

Living From a Full Heart...

Sunday, February 6, 2022 Celebration



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton, RScP; Music by in2it, with Gary French

Bell – Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Lucinda

Opening Song – *Welcome to the Mystic Heart*, written by Chris & Diana Johnson

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 home to your own Mystic Heart. It is so good to have you here with us this morning for our Sunday Celebration. In2it welcomes Gary French to the music team this morning. Thank you, Gary, for being here. Would you please stand if you're able and join our voices in song...you'll find the words on the screen.

Music

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

 ***Opening Up (in Sweet Surrender)***, from Rainbow Spirit Oregon

Rev. Diana

Doesn't it feel good to sing together? It creates such a nice feeling in the room. And singing is a powerful form of prayer.

This month we are *Tending to the Heart*...and in this first week of February we'll be exploring what it means to ***Live From a Full Heart***.

But first, let's take a moment to bring ourselves into this moment, allowing the breath to carry us to that point of stillness within...letting it slow just a bit, and find its own pace and flow...settling ourselves into what is... just being present...blessed with the gift of life...just breathing...here and now...

Join me in feeling our connection with all that is...with our Global Community. Not only the human community, but with all of life...with all that we would call non-living. Being of One Life, we recognize our Unity, our Connection, with all that is. The Light of Spirit burns brightly within each of us...every human, every animal, every plant...a perfect expression of God...every creature, shining with the Light of Spirit...the plants and rocks, the sand, the soil, and the water, teeming with Life, radiating Intelligence...and now allowing our Light to reach into the heavens, to the clouds, the stars, and the galaxies, and sensing that all of it is radiating with the same Divine

Light...there is no separation. There is only Unity...There is only Love...There is only Spirit.

Feeling the Truth of these words, we share a heartfelt intention for our time together. We give time this month to *Attending to the Heart*, and to asking what it means to *Live From a Full Heart*. We spend time, as Spiritual Family, in deep communion with the Great Mystery, with that which is beyond time and space, beyond definition and description. And we explore what it means to Love...to really Love...ourselves and one another.

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...through our Practice, transformation is occurring...Wholeness is being revealed.

Rev. Diana

February has traditionally been the Love month...Valentine's Day happens in February...and we take the time to contemplate Love.

Eastern cultures have many words for Love. Sanskrit has 96 words, each representing a different aspect or stage of Love. Ancient Persian has 80. Western culture has unfortunately given less attention to the nuances of Love. Greek names seven types of Love, and English has only one word – Love.

The Mystics have often defined Love as God's self-givingness. Made in the image and likeness of our creator, each of us has the capacity to give of ourselves, to offer our gifts in the world. Each of us has the ability to Love.

Why else would we have been given our unique qualities and talents? Certainly not so that we can keep them to ourselves...to hide our Light under a bushel. So it is our purpose in this lifetime to pour out our gifts...to give unconditionally...to Live From a Full Heart...to Love Whole-heartedly.

Now the question becomes... "what do I have to offer? What are my unique gifts? How will my loving, my self-givingness, take form in the world?" The first step in answering these questions is to first ask, "What do I love?" St. Thomas Aquinas suggested that "The things that we love tell us what we are."

This year, I am using Angeles Arrien's book *Living in Gratitude* as a loose guide to this year's topics. In the February chapter she suggests that "Where we are full-hearted in our lives, we are deeply engaged, responsible, reliable, and committed." That makes it pretty easy to discover where your own full heartedness lies...where are you fully involved in manifesting what has heart and meaning for you? It can be anything...take a moment and look within yourself...where do you willingly spend your 'free time'? What kinds of activities make time disappear...and move you into a

Flow that leaves you feeling peaceful and contented? I would bet that each of us can name at least one or two things that bring a sense of wholehearted, or full-hearted living.

I'm sure we've all heard this quote by Howard Thurman:

“Don't ask yourself what the world needs. **Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that**, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

So, what is it that makes you come alive? I'll bet you can guess what some of mine are...studying, writing, teaching, cooking, gardening, walking barefoot in the dirt...

Next question...how much of your time do you give to these pursuits, to these activities? Is it enough? Or do you cheat yourself and the world of your gifts?

I find it sad that, when preparing to choose a career, I wasn't asked, “What do you do with your free time? What do you enjoy the most?” Were you asked that question? It might have saved me years of searching and changing majors...six times...before settling on a direction.

Another question (I'm always full of questions)...what does it look like to live a half-hearted life? To me, it looks like a lot of shoulds, rather than wants. It looks like “I have to,” instead of “I choose to.” Here's an interesting experiment...how often do you hear yourself saying, “I have to do this” or “I have to do that?” Not only is that a half-hearted way for me to live, but it also puts me into a victim role and releases me from responsibility. But that's a whole 'nother talk.

Back to half-heartedness...a half-hearted attitude can bring a feeling of being duty-bound...I may believe I have no choice in what I'm doing. I am not consistent or reliable when I'm half-hearted. Sometimes when I am being half-hearted, I realize that I have outgrown certain interests, people, or circumstances. It is our nature to change, and as we change, so do the outer manifestations in our lives. And if we don't allow them to change, we can lose the enthusiasm that we may once have had.

I have a couple of examples for you...when I was in high school, I had a couple of good friends. We did everything together. We loved having time to have sleepovers, or to help one another with chores just so we could talk. Once high school was over, I went to the Junior College and my friends went to Universities...one in my town and one across the country. Each of us learned new things and found new interests and new friends. We tried to stay connected for a while by getting together whenever we were in town, but each of us lost our enthusiasm for being together as we lost our common interests and experiences. It made sense for me to let go of those friendships so that space could be made for new ones that fit me better.

This happened again as I moved to Redding and started a new life. And it happened again when I went back to school to become a teacher. Now that I'm in Ministry, my life is almost unrecognizable from my twenty-something-year-old self. Does this make sense? I'm sure you all have your own examples. The same thing can happen for interests, for homes, for jobs, for partnerships.

When we force ourselves to stay with what no longer works, refusing to change, we stunt our growth...we become half-hearted...and we cheat ourselves and the world of the gifts we might otherwise offer.

Rev. Diana

Let's remember that we are talking about Love, about self-givingness, and about our ability to live wholeheartedly, fully engaging in what we love. So let's talk a little bit more about Love.

Benjamin Riggs, author of *Finding God in the Body*, invites us to remember that:

Love is the defining characteristic of the Kingdom. [He says that] I do not create love. I receive it. Love is a gift. [He goes on to say that] When *freedom from self* is realized the likeness of God is reflected in our actions. The *cataracts of fear and expectation* are removed and we can see the world as-it-is. [Isn't that a great description?] The *cataracts of fear and expectation* are removed and we can see the world as-it-is. When we recover the freedom to see people as they are, we see the life that dwells and sings within them, and love is our *natural response*.

His writing is so beautiful...I have to share just a bit more:

The indwelling image of God is the fount of love that erupts at our center, breaking through our skin onto the plane of our Incarnation, Such love sees beyond the projected self of others to their inmost depths where their True Self abides. When the eye of God within us makes contact with the eye of God in our fellow man, there is communion, which is the meaning of "Namasté."

Finally, he says that:

Love is wild. It has no manners. It comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. Love often defies logic. It would have us embrace our enemies and be uncomfortably honest with our friends. This cannot be taught. Love does not come with a manual. It is the spontaneous expression of our True Nature.

Music: *Love Cover Me*, written by Gary Lynn Floyd & Danny Miller

Rev. Diana

What beautiful poetry...*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.*

What is this saying? Love, fill me...make me whole-hearted, full-hearted...

I believe that there are at least three aspects or qualities of Love that are required if we are to live a whole-hearted, full-hearted life. Let's take moment to look at these. The first is Unconditional Love...I must know the freedom to love both friend and foe as my Self...not as I love my personal, ego self, because sometimes I don't do that very well...but as I love my God-Self...with that kind of devotion.

I must come to experience the kind of Love that recognizes and embraces everything that is real and true, whether it is comfortable or not. This kind of Love does not see the world or its beings as good or bad...no judgment, no criticism... It does not give attention to what I stand to lose or gain. It sees things and people as they truly are...it sees the spark of Divinity that lives within all things.

When I love unconditionally, and experience Unconditional Love in return, a shift happens...a phase change, if you will...and I move into the experience of gratitude...the second aspect of Love required if one is to live whole-heartedly. Gratitude accepts the responsibility of tending, of caring for the relationship, for the lover, for the child, for the pet...for whatever is bringing Unconditional Love into our experience.

I have said before that gratitude is an action, not an idea or a concept. It is the act of caring for that for which we are grateful. Riggs suggests that "It reaches into the world from the deep space of unconditional love. It looks beyond race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and social status to find its kind in others. In this way likeness gives rise to kindness, which is the foundation of relationship."

Once unconditional love brings us to the act of caring for another, the stage is set for Creative Love to emerge. We might think of creative love as limited to our love of the arts...gifts of painting, music, cooking, or poetry...but actually, Creative Love has its greatest potential in our daily life. It expands our field of Practice, bringing it out of our meditation chair and into our day. Our relationships, homes, careers, and hobbies become grounds for artistic expression. Our day-to-day experiences become living works of art.

There are infinite possibilities for how we can express Love in the world. Each of us is a veritable storehouse of possibility. Once I discover for myself the untapped

wealth that lies within me, I am no longer dominated by my poverty mentality...I Am full, overflowing...and naturally, I want to give back.

Love has come full circle. In the beginning, there is Love...God's self-expression as me. Love is my inherent sense of self-givingness, my nature. I may not be in touch with that part of myself. And yet there is a drive within me. It moves me in the direction of receiving, and then giving, unconditional love. This experience draws from me a sense of gratitude, which I demonstrate by my caring actions, which brings a sense of contentment as I am moved into an even more giving and Creative Love.

I believe this is the kind of Love that the Master Jesus spoke of when he gave his two great commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength...and love your neighbor as yourself."

It takes a lot of Creativity to live that way...to put the benefit of the Whole ahead of our own preferences...to put the well-being of our human family, the forests, and the oceans and all of its creatures before our own likes and dislikes.

The word *creativity* means the act of making something from nothing or bringing something into existence. Each one of us has habits and patterns of behavior that can cause us to do things certain ways, and those ways may not be what's best for our neighbors, the other creatures, the plant life, or the planet. It is a heroic and creative act simply to change those habits...to be willing let go of preferences in favor of new ways that work for all beings.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength...and love your neighbor as yourself." Here's another way to say that...Give of yourself, heart, soul, mind, and body, to the unfolding of the Great Mystery. Treat all beings as equal to yourself. Become a beneficial presence on the planet. And in doing so, you will be Living From a Full Heart.

Let's close together in prayer. Please hold these words as your Reality if they ring True for you...

Holy One...I thank you for the gift of this day, and for the many blessings it brings. I Thank you for my growing willingness to be the Love I intend to see in this world. You are the One Intelligence, the One Life, the One Love, forever giving of Itself as all that is. I know that it is by Your Grace moving through my life that I Am lifted, that my mind is purified, and my heart is opened. In my human speech, I have no other way to relate than saying You and Me, but in Truth, there is no separation, there is no difference. You live in, through and as me, and I live in the atmosphere of You. Recognizing our Oneness, I quietly receive and channel Your Love today. I surrender my need to control...to criticize...to be right by making others wrong. Instead I choose Love without Conditions...I allow it to guide my thoughts, words, and actions

from this moment forward. I act as a powerful and creative force for Good in the world.

As we commit to loving unconditionally, to expressing gratitude, and to making a positive imprint on the future of our world, let's take a moment, with eyes still closed, to see that Love flowing out from us to all of Creation, helping to create a **Love-Soaked World**. Let's give it our feeling, our caring, our devotion.

Together, we envision a world completely transformed by all of the Creative Love and Wholehearted Action we are expressing, individually and collectively...a world that is peaceful, joyful, abundant, and free...where all beings live as one family, 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, creative contribution, and a sense of belonging...a world where every being is valued for its inherent Goodness and Light...where the Peace we cultivate within shows up in our world as Radical Love and Compassion. 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 and receives those blessings willingly and gratefully. Breathe that in for a moment...

As we place our faith in the infallible givingness of our Source, and offer our heartfelt Vision, the world is changed...in this instant...and for this knowing, I give thanks.

I am so grateful for all who are here today in community.

And I Am profoundly grateful for all of the blessings of this and every day.

By this act of prayer, we become *Whole-hearted*...we begin to *Live from a Full Heart*...serving as the hands, feet, voice, and heart of God, doing Its work in the world, all things are possible.

Knowing the Power of my Holy Word, I release this prayer to the One Power and Intelligence that I call God, with absolute faith in Its immediate action. I call it done. And so we affirm this together by saying...and so it is. Amen!

Let this Vision become Real in your heart and mind. Infuse it with your Faith. Feel it...know it...and live it. There is no lack or limitation in God...there is no reason that we cannot have such a world.

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. And prepare to Celebrate!

Music – *One Love/People Get Ready*, written by Bob Marley & Curtis Mayfield

Rev. Diana – Moving Into Celebration

Please repeat after me as together we affirm... *There is Power in our Prayer...There is Power in our Vision...Living from the fullness of our hearts...We are creating a world that works for all beings...right here, right now...* (And together we say) *And so it is! Amen!*

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Each Sunday, we invite you to join in the celebration of the work we are doing in the world by sharing of your financial Good, should you choose to.

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, let these words reverberate in your heart and mind, knowing the Power of our word; 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!

Don't hesitate to get up and move, as we celebrate...


Offertory Music – *Promised Land*, written by Diana Johnson

Gratitude Prayer – Lucinda & Rev. Diana


Invitations – Lucinda


 **First of all...Please join Ellie and Randy Thompson in celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary.** They have invited us to witness their Golden Recommitment Ceremony, next Sunday, February 13th as part of the Sunday Service. There will be lots of food, beverages, and a beautiful cake to share immediately following. There is a flyer in your bulletin that you can take with you if you'd like. Please RSVP to Rev. Diana to reserve your seat.

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux's Book Club – *Church of the Wild: How Nature invites Us Into the Sacred*** by Victoria Loorz

 ***Praying in Color - Love Yourself...Heart-shaped Dream Catchers.*** Please join Ellie Thompson on **Saturday, February 12th from 10:00am – 12:00 pm.** Please let Ellie know in advance if you are planning to attend, so that she can be sure to have plenty of materials on hand.

And later this month...

 **Music in Motion: A Body, Mind, and Spirit Experience for Mommy or Daddy and Me!** A unique blend of Music, Movement, and Storytime for toddlers and preschoolers...the little-kid basics of music theory; *Conscious Stories* Storytime, and a closing yoga practice. Appropriate for children 1-5 years old and their Special Someone! Led by Rev. Diana and Amanda Hunter. There are flyers available if you know someone who might be interested. **Mystic Heart Gathering Place, Suite H, beginning Tuesday, February 22, 11:00am-12:00pm. Contact Rev. Diana at revdiana@mysticheart.org for more information or to register. *Pre-registration is required.* Suggested Donation: \$10/class. Any donation gratefully received.**

 **Connections: Book Club and Meditation Circle.** Please join Rev. Diana in this journey through *Heart Minded: How to Hold Yourself and Others in Love* by renowned author and teacher Sarah Blondin, beginning **Thursday, February 24th** at the Mystic Heart Gathering Place, 3609 Bechelli Ln, Suite H, from 12:00-2:00 pm. Again, flyers are available if you are interested.

If you'd like prayer support, we have prayer request cards and envelopes on the fireplace, as well. 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