

Happy Interdependence Day! Sunday, July 4, 2021 Taizé

with Lucinda Alton, RScP, Prayer Practitioner, and Chris Johnson, RScP Leading the Meditation

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. It's so good to be back with you this morning...so good to welcome you Home to our Beloved Community, and Welcome Home to your own Mystic Heart. Thank you for joining us this morning...

I invite you to let go of all that has come before this moment...close your eyes and get really comfortable in your body, allowing it to relax and be fully supported...begin by putting both hands over your heart, making a firm contact so that you can feel your heartbeat. Allow your head to fall just a bit, feeling yourself surrender into this moment...and as you breathe, allow the breath to encircle and warm the heart, to awaken and open the heart, preparing it to receive whatever is here for you today...

As we breathe again, let us soften...let any resistance fall away, as together we feel the presence of our Collective Heart...Let us take what is Good in our lives and give it our full attention and gratitude...Let us listen to all that is spoken, both within and without, through the Wisdom of the Heart...letting the hands gently fall to your lap and breathing in Love...holding it for just a moment, and sending that Love into the room on the outbreath.

There is Freedom in stillness...a Freedom that says, "Just be still." Feel and know the Wholeness, the Completeness, of this moment as you allow yourself to be carried by the meditative tone of Taizé...allow the music to take you deeper as you remember who you are...

Chant – *God Is, I Am* by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana –

With eyes closed, we bring our awareness to our *Connection*... in July we are acknowledging this Truth...*Life is the Practice*...and today's meditative journey celebrates *Interdependence Day*, carrying us more deeply into our sense of *Belonging*.

Of course, July 4th reminds each of us that we are inherently free, and so we give some attention this month to the God Quality of *Freedom*. As we prepare to go deeper, call to mind a moment that you felt completely free...or an activity that brings you a sense of *Freedom*. Breathe in whatever image comes to mind and bring it into

your heart, and then breathe that sense of Freedom back out into the world on the outbreath...May all beings know Love...May all beings be Free. As we breathe together, we are creating an atmosphere of Unconditional Love and Absolute Freedom...

Freedom is the natural state of all beings everywhere...Infinite Intelligence, expressing and experiencing Its agency as all of creation...constant, and yet ever-changing. It is *that* Freedom, *that* Spiritual Authority, that infuses the process of Creation unfolding. It is *that* Freedom that is expressing and experiencing Itself as you...as me...we recognize and honor the *Freedom* granted to all beings, as Divine Birthright. Our nation's Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men (or people) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are the Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness..." As we come to know and embody these powerful words, life on earth is forever changed. We leave our lasting imprint...we make a difference.

We take a moment to sense our connection with all of Life...to feel the Oneness of our global community. Together, we envision a web of consciousness, encompassing our beautiful Mother Earth...We see each member of our human family as a Radiant point of Light in that web...

And now we recognize that all beings, not only humans, carry that Light and are part of that web...we see that in Truth there are no spaces between us...as we begin to see all life forms glowing with the Divine Spark, our web becomes one ever-expanding field of Light that extends out beyond our beautiful planet, into the cosmos...no beginning, no ending...

As we come together this morning, we share a heartfelt intention...to spend time experiencing our Oneness, to find our place of *Belonging* as Sacred Human, in communion with God, and in community with others. Each of us feels the impulse to grow and evolve, and chooses to do so consciously.

Acknowledging our connection with all of life lends Power to our prayer and meditation...collectively, we create a ripple of Peace and Love, of Beauty and Grace, that directly imprints upon the Whole for all time...we give shape and form to the transformation that is occurring...Freedom is being revealed by means of us.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

Continuing with eyes closed, listening with the inner ear, we contemplate the passage from our Declaration of Independence...

As we set out to become an independent nation, we had powerful aspirations...they seem far removed from us at this time, so we can forget. But these words were written

to help guide our nation as we grew into maturity...and we do well to remind ourselves of our initial intentions. Our Founding Fathers chose their language carefully.

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident...". They spoke of Truths, not facts, not opinions, not hopes or wishes...in the metaphysical and mystical realms, Truths are those Principles that are inherent, infallible, unchanging, and unchangeable.

And they wrote that these Principles are *self-evident*, obvious...it's a given. We don't have to *prove* that we're equal. *That's just the way it is.*

Each of us has rights because we're part of this human tribe, this human family. This is what I mean when I speak of *Belonging*. Each of us is part of the *we*, and as part of the *we*, each of us gets to help define the world we live in. We get to have a voice. Because of our inherent *Belonging*, I accord you respect. I accord you human dignity and equality. Not because you're smart, or you have a lot of money...not because of your ethnicity or religion, your age, or your level of education...but just because you're a human being...an expression of Life.

The Zulu tribe of South Africa has a word to acknowledge this deep sense of equality...The word is **Sawubona**. It literally means *I see you*...my whole tribe and all our ancestors see your tribe and your ancestors. It means I see you and you are important to me...I value you.

Sawubona is a way to make another person visible and to accept them as they are with their virtues, their nuances...and their flaws.

Sawubona is an invitation to a deep witnessing and presence. It means all my attention is with you. I see you and I allow myself to discover your needs, to see your fears, to identify your mistakes and accept them. I accept you for who and what you are, and you are part of me.

We are inherently equal, members of one family. I honor all of who you are. True *Belonging* is when our full humanity as individuals, and as groups, is embraced. It is when we're seen as valuable.

Musical Meditation– *You Belong* by Charlie Nimovitz

Rev. Diana

With eyes still closed, we follow the thread of *belonging* expressed by the Zula culture. **Sawubona** reminds me to understand others without prejudice and to leave grudges behind.

It doesn't stop at inclusion...it speaks of integration and cohesion. It speaks of embracing another person's soul, of seeing the Wholeness behind another's shadow. Like the more familiar Namaste, it means the God in me sees the God in you...I see myself in your eyes.

Sawubona says that my eyes are connected to a dimension of reality that includes my ancestors and their Divinities. It's a dialogue...seeing is a dialogue. We see each other...this is an agreement...a communication that asks, "Why are we here at the same time? What has this moment of time given us?" It's an invitation to participate in one another's lives....it creates an obligation to give to another whatever is required for that moment in life to be enhanced.

Seeing represents the question, "How do I have to be for you to be free?" If I limit one person's freedom, I limit my own. There is, after all, only One of us here. When one is greeted with **Sawubona**, the appropriate response is **Shikoba**, which means, *Thank you for seeing me. By recognizing me, you've brought me into existence.*

We are all truly entangled with one another...we *belong* together, all of us. No exceptions.

I invite and welcome the voice of Spirit as we take these words into the silence...*"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men (or people) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are the Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness..."*

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Chris – Meditation

We hear it said that God is Love... And that Divine Love is Unconditional... All-Inclusive... Non-Judgmental... Infinite... We try to understand Divine Love in terms of the human love we have experienced... But It is far, far greater... Let us take a moment to contemplate the vastness of the Love of Spirit...

Imagine a Love so great, so unconditional that there is nothing that we could possibly do to lose it... A Love so freely given that It is ours even when we reject It... It makes no difference whether we are deserving of It... or whether we even know or believe in God's Love... We did not earn this Love... We are simply created in It and of It...

Each of us is the Beloved One in whom God is well pleased... But what can we do to experience this Divine Love? ... Brother David Steindl-Rast tells us, "Love is saying yes to belonging." ... Yes, we belong to Spirit... Yes, we belong to each other... Belonging is always mutual... To the extent that we belong to God, God belongs to us...

Our Beloved Community is an expression of our Yes to Spirit and to one another... We have agreed to behold the Beloved One in each other... To give one another unconditional love and support on our shared spiritual journey... Yes, we belong together... As we move into the Silence let us consider, "How deeply do I experience

Divine Love? ... Do I feel a sense of connectedness and belonging with others? ...
... How wholehearted is my yes to belonging to God?" ...

Silence – 3:00

For our feeling of connection and belonging with one another and with Spirit, we are truly grateful... We give thanks for this Beloved Community, in which we express and receive the Love and Support of true Belonging and Spiritual Family...

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.












As we open our hearts, minds and spirits to the wisdom shared by Rev. Diana this morning, we connect with one another in consciousness, acknowledging and celebrating our interdependence...

Rev. Diana – Invitation to Practice

In our modern time, and in our American culture, we are invited to become more *inclusive*. But *inclusivity* and *belonging* are not the same thing. When I am inclusive, I am inviting another to join my already-existing group. That person comes as a guest. The structure and rules have already been established.

Inclusion says, "This is the way we do things here. As long as you are in agreement with what we have set up and play by our rules, you are welcome to join." This is not *belonging*. *Belonging* says that each participant has an equal voice, has equal agency. I take a moment of silence to let these ideas permeate my heart and mind.

I invite you to reflect on the prayerful words of our first musical meditation today, holding it as my prayer for you:

-  May the Light of Love shine bright as you make your journey home.
-  May the arms of heaven open wide, so you'll never feel alone.
-  May you never lose your faith in the magic of the song.
-  May you sing until your heart is filled and know that you belong.
-  May you always know the Truth of who you really are, and if you stray along the way,
-  May you never stray too far.
-  May your angels and your guides never steer you wrong.
-  May you sing until your heart is filled and know that you belong.
-  May the love you feel inside forever keep you strong.
-  May you never lose your faith in the magic of the song.
-  May you sing until your heart is filled and know that you belong.

There is only the One. This One expresses and experiences Itself as all of Life, as all of Creation. It is the One that I know as Source, as Intelligence and Wisdom, as Love and Compassion.

It is the One that infuses every aspect of my being, and at the same time, surrounds me so that I come to know myself as Sacred Human...an aspect of God forever swimming in a sea of God. There is nothing else. Knowing that all is God means that I belong here, that each of us belongs here, together. Each of us brings a unique expression, and each of us is being called to learn to dance more Gracefully with the other God-beings. Some of these we call humans, some we call two-leggeds and four-leggeds, some we call plants, some we call rocks and soil, fire, and water. No matter the form, we are being called to acknowledge and live from our inherent sense of belonging.

As we begin to let go of our perceived separation, and to embrace our actual, literal Oneness, Freedom emerges...each of us Free to express and share our gifts, each of us Free to pursue Life, Liberty, and a true sense of Happiness. We remember that Freedom is Liberty, which is inherent...God-given, not License, which is granted by human authority and often grows from the ego's need to have its way.

Here and now, I breathe that in...I accept and know my inherent Freedom, and honor the Freedom of others. I accept the responsibility that my Freedom implies. I walk each step grounded in a sense of belonging...that we all belong...and that we are learning day by day, how to respect and honor one another more fully. I understand that the Power of my thoughts, words, and actions is mighty, and that I Am forever channeling the Power of creation...consciously or not. Here and now, I commit to play my part consciously...to do my spiritual work...to open my heart where it has become closed...to see through the veil of separation that threatens to blind me to the Truth.

Thank you, Spirit, for reminding me who I Am. Thank you for opening my heart and mind, making me more and more willing to embody and live from that Truth. Thank you for my evolving faith...I know that it allows me to welcome and embrace the changes that are forever within and around me. And thank you for the Grace and Ease that permeate my experience when I let it. In this prayerful moment, I bask in the Life that fills me to overflowing so that I might bless all who cross my path in this coming week.

Knowing the immense Power of my word, and knowing that it creates my experience here and now, I release this prayer to the Wisdom and Intelligence that I call God, knowing beyond all doubt that it is already active and moving my words into form, in more Beautiful ways than I can imagine...in ways that serve the Whole of Creation. And so, I rest, calling it done...And so it is...Amen!

Musical Meditation – *We Are the Ones* by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana - Moving into Ceremony and Celebration

In a state of deep knowing that *We Are the Ones*, 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 the Earth is in perfect balance, respected and cared for by all beings everywhere...where everyone has plenty of nourishing food to eat, a warm and comfortable home, access to 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. Feel it...know it...live it...it is within you and all around you. Trust and Know that there is no lack or limitation in God...and with humanity as Its hands, feet, voice, and heart, all things are possible.

Now hold onto that Vision...and let it bring a smile to your face and Joy to your heart 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. We are building our belief...we are building our Faith. Please join me in affirming (let's say it together) ...*We are consciously evolving ourselves and our world...We are doing it here...We are doing it now...And so it is!*

Thank you for joining me in this Powerful Practice every week. Together, we are ***practicing the possible through prayer.***

We are so grateful to be a part of this Beloved Community. Mystic Heart is an Independent Spiritual Center that is self-governed by Community Agreements, and is free to grow and change according to the needs and desires of its members and friends. If you'd like to know more about our philosophy, we have a full description printed in our monthly bulletin. Also, I am always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Celebration is a vital part of our Mission and our Spiritual Practice. We understand that by celebrating the Good in our lives, we bring more of it into our experience. I celebrate you and your choice to be here this morning. It is only in community with others 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!

Mr. Jason Mraz – *Look for the Good In Everyone*

Offertory Video – *Look for the Good* by Jason Mraz (5)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru0K8uYEZWw>

Lucinda opens the brief Gratitude Prayer, Rev. Diana closes

Lucinda, Prayer Practitioner

If you are new with us today, please consider filling out an information card so that we can reach out. If you'd like prayer support, we also have prayer request cards and envelopes for your privacy. All of the Mystic Heart events and activities are listed in your bulletin, so feel free to take it with you. To continue the celebration, there is food and fellowship next door immediately following the service. So let's stand and sing our closing song.

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

Close of Service