

Look for the Good

A Celebration of Spirit



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer




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. It is so good to have you here with us this 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 to your own Mystic Heart. Would you please stand if you're able and join me in celebrating the Spirit of Life through musical prayer...you'll find the words on the screen.

Opening Songs – *in2it*

-  **Welcome to the Mystic Heart**, written by Diana Johnson & Chris Johnson
-  **One Big Family**, written by Gary Lynn Floyd & Robin Hackett
-  **Let Love Be the Guide**, written by Dennis Bryan, Kalyani, Diana Johnson & Chris Johnson

Rev. Diana

Music is a powerful form of prayer. By singing together we have shifted the energy in the room...in each one of us...and to a small degree, on the planet. Let's take a moment to experience and 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 Life that encompasses the entire planet...each of us a radiant point of Light in the web. (Pause) As we feel our connection with one another and with all other humans, we begin to 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 God's Light...and we sense that there are no spaces between us...

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

To empower our time together this morning, we share a heartfelt intention...to acknowledge our connection and responsibility to one another as members of one

human family and stewards of the earth; and to practice new ways of Looking for the Good in our daily lives.

As we commit to living more mindfully, we leave 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. (Pause) Go ahead and bring your awareness back into the space if you'd like...and begin to think about what it means to *Look for the Good*.

Rev. Diana

It sounds so cliché, doesn't it? So much of what we hear and read in *New Thought/Ancient Wisdom* can become cliché if we don't take the time to look deeper. Someone says *It's all Good*...and our minds say "No, it's not!" We read that *Every cloud has a silver lining*...and our mind says, "Sure looks like a storm brewing to me!" And *We're all one*? Really? Maybe your inner voice says..."There is no way that I am one with *that!* You know...that criminal, that politician, that evangelist, that homeless man, that drug dealer...And yet, we know that it's only when we are using these phrases lightly...looking at the surface of things...refusing to go deeper, that they become cliché.

In our initial enthusiasm, we can get caught up in the *New Thought* part...change your thinking, change your life...and forget about the foundation of *Ancient Wisdom* on which this philosophy stands. There is really nothing new about New Thought. And it is actually by studying the Ancient Wisdom traditions that that what starts out as a philosophy can become a religion. *Philosophy*, from the Latin, simply means a love of wisdom. *A religion*, on the other hand, is a set of Practices that allow us to feel our connection to something much bigger than we are, to the Intelligence that governs the cosmos and everything in it. And human beings are religious by design. If we don't choose some form of Spiritual Force or Entity to connect with or worship, then something else takes its place. But that's probably another talk.

Don't get me wrong...changing our thinking will change our lives. But we don't want to downplay how hard it can feel to change established thought patterns. We don't want to make light of the tremendous effort and attention, and the length of time it requires to consciously rewire our own neural network. I'm working on 30 years and counting!

And so, maybe you even did a little eye roll when you read the title of this message...*Look for the Good*. And still, somewhere deep inside, we know that a positive attitude and looking at the bright side has benefits to our bodies and our mental and emotional states. If you have been anywhere near me...in classes or other activities...or if you have been a student of New Thought, or even psychology and self-improvement, you know that science and spirituality both hold to this

idea...Optimistic people *who Look for the Good* live longer, healthier, happier lives. And so, here you are.

You might be glad to hear that there will be no Pollyanna here this morning. I'd like to bring this idea of *Looking For the Good* back down to earth...to offer a couple of ideas that make *Looking for the Good* feel more realistic, more accessible to regular people like you and me.

The master teacher Yeshua was big on *Looking for the Good*. He is accredited with these words: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you..." That seems like a really tall order. We tend to think of a blessing as something good in our lives...to bless another is to wish them well. And used this way, blessing them that curse you is probably a good idea. Spiritual Principle tells us that what we give out is what comes back to us, so sending blessings can be looked at as enlightened self-interest.

The problem is that blessing the one who is cursing me is not always my first inclination. When the guy racing up behind me on the freeway revs his engine, pulls up to my rear bumper, and then speeds around me, nearly causing a collision...and then flips me off...my first response may not be, "May your life be Joyful and Abundant." I'm not saying that would be a bad response, but I need baby steps...and that's just what Greg Braden offers in his book *Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer*. He defines blessing this way: "A quality of thought/feeling/emotion that allows us to redefine our feelings." What he is talking about is acknowledging what has just happened in an objective way, without judgment or criticism.

He goes on to say that "Blessing doesn't condone or make excuses for any atrocity or act of suffering. It doesn't put a stamp of approval on a hurtful event, or suggest that we would ever choose to reexperience it." Rather, blessing as acknowledgement allows whatever has happened to simply be. It allows whatever feelings arise to simply move through the body without causing additional stress or dis-ease. Neither does it pretend that the feelings don't exist, causing them to get lodged somewhere in the body where we will have to deal with them later.

Okay, so how did he arrive at this definition? Did he just make it up? If you know me, you know two things...that I love words and their origins, and I'm not likely to just take what someone tells me without running it through my own logical processes. So, when I looked up the word bless, I found its roots go back to the Latin *benedicere*, which means to praise or worship. Well that didn't help because we have attached so much baggage to those two words. But as I took it further, I discovered something interesting...praise simply means *to attach value* to something, and worship refers to *honoring* or *valuing*.

So Braden is suggesting that we turn the process of blessing them that curse you into a more manageable multi-step process. And the first step is to simply

acknowledge what is...to value it as an experience without judgment. The great Spiritual Teacher William Shakespeare offered a similar idea: "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." This is not news...it is our tendency to judge, but our judgment is only a perception, an opinion. So why not let our opinions rest?

I'll admit that it takes a bit of emotional intelligence to simply acknowledge without judgment. It takes humility and a willingness to let go of self-righteousness. But it makes an excellent first step on the way to true compassion. How do you know if you're ready for such a step? Gregg Braden suggests we ask ourselves a question: "Am I ready to move beyond a 'gut' reaction or an old belief that 'someone must pay' or 'I need to get even' in order to right a wrong? In other words, are you ready to move beyond the type of thinking that justifies hurting someone because they've hurt you?"

Wouldn't the world be better off if more of us were asking this question...individually and collectively...and able to answer 'Yes'?

Once we have asked the question, and have a sincere desire to move beyond self-righteousness, *blessing the one who curses and despitefully uses you* becomes more about accepting what is, as it is, and letting it be. In time, and with attention to psychological, emotional, and spiritual growth, we'll get around to wishing only good to the ones that have hurt us.

Music – **in2it**



Pray Me, written by Diana Johnson & Chris Johnson



A Prayer for You, written by Diana Johnson

Rev. Diana

I'd like to return for a moment to the teachings of Jesus. He had some words of wisdom that I think would benefit the world today, should we choose to abide by them. From the Gospel of Thomas,

When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male, nor the female be female... then will you enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

And by the Kingdom of Heaven, he wasn't talking about a place in the clouds where we go if we're well-behaved. I believe he was talking about a state of mind, a state of consciousness. In the book of Luke, Jesus says, "Nor will they say, 'lo here,' or 'lo there.' For behold, the kingdom of Heaven is in your midst." And in the book of Matthew, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Repent...think again...look again...check your perceptions. It's all right here, right now...within you and all around you...in potential. If we are wise, we will follow the directive of another great master...Captain Jean Luc Picard...and make it so!

Rev. Diana – Moving Into Prayer/Envisioning a Love-Soaked World

It is only in seeing beyond our differences to the Truth that unites us that we put down our judgment and acknowledge our Oneness. It is only when we ask “What’s it like to be you?” with the sincere intention to understand that we become instruments of Peace and Compassion. It is only in our willingness to let go of retaliation and greed as ways of being in the world that a Love-Soaked World can emerge. We close in prayer this morning, using the Power of our Word and the Power of our vision to create such a world.

Hold these words as Powerful and True in your own life as I speak them into form.

In this sacred moment, grounded in the Truth of our Oneness, I accept and affirm that there is only One Thing going on here. And that One Thing is Infinite Intelligence, by whatever name we call it, alive and well...expressing and experiencing Itself as all of Creation. It is pure Self-Givingness, operating through Law, forever in a process of becoming. 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 inspires the life within me. 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 this morning...and together, we extend our Vision, helping to create a *Love Soaked World*. Knowing that each of us serves as the hands, feet, heart, and voice of God, we take this time now to move our world toward the experience of Peace, Joy, Abundance, and Freedom. Knowing that Peace exists, that Love is real, we feel and know our world as a Peaceful place...where all beings practice loving kindness, compassion, and generosity with each other...where all humans respect and care for our planet as a cherished Home...where all beings have everything needed to experience fullness of life...nourishing food, the safety and comfort of home, medical care and education, healthy relationships, right livelihood, creative contribution, and a sense of belonging.

We feel and know a world without greed, where there is abundance in having *enough*...where every being, as a precious creation of God, is deserving of all the blessings life has to offer. Take a moment to bask in the feeling of living in such a world...

As we consciously place our faith in the consistent givingness of God, offering our heartfelt Vision, the world will never be the same. The entire planet is shifted, is lifted in consciousness...and for this knowing, I give thanks.

I am so grateful for each one who is here today, in community, in communion, in celebration of this beautiful life.

I give thanks for all who came together to make this time of celebration possible.

And I Am profoundly grateful to the One Life that I call God...for all of the blessings of this and every day.

By this act of prayer, and from this place of gratitude, *I Look for the Good*, fully expecting to find it. I release my Word, in deep faith that it is being moved into form by the One that responds by corresponding, reflecting this Vision back into form and experience in our world. And so I simply let it be...calling it done...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 looking for the good...

Changing the world...

Calling it forth...

Here and Now...

And so it is! Amen!

Music – Dalton Fitzgerald



I Wouldn't Be Surprised, written by Gary Lynn Floyd & Doug LeBow

Rev. Diana

I wouldn't be surprised at all...thank you, Dalton, for joining us here today.

And now, before we wrap up our time together...Homework. You didn't think I forgot, did you?

I invite you to make Blessing part of your week. Let's try it out now. Call to mind someone for whom you have felt judgment. (Pause) Now, try this:

1. I bless _____(Place here the name(s) of those who have suffered. Remember that *I bless* can simply mean *I acknowledge without judgment.*)

2. I bless _____ (Place here the name(s) of those who or what has inflicted the suffering. Remember that *I bless* can simply mean *I acknowledge without judgment.*)
3. I bless (or acknowledge) myself in the witnessing.

You may have started out with blessing as acknowledgment without judgment. That's fine. Over time, you may find that you can move that blessing in the direction of True Compassion. What is it like to be the one who has suffered? I feel you...I offer you my unconditional Love. What is it like to be the one who has caused the suffering? I feel you...I offer you my unconditional Love. What is it like to be me in the witnessing? I feel you...I offer you my unconditional Love.

It's a continuum...start where you are...the work never ends, so best get comfortable with it...be at peace with what is.

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 more music with you this morning, just because we can. Feel free to sing along or get up and dance if the Spirit moves.

Offertory Music: - *in2it*

Look For the Good, written by Jason Mraz, Abby Leah Dorsey, Chaska Lela Potter, Jeff Allan Berkley, Mai Bloomfield, Michael Goldwasser, Mona Tavakoli, Rebecca Emily Gebhardt

Lucinda & Rev. Diana – Gratitude Prayer


Lucinda – This Week's Invitations

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm** – Please join Michael Bordeaux for ***Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer*** by Gregg Braden. Michael Drop-ins are always welcome. Donations are gratefully received but not required.

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

Looking Ahead...

 **Praying in Color w/ Ellie Thompson - *Opening to Advent* - Saturday, November 13, 10 am – 1 pm.** Join Ellie in prayerfully creating an Advent Calendar Wreathe. Contact Ellie for more information. Please RSVP.

 ***Mystic OAKS Adventure Group: The Schreder Planetarium, Saturday, December 3 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm.***

In celebration of the Holy-Day Season, we will be guided on a journey back in time to witness...


THE CHRISTMAS STAR.

Those who wish to meet can gather at **Final Draft** on California Street for dinner at 5:00. We will arrive at the Planetarium at 6:45 to check in and be seated.

Contact Rev. Diana at (530) 356-1227, or by email at revdiana@mysticheart.org for more information or to make your reservation. Tickets are \$12 per person.

RSVP/payment in advance is required. 21 Seats are still available.

Reserve your seats today!

 **Reserve your space at the 1st Annual *Be the Change Spring Retreat* at the beautiful Coram Ranch...May 12-14, 2022.** You can reserve your spot with a \$50 non-refundable deposit. Contact Rev. Diana for more information

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

Closing Song – *in2it*

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

Close of Service