

Planting Seeds of Belonging...

October 3, 2021, Sunday Celebration Service

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Lucinda will set the intention to open heart and mind, welcoming whatever is to be awakened today.

Opening Chant - Dropping Down

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. If you've been attending Taizé, this morning's service will be a little bit different. It is the first Celebration Service we have done with live music since before the pandemic. It will be a little more interactive and upbeat. So let's wake up our bodies and our voices...stand up and join in the song...you'll find the words on the screen. Some of you might remember them from the last time!

Opening Songs



Welcome to the Mystic Heart, written by Rev. Diana & Chris Johnson, and



One Big Family, written by Gary Lynn Floyd & Robin Hackett

(These songs did not make it onto the video due to technical difficulties. Video sound resumes after the next two-and-one-half paragraphs.)

Rev. Diana

Praise Music is a powerful form of prayer. Our singing has shifted the energy in the room...in each one of us...and to a small degree, on the planet as it ripples out...Let's take a moment to celebrate our Oneness with the global Community... knowing that each of us is of the Essence and Substance of God...there is nothing else...and that each life is unfolding by Divine Expression.

Together we close our eyes for just a moment to envision a web of consciousness that extends in every direction so that it encompasses the earth...each of us a radiant point of Light. As we feel our connection with all other humans, we consciously expand our Connection to include all creatures...each one an expression of Spirit's Light...and then extending further to include every plant, every rock, every drop of water...the soil, the clouds, the stars, the galaxies, all shining with Divine Light...and we sense that there are no spaces between us...

We are one continuous field of Intelligence...no beginning, no ending...reaching forever on, beyond our galaxy, into the cosmos...the Light of Spirit, alive as all of creation.

As Light in human form, we share a heartfelt intention for our time together. Even as we stand in our uniqueness, we acknowledge our connection with all that is; our responsibility to one another as members of one human family, and as stewards of the earth.

As we consciously connect with all that is, our collective Vision is empowered and leaves a positive imprint on the world. Together, we create a ripple of Peace and Presence that leads to great transformation...in this Sacred Moment, Wholeness is being revealed. Feels good, doesn't it?

Rev. Diana

This morning we are *Planting Seeds of Belonging*. What does it mean to say something belongs to me? It means 'It's mine!' Doesn't it? At least that seems true with our worldly possessions. Maybe belonging is a little bit different when we're talking about human relationships. Instead of saying that I belong *to* Chris, I might say that I belong *with* Chris...he is my partner. But either way, belonging indicates an exchange...an agreement. Belonging *to* or *with* one another means that we have to take care of one another.

Even when I talk about my car...maybe I say *my car belongs to me*...there is a relationship there. My car serves me by getting me from point A to point B in comfort and safety. But in order for my car to meet its part of the agreement, I have to make sure it gets the service and care that it requires to do its job well. It's an exchange...my car and I are in relationship. And so belonging implies relationship, yes?

I would like to suggest that before I can find True Belonging with other people, I have to have a fundamental sense of belonging to myself...a belonging that does not depend on what is going on in the world...that does not depend on the good opinions of other people. Because I can't control those things, right? In order to have self-agency, I need to be in alignment with what is real for me, in my direct experience, not influenced by external forces.

But aren't we all so influenced by the times and places we live in, by the prescriptions of society...our family, our church, our political, educational, and economic environments? The path of Deeper Practice is to transcend the outer circumstances we are born into. Belonging to myself *first* must become my reference point for all the ways I search for and find belonging. Not because I'm selfish or uncaring about others, but because without returning to myself first, I am not prepared to find True Community. I don't have a Whole Self to offer into relationship.

So how do I develop the habit of returning to myself? It takes Practice. Meditation...sitting in silence, alone with my own mind...is a great way to connect with what is real for me in every moment. Starting and ending the day with a period of silence will go a long way toward returning me to my Self.

But then, I get up from the chair or the cushion and I start my day. Sooner or later something is bound to happen that irritates or upsets me in some way so I need another Practice. I stop...notice my breath...and follow my breath all the way into my belly. It's that simple. In stopping and following my breath, I develop a general sense of being okay with whatever is happening. I realize that in the scheme of things, whatever is happening is not that big a deal. That doesn't mean that I want the situation to continue, or that I become happy with what's going on. It's more like not making a problem out of what's happening...not judging it...just being with it.

Stopping and breathing, and tracing my breath to the belly, my system slows down. My parasympathetic nervous system takes over...the relax and repair system...and the fight or flight reaction decreases. Every time I remember to do this, I am embodying a greater sense of Peace, and a deeper connection with myself.

So this is the Practice...stopping...breathing...and attuning myself to a sense of okay-ness. We all know what it feels like to be okay because we know when we're *not* okay. When I'm okay, my body, mind, and emotions are relaxed, open, and moving toward life. And when I'm not okay, I feel contracted.

When I pause and breathe, I return to myself. And when I come back to myself, I find myself, I am in right relationship with myself, I am aligned with the Truth of who I am. There is an inherent sense of belonging to myself that no one can take from me.

Music– *The Garden* performed by Dalton Fitzgerald

Rev. Diana

And so coming back to our selves is Planting Seeds of Belonging...belonging first to ourselves so that we can find a sense of belonging in *True Community*.

But what is *True Community*? This is the kind of Community we are creating here. In True Community, I can feel at ease with myself. I don't have to cut away part of myself to feel Belonging. I don't have to check part of myself at the door in order to find acceptance or access to membership. True Community is where I feel accepted in the Wholeness of who I am.

That doesn't mean that every aspect of myself is expressed all the time. It simply means that there is no requirement on the part of the group to leave part of myself behind...either explicit or implicit. True Community is a place of Integrity, openness, *realness*.

Back in June of 2019, when we were first gathering to Vision this Beloved Community, we moved through a series of exercises and heartfelt conversations that led to the creation of our Community Agreements. You may have heard me refer to the fact that Mystic Heart is an independent Spiritual Center that is self-governed by community agreements. I'd like to take a moment to share those agreements with you, to help you

determine whether or not this community might be a fit for you. We'll go ahead and put these up on the slides so that you can read along.

1. We agree to always be respectful, compassionate, loving, honest, and authentic in our thoughts, words, actions, and communications. In doing so, we create a safe, loving, and supportive environment in which complete transparency is the norm, vulnerability is honored, and where people are free to evolve physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.
2. We agree to take personal responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions at all times. In doing so, we create a loving environment where spiritually mature individuals promote Peace, Joy, and Celebration in all that we do.
3. We agree to reverently seek Spirit's Guidance when resolving conflict. In doing so, we trust that Love is leading the way and that Peace prevails.
4. We agree that we are consciously choosing to create a Spiritual Family. In doing so, we are creating a space in which to belong, a place to call Home.
5. We agree to welcome all who come, gracefully honoring each individual as a unique child of God, and accepting all faith paths and levels of awareness as a sacred part of the Spiritual Journey. In doing so, we attract a vibrant and diverse group of members who practice this teaching to live in the consciousness of Oneness each and every day.
6. We agree to respect one another's personal space. In doing so, we create a comfortable community experience in which everyone feels safe and honored.
7. We agree to live from a consciousness of Wholeness and Abundance. In doing so, we create personal lives and a Spiritual Home that are radiantly healthy and free from limitation of every kind.

As I look back at these agreements, I can see that we set some very clear intentions to create True Community...Beloved Community. But you'll notice that creating True Community begins with each person taking complete responsibility for themselves. This leads me back to being in right relationship with myself...knowing myself and belonging to myself first. You see, until I am in right relationship with myself, I cannot attract other people that accept me for who I am. As I come into greater alignment with the Truth of Who I Am, I begin to generate connections with people who allow me to be myself.

There is one other piece to this...a piece that might be a little bit challenging for some of us. As I become comfortable with who I Am, it becomes intolerable to leave parts of myself behind. It's not just that I don't want to exclude parts of myself...it's that I can't exclude parts of myself and maintain my Wholeness. And so, there might be some shift in my life...you know, *shift happens*. I might need to let go of relationships, people, a job, a home, a club or group. And we have to be okay with that. Because until we create

space in our lives by letting go of what no longer serves us, we will not have room for something or someone new to show up.

I like to call this coming to a crossroads...a point in time where I realize I no longer fit in this situation, and can no longer leave parts of myself at the door in order to be accepted...a point in time when my commitment to become whole and express my Wholeness is stronger than my need to fit in. At the crossroads, I find the strength and the courage to change direction...to consciously seek others who will accept, welcome, and honor all of who I Am.

Take a moment to reflect...are you at a crossroads anywhere in your life?

I found myself at a huge crossroads a little over two years ago. And I'm here to tell you that a huge amount of growth occurs when you choose to be true to yourself. And it's not all comfortable, but it is all for the Highest and Best for all concerned. Here is some of what I have learned.

In choosing True Community, I have found a greater resonance, a greater ease in my body, mind, and emotional state. I have an all-around greater sense of wellness and peace.

In choosing True Community, I no longer let other people and external things determine my path. I am the only person who can live the life that I have been given, and I live it authentically...even if it upsets people that I love and care about. The thing is when I leave a part of myself out, I am not giving them the whole of who I am to begin with.

Okay, so what are the take-aways for today? The only way I can have True Relationship with people is to be true to myself. And the only way I can be clear about what it means to be true to myself is to move through those crossroads, and to make difficult choices that may lead to losing people, losing face, losing position or access to external things in exchange for the resonance of belonging to myself.

I have to be able to tolerate living in my body and in my existence. And ideally, I want to be able to not just tolerate it, but to thrive living in this body and this existence. No one can do this work for me. It is the most important thing in my life...and not because I'm selfish or uncaring, but because being True to myself is the only way I can be in True Community. And being in True Community is what we're here for.

Music: *Promised Land*, written by Rev. Diana Johnson, performed by in2it

Rev. Diana

We close in prayer this morning, knowing that there is only One Life, One Source from which all things come, and I call that One God. By whatever name we call It, It is the Infinite Intelligence that expresses as all that is...it is the Life Energy that both infuses and completely surrounds all that is seen and all that is unseen...all that is known and all that will never be known. This Life is forever with me and within me, living Its life AS my life. It surrounds me as people, places, sights, sounds...It fills me

and gives me life, as It is the very air that I breathe. I am so completely surrounded and filled to overflowing with the Presence of Spirit and I know it...I give thanks for it...right here and now.

I bask in the Infinite Presence of Spirit showing Itself as True Community...I commit to becoming more and more of myself so that I can continue to be a Loving, Welcoming, and Compassionate Presence, in service to that Community, and to the human family as a whole. I seek to know myself more and more as the hands, feet, heart, and voice of God, so that my every thought, word, and action might bring benefit to the Whole.

I stand in my Authenticity, serving from that place...listening for what is mine to do, I AM making a difference...By practicing True Humility, I express myself Peacefully and Powerfully. By living Prayerfully, I remain present to what is before me. By Planting Seeds of Belonging within myself and my Community, I am helping to create a *Love Soaked World*.

Together, we use our Presence and our Prayer to write a new story. We envision a world that is Peaceful, Joyful, Abundant, Beautiful and Free...where all beings practice loving kindness with each other, and caring for our beautiful planet as we would a cherished Home...acknowledging one another and our planet as Sacred, as Holy. We envision a world where all beings have whatever is needed to make life comfortable...plenty of nourishing food, the safety of home, access to medical care, education, healthy relationships, right livelihood, creative contribution, and a sense of belonging...a world in which every being is valued for its inherent Goodness and Light...where the Peace we cultivate and feel within shows up in the world as Radical Love and Compassion, Integrity, Forgiveness, Kindness, and Generosity. Take a moment to bask in the feeling of living in such a world...

We know that our individual lives are enriched by prayer. Our shared Vision is creative. Let this Vision become Real in your heart and mind. Infuse it with your Faith. Carry it with you every moment of every day. There is no lack or limitation in God...there is no reason that we cannot have such a world. Serving as the hands, feet, voice, and heart of God, doing Its work in the world, all things are possible. As we live *from* this Vision, our world is transformed...coming into being here and now.

And so, grounded in our deep Faith in the Power of Prayer, I release this prayer from a place of profound Gratitude for the many blessings of this and every day...the transformation that is already underway...and the Love and Support of Spiritual Community. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the One Power and Intelligence that I call God has moved into action, as is Its Nature, to bring these words into form and experience. I watch in Wonder and Joyful Expectation, as together we say...and so it is. Amen!

Please repeat after me as together we affirm... *There is Power in our Prayer... There is Power in our Vision... Together, we are changing the world... We are doing it here... We are doing it now... And so it is! Amen!*

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. If you are at home, 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!

We'd like to share a couple more songs with you this morning, just because we can. Feel free to sing along or get up and dance if the Spirit moves.


Offertory Music: Performed by in2it


 **It'll Happen in its Own Sweet Time**, written by Chris Johnson, RScP

 **Oh, Yes...I'm Free!** written by Rev. Diana Johnson

Lucinda & Rev. Diana: Gratitude Prayer


Lucinda: This Week's Invitations

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm** – Please join us for the movie *Kiss the Ground*, the final book club meeting for *Rooted*. A new book will be starting on October 12 – **Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer** by Gregg Braden. Michael Bordeaux returns as your host! Get your books ordered now!

 **Wednesdays, 2–5 pm starting October 6** – *Prayer and Meditation: Part 1 of the Six Pillars of a Spiritual Life*. Feel free to ask Rev. Diana for more information.

 **Thursdays, 3-5 pm** – *Metaphysical Bible* (on-going, drop-ins always welcome)

Looking Ahead...

 **Praying in Color: Your Spiritual Bank Account (Prayer Box Collage)** With Ellie Thompson – Saturday, October 9, 10am – noon



Mystic OAKS Adventure to New Clairvaux Abbey & Vineyard: Meet at the Gathering Place front parking lot at 1:00 pm on Saturday, October 23rd to carpool and/or caravan to Vina. Please RSVP.



***Our Fall Retreat has been transformed...Please mark the date on your calendars.** We will be gathering in even greater numbers, cooler temperatures, and cleaner air for our **First Annual Spring Retreat, May 12-14 at the beautiful Coram Ranch.** Contact Rev. Diana for more information.

If you are new with us today, please consider filling out an information card...they are in your bulletins... so that we can reach out.

If you'd like prayer support, we have prayer request cards and envelopes in the backs of your chairs. If you would like to meet with a Prayer Practitioner in person, I am available for a quick prayer after the service. Or contact one of the Mystic Heart Practitioners for a full Session during the week. Our contact information is listed in the bulletin and on our website, as are all of the Mystic Heart events and activities.

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, performed by **in2it**

Close of Service