

Keeping the Balance

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 – 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 unfolded before this moment, putting aside everything that may await you when our time today is complete...letting all that is not now move gently out of your field of awareness. Consciously relax your body as you allow yourself be supported by your chair...giving yourself the gift of stillness as you allow your awareness to become centered in 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 *Keeping the Balance* as we move toward our own authentic expression. We come together each Sunday for Taizé, giving us the opportunity to share in group *Meditation* and *Prayer*. And we complete each meditative experience with *Gratitude* and *Joyful Expression*, sharing in the Spiritual Practice of *Celebration*.

Join me in taking a 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.

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, in full faith 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. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect." The mystical translation from the Aramaic...be ye all-embracing as the creative Power and Intelligence of the Universe is all-embracing.

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 something vast and mysterious, in which we live, move, and have our being...the One Heart, the One Mind. 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 Authentic Self.

We can feel the shared intention that brought us here...we feel 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.

We began our journey of Authentic Expression, asking "Where do I begin?" We humbly acknowledged that the only place to begin any journey is at the beginning...beginner's mind...letting go of all we thought we knew...serving as a channel for the breath of Spirit to move through.

From this place of receptivity, we are able to take one step at a time, Guided by the Voice of Spirit...the Inner Knowing...becoming more and more authentic in our expression of self...moving closer and closer to the expression of the Higher Self, the True Self.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

We recognize that the very act of living is a process of losing and regaining balance. From moment to moment, day to day, week to week...and on it goes. Losing and regaining balance. We have the mistaken idea that balance is static...a perfect state of stillness, or non-movement. But keeping the balance is a dynamic process, one that requires us to adapt, compensate, first this way, then that way. By remaining fluid, flexible, and moving one way then another, we find what the Buddhists call the Middle Way.

In his book *The Laws of Spirit*, Dan Millman offers this insight: "If gravity is the glue that holds the universe together, balance is the key that unlocks its secrets. Balance applies to our body, mind, and emotions, to all levels of being. It reminds us that

anything we do, we can overdo or underdo, and that if the pendulum of our lives or habits swings too far to one side, it will inevitably swing to the other.”

He goes on to say that “we are creatures of moderation...every human body yearns for and thrives in a state of inner balance, inner peace.” We sense the Truth of these words. And we know that we have more energy and enthusiasm for expressing our authentic gifts when we are physically, mentally, and emotionally in balance. But there is yet another way of *keeping the balance* that is equally important and often gets overlooked. In our journey of self-improvement, we can become self-absorbed. It is natural to move through periods of time, especially in early to mid-adulthood, that are focused on *my* education, *my* job, *my* family, *my* house, *my* hobbies...to the exclusion of all else. Even my spiritual journey may point me in the direction of focusing on changing *my* thinking in order to change *my* life. But as social creatures, human beings are not put here simply to meet their own needs and fulfill their own desires. We are here to take care of one another, to serve the greater community in some meaningful way. And so, as we mature emotionally and spiritually, there is a delicate balance to be maintained between self-care and service.

Our motivation shifts...I take care of me because it leaves me better able to take care of you, to take care of my family, to live my life in ways that support and care for our beautiful Mother Earth. When I do something to nourish my soul, it is in the recognition that my soul is entwined with yours, with the one Soul. Caring for me IS caring for you. And caring for me creates the energy and enthusiasm to serve in meaningful ways.

When I attend to growing my financial abundance, it is with the intention of freeing myself up to contribute my time, talent, and treasure without financial constraints.

When I attend to increasing my abundance in health and wellness, it is with the intention of maintaining vitality and enthusiasm without physical constraints.

When I attend to expanding my joy for living, it is with the understanding that my joy ripples out to affect the Whole.

And when I practice gratefulness, it is with the awareness that being in service, in whatever way Spirit Guides me, is a privilege and an honor. I Am the hands and feet, voice, and heart of God.

Musical Meditation– *Love, Serve, and Remember* by John Astin

Rev. Diana

Why have we come to earth? Do you remember? Why have we taken birth, why have we come? To Love, Serve, and Remember...and to express the fullness of who we are.

We all know people who stand out as accomplished...truly successful...almost bigger than life. These are people who have discovered the unique gift given them

by the Universe, and used that gift in service to their goals, and in service to others. Each of these people has found “the one true note she is meant to sing”...has found Authentic Expression. Living from this Authenticity not determined *what* each of these people would accomplish in the world. Rather, it has guided the *how*...how would she live her life, by what principles would she live, to whom or what would she commit her time and energy, and with what level of focus and dedication?

Author and speaker Caroline Mc Hugh offers that *We call these accomplished, authentic people larger than life. How can that be? Life is pretty large! The truth is that most of us don't take up nearly the space the Universe intended for us. Someone living the fullness of their humanity seems at least a foot larger in every direction. And they are radiant...they shine like they've swallowed the moon* (paraphrased).

Authentic expression is both *larger than life* and *humble*. *Keeping the Balance*, as I learn to express my most authentic self means being the best version of me that I can be. It means recognizing that my qualities, traits, and abilities are gifts from God...expressions of Divinity. Mine is to honor them as such, and to develop them in service to others, all the while acknowledging *the Father within that is doing the Work*. This is true humility...allowing my Divinity to shine through my humanity in a way that is truly unique...and uniquely True.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell

Chris – Meditation

I would like to invite us now to focus our attention on our heart area... Our heart is the Holy of Holies of our body temple... Using the inner eye and our subtle senses let us explore the very center of ourSelves... the Inner Sanctum, where the Divine Spark that is our Authentic Self dwells...

The Master Teacher Jesus taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is within... that the Father dwells within us, as us... The Holy of Holies – your innermost heart of hearts – *is* God's dwelling place... As we open our hearts, we allow Divine Light to shine forth from us... we allow Unconditional Love to envelop us and those around us... Only with a wide-open heart can our Authentic Self have the space to express itSelf fully and completely...

We are both fully human and fully divine... in this world, but not completely of it... We flow back and forth between our spiritual practice and our human endeavors... Is that flow smooth and gentle? ... Do we do that dance with grace and ease? ... Are we able to bring our spiritual understanding into our world? ... and our humanity into our meditation and prayer? ...

Our Authentic Self stands with one foot in the world and one foot in Heaven – the Spiritual Realm... Keeping the balance between our humanity and our divinity is a matter of integration... integrating our spiritual practice into our life in the world...

bringing our worldly affairs into our prayers... As we move into the Silence, let us ask, "How can I more effectively integrate practical spirituality into my day-to-day life? ... Where can I express more Divine Love in the world? ... What areas of my human experience would benefit from being brought into my prayers?" ...

Silence – 5:00

With profound gratitude for this time of Blessed Communion with Spirit and our Beloved Community, we give thanks for the insights and inspiration of this day, for the Wisdom and Divine Guidance given... 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.

Trusting the Divine Inspiration of Rev. Diana's message this morning, we open to our True Authenticity... We grow our ability to integrate the Divine and Human aspects of our life... with faith that Spirit is always here, helping us keep our balance...

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 Guided...that all that I will ever need is already within me.

Life is forever and always in motion. Infinite Intelligence is deliberate, orderly. Every Life has a purpose, a place in the tapestry.

Every Life is a testament to the miraculous nature of our world. Honoring all of Life means placing my faith in Its Perfect Unfolding...letting go of the need to control circumstances.

I gently guide my mind into my deepest, most silent place...into my heart, and there find deep communion with Source...the One that breathes Its Life into me and into all of Creation. (Pause) Even as It gives me life, so does my existence give It Life.

It is here, in the depths of my being that Divinity infuses my humanity...entwined as One. As I sit in the silence, I touch the place where Spiritual Authority dwells, the place from which my Authentic Expression flows...and I Am filled with a sense of profound gratitude for the I That I Am.

(Following meditation taken from Dan Millman's *The Laws of Spirit*)

Take this moment of silence to look within, to the very depths, as if looking to the bottom of a very still pond. No wind disturbs the glass-like surface. Now listen...pay attention to any ripples in your body or your life caused by doing *too much* or *too little* in areas of eating, drinking, exercise, work, or communication.

Balance begins with the breath. Taking in and letting go are the primal rhythms of life. Breathing in, you find inspiration; breathing out, you find release. Inspiring and expiring – birth and death with every breath.

Feel your breath right now. Notice how when the rhythms of your breathing are out of balance, your emotions are, too. So when you feel anger, accept it fully, and bring the breath to balance. When you feel sorrow, embrace it tenderly, and bring the breath to balance. When you feel fear, honor it, and breathe deeply to find your balance.

As you exhale, you give; as you inhale, you receive. If you receive more than you give, you feel that imbalance as a need to reciprocate and complete the circle of relationship. If you give more than you receive, you feel depleted, and eventually have nothing left to give. The Law of Balance assures us that those who give freely, in the spirit of love and generosity, receive in abundance.

In this Sacred Space, in this Holy Moment, I claim and accept Authentic Expression for each one listening today. I know that through Spirit's Guidance, each of us is finding balance in every area of our lives...taking time to get still, to listen for Spirit's Guidance as we surrender to our next right and perfect step. Willing to act on Spirit's Guidance, we open ourselves to Infinite Possibility, counting it all as Miracle. I Am so grateful for growing awareness, for hearts and minds that are open to the sacredness of Life. And I Am grateful to have such a loving group of travelling companions on this journey. May each of us be a reflection of Peace, Love, and Compassion...may we be unfaltering examples of Kindness and Generosity. May we trust in Absolute Justice, letting no criticism or judgment cross our lips, or even our minds. And may we honor the sacredness of every Life, trusting in Spirit's Authentic Expression by means of Its Creation. I surrender completely to Divine Intelligence, Order and Timing, allowing myself to be guided every step of the way. In deepest gratitude and complete Faith, I speak my Word and release.

Trusting in the Power of this Prayer to bring each and every heartfelt word into form and experience (or that which is greater still!), I release it to the Loving and Powerful Presence, calling forth all that is Holy, all that is Whole, here and now. It is done...And so it is...Amen!

Musical Meditation –*Breathe* by Karen Drucker

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...a world that is peaceful, joyful, and kind...where Mother Nature is in perfect balance, respected and nurtured by all beings...where everybody 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.

Okay, here's our call and response, to help us return...The first time, softly...*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 give thanks for this joyful and prayerful experience; we feel so absolutely blessed to have loved ones to share our Spiritual Journey 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. 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***. And we know that anything is possible. This is our Work.

I like to share a little bit each week about our Beloved Community, 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. I love that, by design, 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. I love that we see Evolution and Creation as two aspects of one process that is moving *all that is* to its next yet to be, and that we are an integral part of that process.

Most of us would call ourselves *Spiritual Independents*. We consider our spiritual lineage to be that of the New Thought Leaders and Transcendentalists; before them, the teachings of the Master Teacher Jesus and other evolved beings. Going further back, we acknowledge the Perennial and Indigenous Wisdom Teachings of ancient times. Currently, we are delving into the philosophies of living visionaries, bringing evolutionary spirituality and mysticism into the 21st century. We recognize and celebrate the common threads that run through all Wisdom traditions; from these common themes, we draw principles and practices that are free of dogma and serve as tools for our modern lives.

As our time draws to a close, I want to acknowledge today as the 33rd day of the sacred season of Lent. For those who might be new today, the word *Lent* derives from the Anglo-Saxon and is the word for *spring*, which is a verb meaning *to lengthen*. In recent times the *celebration of fasting and feasting* has been set at 40 days to honor the 40 days of prayer and fasting that the master teacher Jesus spent in the wilderness dealing with temptations of mind and body. The number 40 has been called sacred by many spiritual traditions, and is a symbol of spiritual completion, of the time it takes for a new state of consciousness to be reached.

Modern spirituality views *Lent* 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 the symbols of new life, the new life that will emerge as daily we fast from negative thinking in all forms and focus instead on Spiritual Truth. But in order to shift our thinking, we need to first recognize the thoughts that most often plague us so that we can let go of them and replace them with Spiritual Truth. I invite you to complete the Season of Lent by joining us for our *New Life Blooming* Celebration on Easter Sunday. **Watch your email for more information.**

Okay, it feels like we're 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. Celebration is 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.

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 – *Stand Together* by Faith Rivera and Harold Payne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tnj7usFiwlg>

Rev. Diana – Closing Gratitude and Benediction

Lucinda Alton, Prayer Practitioner: Brief Invitations

WOW! We're busy...but what fun we're having!

-  Tuesdays, beginning 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.
-  Saturdays:
 -  March 27, 11am – 5pm – Mystic OAKS Adventure – Brandy Creek at Whiskeytown Lake, time outdoors with Spiritual Community. Barbecue, storytelling, and sing-along. Contact Rev. Diana for more information.
 -  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.
-  Sunday Taizé Meditation Experience, 10 am each week.

All activities and services are available via Zoom. Also, as we have moved into the red tier, 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*, written by Lainey Bernstein & Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service