we are co-creating with the Infinite.

As an irreplaceable strand woven into the fabric of Creation, you are a vast being that has never been born and will never die...you are the very image and likeness of pure Spirit. Your Essence is Love.

Slipping fully into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge and experience the Love that is our Essence...we honor the Love that is the Essence of every being, without exception...and we acknowledge our connection with all of Life. The Consciousness that permeates and expresses as all that is, is finding a point of expression in you, and in all other beings. Take a moment to become aware that this consciousness isn't something that only you are experiencing. 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...each one of us experiencing the Consciousness that is present right now in everyone and everything...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 ask you to consider...Do I have the courage to Love? This might lead to another question...what do I mean by Love? And what do I mean by courage? Do I have the courage to Love?

The New Thought Tradition defines Love as the unlimited, unrestrained Self-Givingness of Spirit. So by this definition, when I live my life from a loving place, I am giving of myself, fully and completely, to whatever or whomever is before me. Brother David Steindl-Rast defines *Love* as a resounding *Yes* to belonging...a *Yes* that is spoken not only with our words, but by the way we live our lives. *Yes*, what is before me is for me...show me the blessing. *Yes*, I am willing to step up and step in. And *Yes*, we are one in the eyes of Love...there is no separation...this one who is before me is simply a part of myself that I do not yet know.

The root of the word *courage* means *from the heart*. It becomes more and more obvious why it take courage to Love.

If I give of myself wholeheartedly and completely to any situation, experience, or relationship, isn't there a chance that I will get hurt?

Of course the answer to this question is *Yes*, that is a possibility. Being courageous is not the freedom from fear. It is the willingness to acknowledge the fear and the uncertainty, and to choose to move through it.

Mother Teresa once wrote:

“People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”

Feel the fear and choose Love anyway...

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Diana

Let's take a moment to remember who and what we are, and let's do this by way of affirmation. Hold this Truth for yourself as I speak it aloud: What am I? I Am an ineffable energy that is everywhere present...I Am Life Itself, seeking to become conscious of Itself as me...I Am the Love Intelligence that governs the Universe.

And who am I? I Am an individualized expression of Infinite Intelligence...I Am a unique vibrational pattern in the Mind of God...I Am of the One Source which has never been born and will never die; and I carry and express the Divine qualities of Love, Beauty, Wisdom, Intelligence, Order, and Transformation.

I am not simply a body...a body of knowledge or experience, a body of hereditary patterns and external factors. My body is a conduit through which Spirit lives Its life on earth. My body is God's expression of perfection in human form. My body is a vehicle, a holy Temple, through which Love can be expressed in the world.

And why am I here? I am not here to *get* something; I Am here to *let* Something live through me. I Am here to *let* Spirit have Its way with me. I have arrived here at this time because I have something to give, something to share. I have within me all the Love required to fulfill my purpose in this lifetime. Through my living, learning, and loving, I experience growth, evolving to my next yet to be, releasing Life Energy into the Whole, even as I make the world a better place.

Musical Meditation – Use Me by Ricki Byars-Beckwith

Diana

There is a fundamental Wholeness at the core of humanity, at the heart of every one of us. There is something inherently *Right* and *Real* about us...call it original Goodness, original Blessing. We are not *only human*, we are *Divine Human*. One with the One Heart, the One Mind, the One Soul that does Its Work by moving through us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that “What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. *Him*, we do not respect, but *the soul*, whose organ he is, would he let it appear

through his action, would make our knees bend. When *IT* breathes through his intellect, it is Genius. When *IT* breathes through his will, it is Virtue. When *IT* flows through his affection, it is Love.”

When we allow the Infinite, the One Love, the process of Self-givingness Itself, to express Itself through us, *then* we become expressions of the Highest Possibilities of being human.

Rev. Michael Beckwith says that “we are here to reflect and reveal the order of the cosmos.” Take a moment to allow that to sink into your consciousness: I am a Spiritual Being, and I am here to reflect and reveal the Divine Order of the cosmos.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes

Chris – Meditation

I invite you now gently to close your eyes and let your facial muscles relax... Release any tension or stress, and settle your body into a comfortable position... Allow yourSelf to be open and receptive... Spirit is right here... in the midst of you... fully present... fully available...

God is love... but what does that really mean? ... Contemplate your highest idea of the Divine... Love is All That... an Invisible Power... fully present everywhere... infinitely creative... It brings Peace... Joy... Fulfillment... Beauty... Understanding... and Wisdom... Love dwells within each of us... as all of us...

Consider for a moment... What do you love? ... Whom do you love? ... Bring to mind an image of one thing or one person that stirs the emotion of love within you... Feel the feeling... let it expand within you... let it open your heart wide... Let it expand throughout your entire body... Give it your complete attention... Surrender into it...

Divine Love enfolds us right here, right now, and always... We are forever held in the everlasting arms of Spirit... There is nowhere we could go where Love would be absent... There is nothing we could do that would separate us from the Love of God... All we have to do is open to it... let it flow through us... let it shine forth from us... Let your heart and soul continue to open wider and wider to this Divine Love as we move into the Silence...

Silence – 5:00

We are so very grateful for this Wholehearted experience of Divine Love... We give thanks that It is always fully available to us, and we show our appreciation by letting Love be our primary response to Life... With heartfelt gratitude for this time with Spirit and with Beloved Community, we know that we are truly blessed...

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.

In this Holy Moment, we give thanks for the Courage of Love, as it inspires Rev. Diana's words this morning... We receive it with profound gratitude and Love...

Diana – Invitation to Practice

Continuing with the meditative tone of Taizé... we recall that we are giving our focused attention to the Spiritual Quality of Love this month. This Love is always present and available, within us. As I attend to the Quality of Love, it grows and expands in my experience, being revealed in every area of my life, more and more.

Living my life from *Love*, from self-givingness, no matter what is happening around me, offers the valuable gift of Whole-hearted Contentment. As I allow Love to guide me, I Am living in the image and likeness of the Divine Mother, of the Blessed Father...there is nothing wrong, nothing broken, nothing missing. I Am at Peace.

Today, I invite you into a Practice that will lead you to greater Love. We know that whatever we give our attention to expands in our experience. And so we take a moment to center ourselves in the Awareness that we are God's Love expressing. Breathe that into every aspect of your being. I Am God's Love expressing. It has no other channel through which to flow...I Am a conduit for Divine Love. Let that Love flow through you, carried on the breath as it moves in and out of your body. The breath is an access point of your Eternal Nature.

An Infinite Field of Loving Intelligence, Loving Presence, fills you and surrounds you...It *is* you. Allow this to sink more deeply into your Awareness...can you feel Its Presence?

Spending time in the Practice of *Being the Love* brings Love to our world. Just think, as we begin...one by one...to engage in the conscious Practice of Being the Love, what kind of world will we create?

Musical Meditation –*What Kind of World* by Daniel Nahmod

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Diana - Moving into Celebration

Can you see it? A world that is peaceful, joyful, and kind...where everybody has enough to eat, a warm place to sleep at night, and a sense of belonging and contribution? A world created by our willingness to practice bold and courageous Love? Doesn't it make you want to smile? Hold onto the Vision...hold onto the smile...hold onto the Love as you 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.

With hearts brimming over, we gradually step into the final few minutes of our gathering...together, we Practice gratitude for, and celebration of one another in Community. We give thanks for this joyful and prayerful experience; we are so deeply grateful to have Spiritual Family, a Spiritual Community, to share our lives with.

We are creating a new story. Together, we practice seeing the Divine in all that is, and in seeing a world where all human gifts are shared and appreciated. Author Charles Eisenstein says that “people cannot hold a new story by themselves. A story can be held only in community, which is why people seek to establish communities dedicated to spiritual ideas...we can do the same by surrounding ourselves with people who are living similar values.”

Mystic Heart’s Beloved Community is creating space for such people to gather and find support and encouragement. 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. What we are committed to:

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 at the heart of our Mission. It’s who we are, it’s what we do.

I love that this Community is a living, breathing organism...that it is an Independent Spiritual Center that is growing and changing according to the needs and desires of its members and friends...that it welcomes all who are drawn to be here...that it is open to all faith paths, philosophical points of view, and ways of life that acknowledge and honor the Divine, and support and uplift the growth and evolution of the planet and its beings.

As Spiritual Independents, we hold the Master Teacher Jesus as an example...as one of the most evolved beings and Evolutionaries to date, and hold his life as a model 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 acknowledge the common threads that run through all Wisdom traditions and carry them forward, offering principles and practices that are free of dogma and practical for the 21st century.

As our time draws to a close, we will have practiced prayer and meditation, received food for thought and tools for growth, served the community by our willingness to be present for one another, and offered gratitude and thanksgiving by our joyful celebration and our act of giving. That’s all Six Pillars of a Spiritual Life in about an hour!

So let’s wrap it up. Are you ready for ***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. This is a vital part of our Spiritual Practice. The sacred scriptures of the world treat celebration as a holy, creative act, an act of worship and devotion to the One Source of all of Life. By celebrating, we feel and express our inherent Joy. So from the bottom of my heart, 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 celebrating the Joy of Life together.

Diana – 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 feel the Truth of these words, and know 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!

Get up on your feet and join me in celebrating...

Offertory Video – *Living In the Overflow* by Charity Gayle and Joshua Sherman

Closing Gratitude and Benediction

Lucinda, Prayer Practitioner: Brief Invitations

Tuesday (*Tai Chi* with Chris Netto has moved to Thursdays on Zoom. Please 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.

Wednesdays – *Paradigm Shifting*, on hiatus for this week...back next week.

Thursdays - *Metaphysical Bible*, on hiatus for this week...back next week.

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

Saturdays:

February 28...the Mystic OAKS is considering an adventure...keeping an eye on the weather forecast. Please let Rev. Diana know if you'd like to join us for some time with Community in Nature. Location TBA.

March 6, 10 am – 1 pm – *Mystic Morning Brew* with “Yours Truly”

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.

We want to share what we have with others, so please invite folks to check out our website. The power of invitation is one of the ways we grow our community. If you are here in person, or if you drop by during the week, we have some little cards that you can use to help friends find us.

Closing Song: *Love Be with You*, written by Lainey Bernstein & Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service