

Love is a Discipline...

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. Welcome Home to our Beloved Community, and Welcome Home to your own Mystic Heart. I thank you for joining us this morning for our Taizé Meditation Experience.

For the next hour or so, I invite you to let go of all that has come before this moment...taking a full and cleansing breath and fully arriving in this moment. Gently closing your eyes if you are comfortable doing so, and allow your body to relax...letting your mind relax...allowing yourself to settle into the Peace that dwells within you...where the Voice of Wisdom might make Itself known as we invite Its participation...and settling into the Power that lives through you, taking a moment to ground yourself...imagine a root extending from the base of your spine down into the earth...connecting you to the Heart of the Mother, offering you stability and constancy...drawing on the Universal Energy as you allow yourself to be held and carried by the experience of Taizé...feel the words and music wash over you as you drop down into the depths of your soul...

Chant – *Dropping Down* by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana

This year we are talking about *Connection*, and during the month of May we are exploring the process of being *Care-full, Not Cautious*. Today's meditative journey will serve as a reminder that *Love is a Discipline*...it is a Divine Quality, inherent in us, available to us in every moment...the trick is remembering. So join me in taking another deep breath in, and feeling the Presence of New Life entering your being...and then breathing out, and allowing anything that is not Life-enhancing to be released back into the atmosphere where it is transformed...

Breathing in Life-giving Energy and holding it for a moment as it builds Power, and then sending that Energy out into the world on the outbreath, creating an atmosphere of Peace, Vibrancy, Wholeness, and Love...both within and without...Taking another moment to follow the breath as it settles into its own natural flow, and then allowing it to slow just a bit more... and moving your awareness away from the breath, grounding even more deeply into the silence, into the eternal nature of your being, where you feel and know your Oneness with the Creative Intelligence of the Universe. Together, we are attuning ourselves to a higher vibration as we co-create this experience with the Infinite...take a moment to feel the Presence of Spirit in your

body...it may be a tingling, a warmth, a vibration, a sense of comfort...or something else.

There is a Power, greater than anything we can imagine. It is *that* Power that fuels the Evolutionary Process...the same Power that formed the stars in the heavens, that divided the bodies of water from the vast expanses of land...that formed the minerals the plants, the animals, and the humans...It is the same Power that moved through the physical world over eons, until finally there was you. And it is the same Power that is fueling the evolution of what it means to be human. We recognize and honor the same Power in everyone and everything. As one by one, each of us acknowledges and learns to consciously direct that Power for Good, our lives and the life of our planet are being transformed. Each of us is a conduit for Spirit's Power.

We take a moment to sense the Spiritual Power that connects us...to feel the Oneness of our global community...to envision a web of consciousness that is everywhere present, each of us a Powerful point of Light...each one connected to all others. As we add to our web all beings, all of creation, we see that in Truth there are no spaces between us...our web has become one continuous field of Awareness, of Intelligence, of Infinite Potential, each of us an individualized expression...and we sense that it extends out beyond our beautiful planet, into the cosmos...there is no beginning, no ending...

As we come together this morning, we share a heartfelt intention...to spend time, as Spiritual Family, in deep communion with that which is beyond time and space, beyond definition and description...from deep within, each of us feels the impulse to grow and evolve, and chooses to do so consciously.

Acknowledging our connection with all of life, our collective Work here is empowered...Our collective prayer and meditation leave an imprint of Peace, of Love, of Grace, on the world, on the cosmos, for all time...transformation is occurring...Wholeness is being revealed.

In our American culture, we use the word Love to mean so many things...I find it unfortunate that we do not have a wider vocabulary...that it becomes so difficult to speak accurately of Love. Last week, I spoke of Love as self-givingness...this would be a Spiritual Love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have ever-lasting life." (John 3:16, NKJV) Let's give this a Universal translation...because the one Source of all that is could not help but give of Itself by becoming every possible form (because that is Its nature), It eventually became humanity. As we learn to identify with and live from our Divinity (created in Its image and likeness), we come to understand our own eternal nature.

If Love is self-givingness, and that is the Nature of God, and of humanity, why is Love a discipline? *Discipline*...does that word strike any chords of resistance in you? In

our culture, we tend to confuse *discipline* with *punishment*. And so, *discipline* gets a bad rap. From its Latin roots, *discipline* shares its origin with disciple...one who learns...one who is learning to live by a higher Truth. To say that *Love is a Discipline* is really saying that *to give of ourselves is our True nature*. But life has taught us just the opposite...survival of the fittest...I'd better get mine...there's not enough. We have forgotten our True nature as infinitely abundant beings...we have forgotten how good it feels to give of ourselves, to share what we have, to live from our generous spirit. Moving into the silence, allow the Quality of Generosity to fill your being...

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

There is an amazing book called *Love without Reason*, written by LaRayia Gaston. She is a 32-year-old writer, activist, and founder of *Lunch on Me*, a program that brings organic whole foods to those experiencing homelessness. Her insight and her expansive heart come through her writing, as she says that Love is her Superpower...She doesn't know how to solve all of the world's problems, but she knows how to love people...as individuals. LaRayia is truly inspiring...young people like her give me a sense of faith that all is well in the world. When talking about how we can make a difference, she says this:

“We are supposed to work on our own real estate, and that's what is right in from of us. When I'm taking care of what's in front of me, I feel like I'm chipping away at it, making a difference...I can feel empowered by solving even a small problem or meeting a simple need for someone in front of me.”

Think about the Power of her words... “Love is my Superpower.” Is love my Superpower? Is it yours?

She goes on to say, “Everything I do comes from a mighty place when I do it with a whole heart.” I ask myself again, am I wholehearted in everything I do? Do my actions come from a mighty place?

Love...self-givingness...is a discipline. It takes practice, just like everything else. Remembering that Love is our Nature, and then thinking, speaking, and acting from Love is a choice, a decision. You may remember the words of the Master Yoda... “Do or do not...there is no try.” The hard scripture he offers me is that when I say I'll *try*, there is no real commitment. *Trying* becomes my loophole, my way out. This is not to be hard on myself, it is simply to own the game I am playing with myself. And I do play this game sometimes, as much as I'd like to say I don't. I think we all do.

So, how do we step into full ownership of our decision to Love? There is a Power within you that will help to guide you in that direction as soon as you ask...and listen...and follow the Higher Truth that is coming through. It is your Higher Wisdom

and it always available. All that is required is to invite Spirit in the form of Love to be your strength...it doesn't have to be difficult, unless you say it does.

Musical Meditation– *Love Cover Me* by Gary Lynn Floyd

Rev. Diana

As time has unfolded me, it has revealed to me Life's nothing less than sublime.

With every thought I make, every last breath I take, may I be gracious and kind.

Love, I invite you to open up this heart of mine...Love, Cover Me, light any darkness...Love, Cover Me, right every wrong. Cause me to see Love over hatred, guide me to be faithful and strong...Love, Cover Me.

Love will cover you...if you let it...if you look at every moment, every person and situation that is before you as there *for* you. It is so easy to miss the small moments, the opportunities to be fully present and generous with another human being. It is so easy to miss the miraculous nature of the world around us, and to take things for granted. It takes effort to shift our mindless habits to more mindful ways of being. Once again, quoting LaRayia: "In order to have a different world, we have to hold accountability on our habits. Our collective habits are what got us here collectively. It's a decision to change our habits."

What's really important and empowering is to realize that it doesn't take big changes, but small ones. What if each of us made the decision to smile at the grocery clerk and to thank her by name? What if every time we walked into a place of business, we looked for someone to hold the door for? What if every time we went grocery shopping, we walked our cart back into the store? What if we started every morning by saying I love you, first to ourselves before our feet hit the floor; then to God, the Universe, Infinite Intelligence, Nature, or whatever name brings you a feeling of personal connection to the Divine; then to whatever humans, animals, plants, or other beings that share our space? What if we made the conscious decision to make kindness our religion (that which reconnects us to our Source), and to practice it all day long? Truly, it is the little things that mean so much

Finally, and this is an important one...what if we decided to not withhold our Love at all, for any reason? This would require us to put down our judgments.

The Master Yeshua taught that we should "Judge not, lest ye be judged." He didn't just mean that we get back what we offer out...and we do. I believe he was going deeper...in the very instant that you judge another, you are also judging yourself. I could not recognize whatever-it-is in you if it wasn't also present in me (at least in potential). And really, there's only one of us here. So, when I'm judging you, I've already condemned myself.

Judgment is exhausting, physically and emotionally. It drains our energy. *It is taxing on the soul; it is a betrayal of the soul. It's not our natural expression...it's what life*

has done to us...it's not the core of who we are. (excerpted from *Love without Reason*). This kind of Practice is Soul Work. It will transform your life. And when enough of us begin to live from the Truth of Who we are, it will transform our world.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes - Bell

Chris – Meditation

Centered together in this contemplative stillness, let us remember that we are on Holy Ground... Our conscious awareness of the omnipresence of God consecrates the place where we are, creating Sacred Space, wherever we are... All of Spirit is fully present and fully available right here, right now...

As we acknowledge that we are completely immersed in Spirit, let us also remember that God is Love... This Love is far beyond the human emotion that we feel toward our spouse, family, and friends... Divine Love is Universal, all-inclusive, unconditional, eternally unchanging – human love is but a faint echo of the Love of God...

The Master Teacher Yeshua of Nazareth taught that we should love not only our friends and our families, but also our enemies... to bless *those who curse* us and to pray for *those who spitefully use* us... to forgive seventy times seven... How are we to do that if our love is merely a feeling that we have? ...

The Love that Yeshua described was much more than a feeling... more than an emotion... Divine Love is a choice... a commitment... a discipline... Chances are that we will not feel much like blessing someone who has cursed us... The practice of Divine Love calls us to rise above our feelings... to become a human source of God's Love to all... As we move into the Silence, let us ask, "Who is in my life right now with whom I can practice this greater Love?... What will I need to release in order for God to love them through and as me? ... What if Unconditional Love were my primary Spiritual Practice? ... "

Silence – 5:00

We give profound thanks for being embraced by Divine Love... We are grateful that Spirit's love is always disciplined – loving us always, without regard for our behaviors or attitudes... All that our soul requires is Divinely Given unto us...

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 this world.

Centered in Divine Love, we open our heart, our mind, and our soul to welcome Rev. Diana's message this morning... We let it touch that spark of Spirit within us and grow our ability to practice Divine Love as a Spiritual Discipline...

Rev. Diana – Invitation to Practice

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.

I gently guide my mind into my deepest, most silent place...into my heart, and there stand in the presence of God. I enter willingly into true solitude...

It is here, in the depths of my heart and soul that I find my Divinity infusing my humanity...entwined as One. As I sit in the silence, I touch the place where Spiritual Understanding dwells...and I Am filled with a sense of deep communion.

It is in this place that I feel the Presence of the One Loving and Compassionate Source. It is here that I sense and know that I Am a perfect expression of the Divine...that I Am intentionally created so that God might experience Itself as me.

And so, I grant this opportunity to the One...to experience and express Its inherent Love and Compassion. I allow my mind to gently call forward the image of someone in my life...someone for whom forgiveness seems difficult...someone that may have said or done things in my life that felt hurtful...I take a moment now to bring my full attention to this One.

I allow any feelings that have come with this image to soften...and as I bring my full attention to this person. What's it like to be you?

Just like me, this person is seeking happiness for his or her life. I breathe that in...

Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his or her life. Breathe...

Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness, and despair. Breathe...

Just like me, this person is seeking to fulfill his or her needs. Breathe...

Just like me, this person is learning about life.

With my heart wide open, and compassion flowing, I speak this prayer: I love you, I bless you, I release you from all judgment. I trust that like me, you are finding your way.

Thank you, God, for Your many gifts and for my growing compassion. There is no Love but Yours, and that Love is boundless. I know that it is by Your Grace that I Am lifted, that my mind is purified, and my heart is opened. Recognizing our Oneness, I

quietly receive Your Peace today. I surrender completely to Your Love, allowing it to guide me from this moment forward. In deepest gratitude and Absolute Faith, I speak my Word and release it to the Mighty Power of the Universe, calling forth all that is Holy, all that is Whole, here and now. I let it be and it is done...And so it is...Amen!

Musical Meditation – *We Shall Be Known by MaMuse*

Rev. Diana - Moving into Celebration

Remembering the creative Power of our thoughts and intentions, 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...Visioning together...a world that is peaceful, joyful, abundant, and free...where Divine Mother is in perfect balance, respected and cared for by all humans everywhere...where everyone has plenty of nourishing food to eat, a warm and comfortable home, medical care, opportunities for education and creative contribution, and a sense of belonging...a world in which every being is valued for his or her inherent Goodness, Beauty, and Perfection...a world created by our willingness to practice Radical Love and Compassion, Integrity, Forgiveness, Kindness, and Generosity. Let this Vision become crystal clear in your heart and mind. Let it be a felt experience, within you and all around you. Trust and Know that God is bigger than any apparent lack or limitation...that all things are possible in Spirit.

Do you feel it raising your vibration? Now hold onto that Vision...feel it happening...and let it bring a smile to your face 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 form of prayer. Thank you for joining me in this Vision every week. We are building our belief...we are building our Faith.

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, we practice Gratitude and Joyful Expression as a way of celebrating one another in Community. We are so grateful to be a part of this loving and committed Spiritual Community.

I like to share a little bit each week, for those who may be joining us for the first time, about who we are and what we're about. *Mystic Heart* is a group of individuals who are consciously seeking to *be* the Love and the Peace that we desire for all beings...together we are learning to be the change we wish to see in the world. We are an Independent Spiritual Center that is self-governed by Community Agreements, which means it is free to grow and change according to the needs and desires of its members and friends.

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 consider ourselves to be Spiritually Independent. We draw from the New Thought and Transcendentalist philosophies; the teachings of the Rabbi Jesus and other evolved Masters; and the Perennial and Indigenous Wisdom Traditions of ancient times. On the cutting edge of Spirituality for the 21st century, we are exploring 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.

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.

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. We are committed to

Living from our Divinity... empowering our lives, and creating authentic, loving Community through heartfelt Study, Service, Celebration, and Prayer.

AND...we love to have fun. We're serious about Celebration...it is a vital part of our Spiritual Practice. We understand that by celebrating the Good in our lives, we bring more of it into our experience. I celebrate your choice to be here and your willingness to be present for this gathering of Beloved Community. 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!


This is a song that we used to sing together every week at the start of our service. We don't want you to forget it, because you're going to see it again on June 11th. Feel free to get up and dance to...


Offertory Video – *One Big Family* by Gary Lynn Floyd and Jami Lula

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Hyp0UEayEY>


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 – an on-going book club facilitated by Michael Bordeaux. Beginning on June 1, we begin a new book. Join our lively discussions as we jump into *Communion with God* by Neale Donald Walsh. Two used copies are currently available for sale from Rev. Diana. Additional copies are available on AmazonSmile.

 **Wednesday**, June 2 – 2:00-5:00 – *The Gratitude Formula* by May McCarthy, with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton. Books are available on AmazonSmile. Contact Lucinda for more information.


 **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:

 May 22, 10 am – 5 pm – Mystic OAKS Adventure to Hat Creek SETI Observatory and Potluck Picnic. Please RSVP for more information.

Planning Ahead:

 June 5, 10 am – 1 pm, *Mystic Morning Brew* with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton...yours truly!

 Friday, June 11th from 6:00-9:00 pm – *The State of the Heart Annual Gathering*, outdoors in the Johnson Backyard. This is the Mystic Heart version of the Annual Members Meeting. First hour - Updates as to how our community is thriving, plans for growth, opportunities for input. Second hour – Barbecue and potluck. Third hour – Music by in2it!

 *All are welcome, families with children, too! Bring a friend!* RSVP will be required. More details will be sent as responses are received.



Save the date... Please join the *Mystic Heart Beloved Community* in our first annual *Fall Meditation and Prayer Retreat* led by Rev. Diana and Chris Johnson at the beautiful Coram Ranch in Shasta Lake. When? September 16-18 (Thursday through Saturday). Cost is \$175. Place your reservation with a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Spaces are limited...contact Rev. Diana for more information.

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* by Lainey Bernstein, RScP & Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service