

Coming Alive!

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

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

Introduction – Rev. 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 let go of all that has come before this moment, putting aside everything that may await you when our time today is complete...letting all thoughts and concerns move gently out of your field of awareness. Take a deep breath and allow your body to relax, allowing your chair to fully support you...giving yourself the gift of stillness as you bring your awareness to this time and place...feeling content with what is as you ground yourself in Spirit, here and now...Just be...allowing yourself to be carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...feeling the words and music wash over you...remembering who you are as the spark of Divinity is kindled and allowed to burn brightly...

Chant – *Beauty In You* by Karen Drucker

Our theme for 2021 is *Connection*, and the point of focus for the month of March is *Authentic Expression*. This morning, we'll be taking a meditative journey into *Coming Alive!* as we move toward our own authentic expression. We come together each Sunday for Taizé, a deep and beautiful form of group *Meditation* and *Prayer*. And we complete each service with *Gratitude* and *Joyful Expression*, sharing in the Spiritual Practice of *Celebration*.

Join me in taking another deep breath in, allowing yourself to feel the Presence of Spirit moving into and through your body...and then gently breathing out, allowing your body to relax a bit more. Breathing in the Peace of Spirit, and then letting that Peace flow out into the world around you, creating an atmosphere of Perfect Peace, both within and without.

Taking another moment to follow the breath as it settles into its own natural flow... and then slowing the breath down just a little bit more. Now letting go of the need to follow the breath, knowing that the breath of Spirit is forever constant...and turning inward to the Peace, the Love, the Beauty, and the Joy that are forever within you, settling into the eternal nature of your being, where you feel and know your Oneness with the Great Mystery. There is only here and now...this sacred moment...as together, we attune ourselves to the high vibration we are co-creating with the Infinite. You are an irreplaceable strand woven into the fabric of Creation, perfectly and

intentionally made. ...you are the very image and likeness of pure Spirit. You are Life expressing.

Slipping fully into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge and experience the pulsing of Life as it moves through us...we honor the same Life in everyone and everything, and we acknowledge our connection with all of Life. From the *Book of Romans*, "So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Each of us is a unique expression of the One Intelligence, the One Consciousness.

We take a moment to feel the Oneness of our global community...Sensing a web of consciousness that covers the planet, each of us a point of Light...all beings who in this moment, are drawn to the Presence of the One Source, in which we live, move, and have our being...the Eternal Mystery. By whatever name we call It, we know It to be a field of Infinite Intelligence and Possibility, a web of Consciousness. As we envision all beings, all of creation, joining the web, we see that there are no longer spaces between us...our web has become the fabric of Life in which we find our place, our purpose, our unique gifts...our Authentic Self.

Feeling the shared intention that brought us here, there is a deep sense of communion with that which is beyond time and space, beyond definition and description...and we feel the impulse to grow and evolve. As we consciously acknowledge our connection with all of life, our collective Work here is empowered... our collective prayer and meditation make a difference in the world...transformation has begun...Wholeness is revealed.

Today is Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week for many Christians, and the Sunday before Easter. It commemorates the Rabbi Jesus's entry into Jerusalem to observe Passover. According to the Gospel account, he entered from the East (which symbolizes a high state of consciousness) riding a colt, and was greeted by crowds of people who spread their cloaks and laid palm leaves in his path and proclaimed him the Son of David (Matthew 21:5). Palm leaves were a symbol of victory...the people thought they had found their King. What we are not told is that at the same moment, there was a procession entering Jerusalem from the west (symbolizing an unenlightened state of being). Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor "entered Jerusalem at the head of a column of imperial cavalry and soldiers. Jesus's procession proclaimed the kingdom of God; Pilate's proclaimed the power of empire." (*The Last Week*, by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan)

Some believe that his entering on a donkey was an act of humility. But deeper study reveals that it was more likely a statement of denial that he would be their king, and a mocking of the Roman government and its ruling by domination. It seems that his entry into Jerusalem was a staged demonstration, the first in a long list of activities that would unfold in the week to come.

Jesus was a man who knew who he was and what he believed. He stood in his Spiritual Authority and was not prepared to bend to expectations. He was both a source of confusion and disappointment to his own people, and a threat to the Roman government, which is why he was ultimately put to death. He wanted desperately to teach the people about Truth, about Love, and Spiritual Law. After more than 2000 years, Jesus still serves as an amazing example of strength, courage, devotion and forgiveness.

It is important to acknowledge that *Jerusalem* was not just any city... “it had been the center of sacred geography of the Jewish people for a millennium.” (Borg, Crossan) It was the city of God. Charles Fillmore, founder of Unity, describes *Jerusalem* metaphysically as “the *habitation* of peace, *possession* of peace, *vision* of peace [and] abode of prosperity” (*Keep a True Lent*, p. 188). In a sense, Jerusalem symbolizes Wholeness. Just as Jesus entered Jerusalem, fully aware of the pain and joy he was to face, so did he stand in his Wholeness...in his Authentic Expression.

Solomon’s Temple was not just any church. According to Jewish tradition, it was God’s dwelling place on earth. “To be in the temple was to be in God’s presence.” (Borg, Crossan) Jesus entered Jerusalem, briefly visited the temple (checked in with God), and then, according to the writer of Mark, “As it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.” So Palm Sunday includes not only Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, but also his walk to Bethany. The meaning of *Bethany*, derived from the Hebrew, is *house of afflictions*. Bethany was the home of Lazarus and his sisters, and where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and “overcame the sorrow, lamentation, and affliction.”

We can celebrate *Palm Sunday* by spending some quality time in the *Jerusalem* of our consciousness, that place of Peace and Wholeness that lies within. Like Jesus and his disciples, we can also take this opportunity to go to *Bethany* where we turn our sorrow into joy. We begin *Holy Week* by letting go of our sorrow...of whatever pattern has brought us the most difficulty...and replacing it with that which brings us joy. Our spiritual journey is not yet complete; and today we acknowledge the new life that is taking shape within us, and appreciate how far we have come.

Today we hold the “vision of peace” for our lives. We are in the process of being resurrected, of transcending all that is unlike peace and fulfillment, of entering our own Jerusalem.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

The teachings of the Master Jesus have much to offer us in our current time and world situation. It is likely that being a native speaker of Aramaic, Jesus would have referred to the Divine as *Alaha*, meaning *Unity without qualification or limit*. “Our Western concepts of God and the sacred are only a partial view of Unity in the Middle

Eastern sense...Most of us have been raised from childhood to think of God as being infinitely distant from humanity or nature, and as the sacred as something separate from the profane. We have been taught that religion operates by different rules than politics, science, psychology, art, or culture. Yeshua's teaching and reported dealings with his followers show that he did not live from this type of separation thinking." (*The Hidden Gospel*, Neil Douglas-Klotz)

It was important to the Rabbi Jesus, as it should be to us in our own time, that we do not allow our ideas of Oneness to be twisted into exclusivity, as in *I am the only one who has the Truth*. "In Yeshua's eyes, those in charge of the worship at the Jerusalem Temple manipulated their position to exclude or take advantage of those who were lesser in class, wealth, or position." (Douglas-Klotz) Many in the Jewish community wanted Jesus to become their political leader, to use political revolution to bring about religious and spiritual change.

Jesus knew that this could never work...in his time or in ours. He understood that "if *Alaha* really meant *Unity*, a change of heart was necessary before a change of government. Otherwise the oppression that his listeners experienced would only reappear in a new form...the faces would change but the poor would still suffer...if there were a communal change of heart, a violent solution would not be necessary, or even thinkable." (Douglas-Klotz)

Jesus was pushing for a Paradigm Shift similar to what we are experiencing now on a global scale. When we read deeply, sacred scripture has much to offer us as we move into the next phase of human evolution. What is being called for is a change of heart, a letting go of our story of separation. Each of us is an individualized expression of the Divine, and yet we are not separate. The word individual actually means indivisible...inherently and forever part of one whole. So we are unique in our human qualities, traits, and gifts, but one in Essence, in Consciousness, and in our absolute dependence on the Whole for our existence. This is Spiritual Truth. We are still in the process of understanding and accepting the extent, the depth, of our Oneness. For our own benefit, and for our global Good, let us have a change of heart...let us release our sense of separation, fear, limitation, and not-enoughness. Let us instead open our hearts to Life and to one another.

Musical Meditation– *Circle of Fire Prayer* by Cari Cole

Rev. Diana

What a beautiful prayer: "The Day of the Lord, when the Divinity returns to us; when living our free will, and with all the Power of our Spirit, we decide to live our lives in free communion with God, with no expectations.

We will live our lives with Gratitude, Love, Loyalty and Justice. Beginning with ourselves, and continuing with our brothers and sisters, we will respect all creation

as a symbol of our Love...Communion with the One who created us, to the eternal happiness of humanity.”

Of course, we know that Divinity does not have to return to us...it is already here, at the core of our being. It is our awareness and embodiment of our Divinity that we are opening to. Here is the first question I must ask myself? Can I imagine a life where it is my *personal will*, my *only desire*, to live in constant connection with my Highest Wisdom and Guidance? Can I fathom a life in which all of the Spiritual Power in me is directed at living in a constant state of Gratitude for the many blessings in my life, and Love for all beings? Can I live by an intention that places Loyalty to the Good and the True, and *Justice for All* as my first priority?

This sounds like a tall order, but it's really not so difficult. It begins by saying Yes...this is my intention...by being present to whatever is before me...by doing my own healing work, whatever that may be, so that I am not contributing to the chaos and woundedness of the planet...by spending my time and my money in ways that enhance Life and care for the planet...and doing little things to show Love, Care, and Compassion for others. Mother Theresa once said, “We cannot all do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell

Chris – Meditation

Immersed together in this meditative experience of Taizé, I invite us to contemplate what it means to be truly alive... To be alive, we must have Life... but just what *is* Life? ... New Thought tells us that there is One Life, Spirit, that expresses through all of Creation... Your Life, my Life, the Life of everyone and everything is the Life of God... Let's breathe that in...

Since we all share One Life, will an abundant Life for me mean less for you? ... If you enjoy great health, will I have less vitality? ... Is there enough Love, Beauty, and Joy to go around? ... The One Divine Life is Infinite... Rabbi Yeshua taught that, “It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”ⁱ ... This Divine Life comes with full access to everything we could ever want or need...

So, how do we access the Abundance of the Kingdom? ... By surrendering more fully into our Divine Life... by making the best possible use of this amazing Gift of God... by Coming Alive...

We express our gratitude for this precious gift by living with greater joy and generosity... by confronting our fears with faith... by acknowledging and celebrating that everyone else and everything – even the planet Earth HerSelf – is some part of our Life... As we move into the Silence, let us feel our connection with one another... with all of Life... with Spirit... Let us truly Come Alive...

Silence – 5:00

We are profoundly grateful for this time of shared communion with God and with our Beloved Community... We give thanks for the privilege of taking part in this great adventure that is Life... We appreciate everyone and everything in our life...

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.

Knowing that Rev. Diana's message this morning is blessed with Divine Wisdom, we open our hearts and minds, accepting that we are receiving yet another of the Holy Gifts of the Kingdom of Heaven... the Gift of Inspiration that encourages us to Come Alive...

Rev. Diana – Invitation to Practice

Continuing with the meditative tone of Taizé...we give our focused attention to the Spiritual Quality of *Life*. As I attend to the Quality of *Life* within me and all around me, I know that I Am forever changing and growing...that all that I am here to be and to do is coming forth in Spirit's perfect time.

Life is forever and always in motion. Infinite Intelligence is deliberate, orderly.

Every *Life* has a purpose, a place in the tapestry. Mine is no exception.

I gently guide my mind into my deepest, most silent place...into my heart, and there find a sense of complete Wholeness...I fully embody this Wholeness now.

I acknowledge my Life, myself, my body, mind, emotional body, and soul, as a Holy Place, a Holy Temple...the place where I come to know my Divinity, to commune with God.

(Adapted from a meditation by Heather Waxman)

Here is what I know for you, Beloved One... *you* are the Healer. *You* are the Temple. *You* are the Church. *You* are the Sanctuary. *You* are the Holy Place. It's all within *you*. This is what the Rabbi Jesus taught.

Holy does not mean humanly perfect...it's time to redefine. You are Divinity in human form. Return home to the Truth that *you* are the Holy Place.

The Holy Place within you is your true Savior...the altar on which you lay your burdens is within you, always. The place where you ask your questions and receive your Guidance is in you. You have all you will ever need.

You are wholly and completely and innately worthy because you *are*. There is nothing you ever need to prove to yourself or anyone else to show that

you're worthy. You don't have to cut off any part of yourself to show how *spiritual* you are. You are already *all of It*. That's the beauty of it.

Dr. Wayne Dyer said: "You *must* be like what you came from. You came from the most Powerful, Transformational, Full-Spectrum, Infinite Energy that has ever been." Whether you call It God, Source, Spirit, Energy, it doesn't matter...It doesn't care what you call It. It only matters that you allow yourself to *receive* and *believe* that you are an extension of It. *It is your faith that makes you Whole*.

Lesson 70 from *A Course in Miracles* teaches:

My salvation comes from me...The seeming cost of accepting today's idea is this...it means that nothing outside yourself can save you, nothing outside of yourself can give you peace. But it also means that nothing outside of yourself can hurt you, or disturb your peace, or upset you in any way. This puts you in charge of the Universe, where you belong, because of what you are. This is your Spiritual Power and Authority.

You have the power of awareness, the power of choice, and the power of attuning to your Holy Place at any moment. It is always at your fingertips.

You are like that from which you came. You, Beloved One, *are* the Holy Place.

In this Sacred Moment, I accept this meditation as our prayer. By our own inner work and Good Works, I trust that each of us lifted. By our willingness to receive and follow Guidance, our lives are made Whole. As we let go of our illusion of separateness, we come to know our unity with all of life. We allow Peace, Love, Compassion, Kindness, and Generosity to be our nature. We trust in Spirit's Absolute Justice, so that no criticism or judgment ever cross our lips, or even our minds. We honor the sacredness of every Life, trusting in Spirit's Authentic Expression by means of Its Creation. I surrender completely to Eternal Mystery, allowing my life to unfold Gracefully and Easily...allowing myself to be guided every step of the way. With profound gratitude and Absolute Faith, my Word is spoken and released, trusting in the Loving and Lawful Presence to bring it, or something even more beautiful, into form and experience. I lay it on the altar, calling forth all that is Holy, all that is Whole, here and now. It is done...And so it is...Amen!

Musical Meditation –Prayer of St. Francis by James Twyman

Rev. Diana - Moving into Celebration

Let's take a moment, with eyes still closed, for our Joyful Practice of ***Envisioning a Love-Soaked World***, a world impacted and transformed by all of the good we are doing, individually and collectively...a world that is peaceful, joyful, and kind...where Mother Nature is in perfect balance, respected and nurtured by all beings...where everyone has plenty of nourishing food to eat, a warm and comfortable place to sleep at night, medical care, opportunities for growth, development, and creativity, and a

sense of belonging and contribution. A world created by our willingness to practice Radical Love and Compassion, Integrity, Kindness, and Generosity. Let this most amazing Vision bring a smile to your face and a song to your heart ...feel it raising your vibration...Hold onto the Vision...hold onto the smile...hold onto the Love as you 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.

Holding a shared Vision is a powerful prayer. Do you truly believe in your heart of hearts that we can bring our Vision to life? I believe it with all that I Am.





Okay, every church service needs a little call and response, don't you think? I know you're just coming back into the space, so the first time, softly affirm with me...*We can do this thing*. With a little more feeling...*We can do this thing*. And with the fullness of your being...*We can do this thing*. With hearts overflowing, we step into the final few minutes of our gathering...together, we continue the Practice of Gratitude and Joyful Expression as a way of celebrating one another in Community. We are so grateful for this joyful and prayerful experience; we feel so absolutely blessed to have loved ones to share our Spiritual Journey with.


We are each contributing to a new story. "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love." That was from St. Francis, another great example of how to live a life of Authentic Expression. What are we asking for when we make that request...make me an instrument of Your Peace?

I think that we are asking for the boundless determination to empty ourselves of every state of mind that disrupts relationships – anger, resentment, jealousy, greed, self-will in any form. Our first priority is to reform ourselves; without that, how can we expect to have a positive impact on our world? Like Jesus, we become a living example of Love in action. Hindu teacher Eknath Easwaran says that "We do not need a bumper sticker that says *You are following an instrument of the Lord*. Our everyday actions speak for themselves."

Mystic Heart's Beloved Community is made up of people who are seeking to *be* the Love and the Peace that we desire for all people...learning to be the change we wish to see in the world. Our statement of purpose shows how we hold ourselves to a high standard, to walking our talk:

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.

I like to share a little bit each week about our philosophy and organization, so that each of us comes to understand who we are and what we're about. *Mystic Heart* is a living, breathing organism...it is an Independent Spiritual Center, self-governed by Community Agreements; free to grow and change according to the needs and desires of its members and friends. By design, it welcomes all who are drawn to be here. 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. We see Evolution and Creation as two aspects of one process that is forever moving life toward its next yet to be, and each of us is an integral part of that process.

We are a community of *Spiritual Independents*. We consider our spiritual lineage to be that of the New Thought Leaders and Transcendentalists; the teachings of the Master Teacher Jesus and other evolved beings; and the Perennial and Indigenous Wisdom Teachings of ancient times. To make all of this meaningful to life in the 21st century, we are delving into the philosophies of living visionaries, bringing evolutionary spirituality and mysticism into our studies and prayer life. We recognize and celebrate the common Truths that connect all Wisdom traditions; from these we draw principles and practices that are free of dogma and serve as tools for our modern lives.

As we approach the last week of the Lenten Season, we acknowledge this time as a season of spiritual growth, a time for progressive unfoldment, for the expansion of awareness and the raising of consciousness. On the altar this morning, you see our amazing flowers that only four weeks ago, came in as bulbs in pots of soil. We have witnessed the miracle of new life emerging. We know that as we fast from negative thinking in all forms and focus instead on Spiritual Truth, that new life is blossoming in us, as well. I invite you to complete the *Season of Lent* by joining us for our *New Life Blooming Celebration* next week on Easter Sunday. I'm sure you've received your email invitations and homework. If not, feel free to contact me.

Are we ready to get on with our 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. We view celebration as a holy act, a 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, which brings more to feel Joyful about! And so, in celebration and deep gratitude, I thank you for joining us this morning for our time of devotion and celebration. It is in community that we come to know who we are.

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Each Sunday, 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!

Don't hesitate to get up and dance.

Offertory Video – *God is Loose in the World* by Peter Mayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHHDeWtoftw>

Rev. Diana – Closing Gratitude and Benediction

Sherri, Prayer Practitioner: Brief Invitations

- ♥ Tuesdays, beginning this week - March 30, 3:00-5:00 pm – *Deep Spirit* by Christian de Quincey - a book club facilitated by Michael Bordeaux.
- ♥ Wednesday, March 31, 5:30-8:30 – The Future of God: An Interactive Exploration of Evolutionary Spirituality. In person only, 12 seats available. Contact Rev. Diana to reserve your seat.
- ♥ Wednesday, April 7 – 2:00-5:00 pm – Provocative Stories: The Parables of Jesus with Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson.
- ♥ Thursdays, 3:00-5:00 pm - *Metaphysical Bible*, an on-going circle.
- ♥ Also on Thursdays, Chris Netto is offering Tai Chi via Zoom. Please contact Chris at standingfirmfitness.com for more information.
- ♥ Selected Saturdays:
- ♥ April 3, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm – Mystic Morning Brew: *What Will You Do with this One Beautiful Day the Lord has Made?* with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton.
- ♥ April 10, 10 am – noon – *Praying in Color...Faith, Fun, and Flowerpots!* A prayerful playshop with Ellie Thompson. Come and learn how to turn prayer into art.
- ♥ April 24, 11am – 5pm – Mystic OAKS Adventure – Brandy Creek at Whiskeytown Lake, time outdoors with Spiritual Community. Barbecue, story-telling and sing-along. Contact Rev. Diana for more information. *You must RSVP.*
- ♥ Sunday Taizé Meditation Experience, 10 am each week.

Most activities and services are available via Zoom. Also, as we have between 8-12 seats available for each activity, with physical distancing in place for in-person attendance. You must reserve your seat ahead of time with Rev. Diana. 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.

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

Close of Service

ⁱ Luke 12:32