

Waking to Grace

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, and I 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...gently close your eyes and find your breath. Let it connect you with your essence, with the Life Force...let all the noises and distractions around you fall away and out of focus. Let everything soften in the space surrounding you. Find what is still here when all the noise is quieted...this is your Center. This is where we carry the Light we are born with...this is where we are awake. This is home where all the fruitfulness of life blooms and lives, where nothing can be influenced, tarnished, or hurt.

You are here in this moment because your highest Truth, your soul, is pulling you ever so gently into your own Light. You are following your Highest Wisdom, Beloved, as you move in the direction of what brings you more Love...as you listen for what your heart is asking of you.

Now slowly turn toward your body with Loving Awareness. Bring your mind into your heart. Focus your attention on its physical place in the body. See if you can feel its Loving Current. Notice how its vibration is trusting and comforting. What does your heart feel and look like when it is awake, when you are awake to it? Notice how it ignites and becomes more vibrant with your attention. Notice how it is reaching out to you, speaking to you. *Peace, be still, my child. I am always with you.*

Let go, Beloved. Place yourself gently into this current of Peace. Hand yourself over. Know yourself not as your story, not as your past, not as the being you wish to become, but as a fluid and spacious Self. You have been working so hard to get someplace, to become something you're not, or simply to grow and evolve consciously. You may rest now...it is time to come Home.

Home to the Truth of who you are...Home to the deep Peace, Comfort, and Joy of simply existing as the perfect creation of God that you were made to be...exactly as you are. There are no accidents. There is Purpose to your being just exactly as you are...without your presence, being True to the authentic expression of God that you were created to be, there would be something missing. Only you can be you.

Feel and know the Freedom that comes with giving yourself permission to be you...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 and Whose you are...

Chant – *God Is, I Am* by Eddie Watkins, Jr. (3)

Rev. Diana –

Grounded in the Truth of who we are, we bring our awareness to our *Connection*... in July we are acknowledging this Truth...*Life is the Practice*...and today's meditative journey invites us to *Waken to the Grace* that surrounds, infuses, and carries us if only we can let it...

As one by one, we awaken to the Grace that sustains us, we experience more and more of our inherent *Freedom*. As we prepare to go deeper, I invite you to take on the sense of *Freedom* that is your birthright. All beings are born to be free. Breathe that in and draw it into your heart...feel the *Freedom* permeate your breath as you inhale, and then exhale. As we breathe together, sensing our inherent *Freedom*, we are lifting the vibration for ourselves and our world.

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 guides 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.

In order to live as Free beings, we must accept ourselves as Holy...you, my Beloved, are Holy. Your life is a Sacred Journey. You need nothing. All that is required is given. As you come to know and embody these powerful words, you are changed from the inside out...your life is transformed...and life on earth is forever changed. You leave a lasting imprint...what will it be?

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, completely 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 sense the Light getting brighter as we recognize that all beings, not only humans, carry that Light and are part of that web...the Light gets brighter still as 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...

Filled to overflowing with this amazing Light, we share a heartfelt intention for our time together...to experience our Wholeness and our Oneness; to recognize and live from our inherent *Freedom*; and to acknowledge our responsibility to one another as

members of one human family, and as stewards of this beautiful planet. 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 Compassion and Caring, of Peace and Joy, 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. We are Love in action.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Rev. Diana

Together, we are waking to Grace. What is Grace? I was not taught about Grace as a child. Some of my young friends were taught that Grace was a gift that came from God, but had to be earned. Consider with me...I have come to believe that Grace is an invisible force of support...one that we discover for ourselves as we mature spiritually. It is the intervention of Divine Intelligence on our behalf. When we say that God turns all things to Good, that is Grace. And when something reaches out from deep within me and pulls me inward, *that* is Grace.

I share this quote from Sarah Blondin's book *Heart Minded*:

“Grace is a hand that reaches through the density of our lives, our heartache and struggle, and brushes the angst from our brow. It is disguised in people and poetry or in bursts of beauty that catch us off guard. Grace cannot be seen. It is felt. It is that feeling of being overwhelmed by goodness. It comes like a great benevolent gust, making us agape at the sheer mercy being blown our way.

(It is a) deep, unwavering force at the core of everything – me, you, the universe – and it always seems to be working to pull us up and out from our current stuck-ness into something more truthful and more meaningful. It operates even when we are most in despair; ever so gently trying to shift our gaze and awareness back to our heart...Grace works tirelessly out of love and devotion in the name of all living things.

With or without our consent, Grace is always at work, nudging us to explore our internal landscape. If we follow Grace's Call, we discover that underneath the knots and noise of our lives sits a loving Presence, unaffected by what is happening on the outside – a universal current leading all of us to a state of acceptance and peace.”

Grace is a point of *Connection*...as individual parts of One Divine Life, each of us has equal access to Grace. And so, in Grace we can find belonging.

When I allow myself to become still and let myself be moved by Grace...really following my deepest soul's desire...I find that “Every valley shall be lifted up, and

every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.” (Isaiah 40:4)

Musical Meditation– *Amazing Grace* by Ricky Byers-Beckwith

Rev. Diana

Amazing Grace...a universal current leading all of us to a state of acceptance and peace...a state of being that can serve as our tap root. And when we are open to Grace, we find that no matter the circumstance, there is a loving force of unfathomable intelligence holding us.

I believe we are born with a deep awareness of Grace, an inherent trust in the Goodness of Life...that all our needs are met. And then one by one, we discover the dualities of the material realm, and we begin to question. Gradually, and without conscious awareness, we begin to splinter off from our heart, which is our Source and True Nature...the place where we are naturally open to Grace.

As we step into Spiritual Maturity, we begin to once again recognize the Grace that supports and sustains us. Looking back upon our lives, we can see that each event, person, and circumstance has been absolutely necessary to make us who we are today. We recognize that every step we have taken, no matter the appearance, has been on Holy Ground. There are no accidents...no mistakes. Whatever has occurred has been neither good nor bad. It has simply been a necessary part of your journey.

Sometimes it is difficult to recognize Grace when it comes in disguise...a lost job, a lost home, an accident, an illness, the death of a loved one. But rest assured, it is always at work, helping to bring you back into alignment with the Truth of who you are, with your immense Life Force.

These words from my first Spiritual Teacher are forever with me: “People either learn through inspiration or desperation.” It is easy to see Grace at work when we are inspired, seeking growth and change, consciously creating our lives. It is more challenging to recognize the Grace in an unwelcome, forced change. Either way it comes, we can trust that Grace is always present. Taking that into the silence...Grace is always present.

SILENCE – 2 Minutes – Bell

Chris – Meditation

Divine Grace is defined as *the free and unmerited favor of God*... The Blessings of Spirit are freely given to all... *the sun rises on the evil and on the good, and rain falls on the just and on the unjust*¹... We cannot earn Grace, nor can we stop its eternal flow of Blessings... God is always bestowing the Gift of Divine Grace...

While we cannot stop Spirit from giving us this Grace, we can – and sometimes do – refuse to accept it... We may feel unworthy of a Great Blessing, and so sabotage our

ability to receive it... Or Grace may come masquerading as loss... of a job, a relationship, or a possession... This is where Faith comes in...

Our human perception gives us only a tiny fraction of the Divine Intelligence and Wisdom that is Spirit... Omniscience is Infinite... Divine Grace emanates from this Omniscience, always for our highest Good... for the optimal evolution of our Soul... Placing our Faith in this Truth, we can remember that despite the appearance, God is guiding and guarding us always...

The Master Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth advised us *judge not according to the appearance*²... We don't receive enough information from the *appearance* to make an appropriate evaluation... But if we have Faith in the Divine Mystery, we can trust that this too is ultimately a Blessing...

As we move into the Silence, let us contemplate: "When have I refused a Blessing because I felt unworthy? ... What losses have I experienced that later turned out to be just what I most needed? ... Do I have as much Faith in God as God has in me?" ...

Silence – 3:00

In heartfelt gratitude, we give thanks for the Divine Grace that is flowing to us and through us this morning... Grateful for this time in communion with Spirit and our Beloved Community, we trust that all is unfolding for our Highest Good...

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.

We acknowledge the Divine Inspiration flowing through Rev. Diana's message today, with faith that we are right where we need to be – Waking to Grace...

Rev. Diana – Invitation to Practice

We sometimes hear people talk about challenging circumstances in their lives as portals that, while not purposefully chosen, ended up opening them to the Divine Source within them. Each of *us* may recall a difficult situation that ultimately led to higher levels of awareness, trust, and love. This is Grace at work. As we continue our discovery of Life as the Practice, let's join together by *Leaning into Grace*.

Allowing our own minds to rest, once again finding the breath, noticing its presence as it moves effortlessly into your body and back out again. This is Grace.

We remember that to awaken to Grace, the heart must be open. Take a moment to breathe into your heart, allowing it to slowly relax...and open.

Now without moving anything else, clench one fist very tightly; squeeze it shut. Notice how the blood in your hand is blocked from its proper flow because it's too constricted and misaligned.

Now slowly open your fist. Without any effort on your part, the blood rushes back to feed your hand with loving energy and life. Source flows back into you easily, Gracefully.

You see, you are not separate from Source...you are one with It. It is always there to serve and support you. It's up to you to decide whether you will close in fear and protection or let Life take care of you in all the ways it always has and always will...

Please join me in prayer...to awaken to Grace...right here and right now.

As I relax into my soul's deepest remembering, I feel and know that there is always and forever One Life expressing and experiencing Itself as Its Creation. There is nothing else...God living Its life as me, as you, as every animal, every plant, every rock, and grain of sand...as every drop of water in the ocean and every star in the heavens...as all that I would call Good and Beautiful...as all that I would call bad or ugly...as all that I would call Loving and Generous, and all that would appear to be hateful and greedy. All of it is imbued with Grace...no exceptions. I take a moment to breathe that in...

In this Holy Moment, I awaken to that Truth...I awaken to the Grace that fills every moment of my life. I step into my Spiritual Authority and practice my God-given Freedom, the Freedom that allows me to choose Grace in my every experience, in my every relationship...the Freedom that creates a sense of Easefulness as I move through every moment of now. Who said that Life had to be difficult, filled with resistance and drama and suffering? Giving effort and attention to a circumstance does not make it *hard*...physical pain does not have to bring *suffering*. This is a choice. And I choose Grace!

I know 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 the inherent capacity 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 in every moment. I Am showered in Blessing;

I Am filled to overflowing. I pray that I might bless all who cross my path in this coming week.

Knowing and trusting in the immense Power of my word, and fully expecting that it creates my experience here and now, I release this prayer to the Loving Intelligence that I call God, in deep faith that it has already responded, active and moving my words into form, in more empowering ways than I can imagine...in ways that serve the Whole of Creation. And so, I let it be, I call it done...And so it is...Amen!

Musical Meditation – *Hands of Grace* by Jack Fowler

Rev. Diana - Moving into Ceremony and Celebration

As we *Awaken to Grace*, let's take a moment, with eyes still closed, to see that Grace flowing out from us to all of Creation, helping to create a ***Love-Soaked World***. Together, we envision it now...a world completely transformed by all of the good we are doing, individually and collectively...a world that is peaceful, joyful, abundant, and free...where all beings live as brothers and sisters, caring for one another and our beautiful planet as the Sacred beings that we are...a world where everyone has access to plenty of nourishing food, a warm and comfortable home, medical care, 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 Real in your heart and mind. Together we feel it...know it...and live it. There is no lack or limitation in God...there is no separation between any of God's expressions. With humanity as Its hands, feet, voice, and heart, doing Its work in the world, 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.

We know that holding a shared Vision is a powerful form of prayer. We are building our Faith in the *More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible* (book title by Charles Eisenstein). Please join me in affirming (let's say it together) ...*We're creating A Love-Soaked 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 know that life is meant to be Joyful, that we are meant to experience the Goodness of being alive. 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. I celebrate each and every person who contributes time, talent, or treasure to our Beloved Community.

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!

I'm binging on Jason Mraz right now...this song speaks to my heart, and to where I believe we are being Called...In honor of our Sacred Mother, let's go...

Offertory Video – *Have it All* by Jason Mraz

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.

If you would like to meet with a Prayer Practitioner in person, our contact information is also listed in the bulletin and on our website. All of the Mystic Heart events and activities are also in your bulletin, so feel free to take it with you. You can also find all the information you need or want on our website, mysticheart.org.

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

¹ Matthew 5:45

² John 7:24