

How Fertile is Your Soil?

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 come before this moment...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...Gently close your eyes to shut out the visual distraction...now imagine that there is a root that extends from the base of your spine down into the earth...maybe there are roots extending from your feet, as well...grounding you to the sacred Mother, offering you stability and connection...allow yourself to be carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...feel the words and music wash over you...let the garden of your soul be nourished by the Light and Love of Spirit...

Chant – *The Garden* by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Our theme for 2021 is *Connection*, and the point of focus for the month of April is *Living Life Full-On*. This morning, we'll be taking a meditative journey to explore a question...*How Fertile is Your Soil?* as we move toward living a fuller, richer, more authentic life. Join me in taking a deep breath in, allowing yourself to maintain your sense of being rooted to the earth...feel the Presence of New Life moving up from the earth, and into your body...breathing out, and allowing anything that is unlike peace, to be released back into the ground where it is recycled, redirected to where it can be useful...Breathing in Vibrant Energy, and then letting that Energy flow out into the world around you, creating an atmosphere of Health and Wholeness, both within and without.

Taking another moment to follow the breath as it settles into its own natural flow...and then slow the breath down just a little bit more. Now let your awareness move away from the breath, trusting in the constancy of Spirit as it breathes your body...and turn inward to the Light that shines forever within you, settling into the eternal nature of your being, where you feel and know your Oneness with the Creative Intelligence of the Universe...where you feel at home in the here and now...as together, we attune ourselves to the high vibration we are co-creating with the Infinite...you are the very image and likeness of pure Spirit. You are pure Light expressing...

Slipping fully into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge and experience the Radiant Light of Spirit as it glows forever within us...we recognize and honor the same Light

in everyone and everything. There is nowhere that God's Light does not shine. From the *Tao Te Ching*, "Use your own Light and return to the source of Light...this is called practicing Eternity."

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 radiant point of Light...all beings who in this moment, are drawn to the Presence of the One...surrounded and infused by the Divine...inseparable...each bringing completion to the other. (Pause) As we envision all beings, all of creation, joining the web, we see that there are no spaces between us...our web has become the fabric of Life in which we find our place, our purpose, our Individual Expression.

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. This impulse is innate, inherent, and so we choose to grow consciously.

As we acknowledge our connection with all of life, our collective Work here is empowered...our collective prayer and meditation leave a positive imprint on the world, on the cosmos, for all time...transformation has begun...Wholeness is revealed.

We begin today with one of the parables attributed to the Master Teacher, Yeshua. A parable is a teaching story containing one or more lessons or principles. It is presented in three parts: a setting, an action, and the results. The parable uses simple metaphor to invite the listener to reflect on a deeper meaning...a meaning that is useful for all people who take it to heart, who come to understand and embody it...a meaning that is still helpful for us in the 21st century. As you listen, ask Spirit to reveal its meaning.

From Matthew 13:1-9, here is *the Parable of the Sower and the Seeds*:

That same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the seaside. And many people gathered around him, so that he had to go up and sit in a boat, and all the people stood on the seashore. And he spoke many things to them in parables, and said, "Behold the sower went out to sow; And when he had sown, some seed fell on the roadside, and the fowls came and ate it. Other fell upon the rock, where there was not sufficient soil; and it sprang up earlier because the ground was not deep enough; But when the sun shone, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it dried up; And other fell among thistles, and the thistles sprung up and choked it. And other fell in good soil, and bore fruit, some one hundred, and some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

With eyes still closed, join me in putting on your Jewish sandals and sitting at the feet of Rabbi Jesus. As a 1st century farmer, you are well aware that seeds are sown by hand, by hanging the bag of seed over your shoulder and broadcasting them over the soil. Naturally, the farmer is aiming for the fertile ground; but inevitably, some of the seed lands in the road, or wayside. Some lands in the thistles, and some lands in rockier places. Then, as now, different kinds of soil allow seeds to express their potential differently.

A seed landing on the road will not sprout at all; rather, it will be eaten by the birds. A seed landing in a patch of rocky ground may sprout quickly, but will not root deeply; and so, it may die just as quickly. A seed landing in thistle will root and grow well at first, but will soon be choked out. While a seed landing in rich, fertile soil, clear of rocks and thistle, will root deeply and grow well, eventually bearing fruit according to its kind.

You have listened to the teachings of the Master before, and you know that there is a deeper meaning to his story. You begin to ask yourself...who is the sower? What does the seed symbolize? What about the birds...the thorns...the good ground...the fruit?

As one who has following this teacher closely, you begin to find meaning...

Maybe the sower is God, the Creator, the Infinite Source of all that is...forever and freely casting seeds of possibility.

Could it be that the seeds landing on the wayside are the possibilities that I miss when I am closed-minded and blinded by my story, by what I already think I know?

And could the seeds landing in the rocky soil be the possibilities that I notice...that I visualize, affirm, and even pray about, but do not take action on?

Might the seeds landing in the thistles be the possibilities that I give more attention to, so that they grow strong, but then, I lose interest and move on to something else?

Suddenly it occurs to you that the Master has taught that each of us is the Creator in our own lives, that God is not separate from us, creates by means of us. The understanding grows...

Maybe the sower is me...each one of us.

Might the seeds have something to do with my beliefs, thoughts, intentions, and feelings? This would certainly affect which possibilities would become realities in my life.

Might the wayside represent my closed heart and mind, my self-righteousness? Those attitudes that cause me to ignore the Voice of Spirit when it speaks?

And might the rocky soil represent the times when my commitment to change is shallow? When I do some mental and spiritual practice, but then fail to follow through?

And might the soil full of thistle represent a mind that is too receptive, that is easily distracted, that is cluttered with too many projects and ideas, so that none of them can take root?

Perhaps the Master is inviting me to look at the condition of my mind, to make connections between my thought patterns, my actions, and my life experience.

Musical Meditation– *Build My Dock* by Rev. David Ault

Rev. Diana

“Gonna’ Build My Dock because my ship’s already in, and it’s up to me to give my dreams a home”...gonna’ take charge of my thoughts and emotions, and use them to build the life I wish to live.

“Even if I have faith doesn’t mean my work comes to an end, so I pace myself across life’s stepping stones”...and it doesn’t stop with prayer and meditation. I have to take action.

“A little less of human talking, and a lot more Spirit walking, ever learning on my way.

Work on how my heart is listening, let go of my resistance. Shining with the Light of day.

Gonna’ build my dock because my ship’s already in, and it’s time to do instead of time to try.

Gonna’ join into that race where everybody wins, live on heavenly Truths instead of earthly lies.

Herald this momentous feeling of honestly believing, I can choose to live in bliss.

Guided on my sacred journey, discovering I’m worthy to be anointed by God’s kiss.”

This is where we can run into trouble...somehow, we think that living a Graceful, bliss-filled life is for someone else. Somewhere along the way we got the message that we were not worthy of so many blessings...but it isn’t true. It has never been true. You are the God in form...and so is everyone else. There is nothing else. Take a moment of silence to let that sink in...you are worthy by design.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell

Chris – Meditation

In this place of deep serenity, I invite us back into the garden... Feel the verdant plant life all around us as an extension of the Life within us... Standing in the stillness, we notice the earth beneath our feet... how it yields gently to each step... welcoming and receiving our weight as it welcomes and receives the seeds... Consider for a moment that welcoming receptivity that is so characteristic of fertile soil...

Looking down at the rich, brown earth, we notice many textures... small bits of sand, clay, and silt, mixed in with organic materials in various stages of decay... that which was once alive is composting, returning its essence to the soil to support new life... The spiritual law of conservation is always at work... Mother Nature recycles everything... Spirit wastes nothing...

As Rev. Diana said last week, compost can get a little stinky... a bit unpleasant... as can our experience of life... How then will we recycle those experiences which no longer serve us? ... In our Soul's Garden, we can plow them into the "soil" of Divine Creativity, where their energy can be transmuted into nutrition for new, more empowering experiences... enriching our soil... growing new life...

As we move into the Silence, let us contemplate... What unpleasant experiences have I had lately? ... How much energy were they carrying? ... How can I "compost" those experiences to feed my future desires? ... How fertile can I make my soil? ...

Silence – 5:00

We are profoundly grateful for this time of blessed communion in "the Garden" with Spirit and with our Beloved Community... In gratitude for the ability to transmute negative energy into positive, we give thanks to our Divine Parent and Source...

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.

As we listen to Rev. Diana's message today, we know that our hearts are welcoming and receptive to the Seeds of Truth she is sowing... The "field" is ready... the season is right... The "soil" of our Souls is very fertile indeed ...

Rev. Diana – Invitation to Practice

Continuing with the meditative tone of Taizé...we complete our reflection on the Parable of the Sower.

Rev. Michael Beckwith offers his interpretation of this parable. Consider this: (paraphrased) When my thoughts, feelings, and intentions exist in a mind and heart

that are closed and self-righteous (the wayside), I am living in as a victim in the world...in the first stage of spiritual development. It feels like everything is happening **to me**. It feels as though I have no control over anything.

As I evolve to the next stage of consciousness...to the rocky soil where intentions to think differently can least begin to take root...I have moved to the second stage, or **by me** level of consciousness. *If it's to be, it's up to me.*

Once I have learned to take action, I am ready to move to the next stage of consciousness. I begin to feel my oneness with Spirit, and with my world. While my mind can still become cluttered...maybe from my excitement over feeling empowered and interested in many new things (these are the thistles)...I begin to feel that life is happening **through me**. I am a vessel that Spirit moves through.

Finally, as I stabilize and deepen my Spiritual Practices, committing myself to conscious communion with God on a daily basis, and surrender my will to Thy Will, my seeds are landing in fertile soil...life is happening **AS me**.

I invite you now to join me in completing our meditative process for today by feeling the Radiant Light of Spirit glowing within you...allow it to fill you to overflowing with Its Presence...and then feel it moving out from you, into the space around you...connecting with the Light of other beings. As I attend to the Quality of *Light* within me and all around me, I trust that I Am here so that God can experience Itself by means of me. I Am the hands, the feet, the voice, and the heart of God, walking the earth in sacred service, to bring Its Love and Compassion into form and experience in the world. I allow the Light of Spirit to shine through me now...

Musical Meditation – *Earth* by David Roth

Rev. Diana - Moving into Ceremony and 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...really see it with me...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 home and a bed for the 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, Forgiveness, Kindness, and Generosity. Let this most amazing Vision bring a smile to your face and a song to your heart...do you feel it raising your vibration? Now hold onto that Vision...feel it happening...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.

Holding a shared Vision is a powerful prayer. I believe it with all that I Am that we have the capacity to live in such a world.

Please join me in affirming...*We can do this thing...We are doing it here...We are doing it now...And so it is!*

In 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 are so absolutely blessed to have such a loving and committed Spiritual Community to share the journey with.

We are each contributing to a new story. *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. 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...an Independent Spiritual Center that is 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 we understand that each of us is an integral part of that process, leaving our direct imprint on the evolution of humanity.

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.

AND...we love to have fun. Celebration 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 – *Planting Seeds* by Nemo Patel and Daniel Nahmod


Rev. Diana - Closing Gratitude and Benediction

Lucinda, Prayer Practitioner: Brief Invitations


 **Tuesdays** - March 30, 3:00-5:00 pm – *Deep Spirit* by Christian de Quincey - a book club facilitated by Michael Bordeaux.


 **Wednesday**, April 7 – 2:00-5:00 pm – *Provocative Stories: The Parables of Jesus* with Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. *Last week to join.*

 **Thursdays**, 3:00-5:00 pm - *Metaphysical Bible*, an on-going circle. BYOB – Bring your own Bible 😊

 Also on **Thursdays**, Chris Netto is offering Tai Chi via Zoom. Please contact Chris at standingfirmfitness.com for more information.

Selected Saturdays:

 April 24, 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. *You must RSVP.*

 May 15, 10 am – 4 pm – *Praying in Color...Spring Garden Party!* A prayerful and playful day of Creativity and Celebration with Ellie Thompson and Rev. Diana. Spend time in community on the 3rd Saturday, due to Mother's Day. This month's *Praying in*

Color will be in-person only, in an outdoor setting. Suggested donation: \$40 – Any donation gratefully accepted.

 **Sunday Taizé Meditation Experience**, 10 am each week.

Keep your eye on our newsletter. 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