

Living With an Open Heart...

Sunday, February 13, 2022 Taizé



**A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer**

**Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP
and Chris Johnson, RScP**

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Lucinda

Introduction – Rev. Diana

Good morning. My name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. I'd like to welcome you Home to our Beloved Community, and welcome Home to your own Mystic Heart. Let's prepare to *Open Our Hearts*...join me in this affirmation, "I open my eyes to see the Spiritual Truth today. I open my ears to hear the Spiritual Truth today. I open my heart to receive the Spiritual Truth today."

Chant –*Opening Up (Sweet Surrender)* from Rainbow Spirit Oregon

Rev. Diana

This morning we are contemplating what it means to *Live an Open-Hearted Life*.

Beginning with three slow, deep breaths...allowing the lungs and the chest to open as you inhale, and releasing any tension you may be holding as you breathe out...allowing the heart to open as you inhale...and then letting go of anything that may be holding your heart closed...breathing in Love and allowing it to fill you to overflowing, and offering that Love into this space on the outbreath, allowing it to surround, hold and comfort you...basking in the feeling of God's Loving Presence as it moves in and out of your body on the breath...allowing everything to be exactly as it is, right here and now.

In this state of Peaceful Presence, we offer our unconditional Love, allowing it to connect us with our Global Community...envisioning a web of Consciousness that encompasses the earth, knowing that every being is a point of God's Radiant Light in that web...all connected...every creature, every plant, every rock...the sand, soil, and water...the entire planet, from the smallest to the largest, all shining with the Light of Spirit...teeming with Life and Intelligence.

As we acknowledge the Light of Creation, our web has taken on a radiant glow, shining out into the heavens...the clouds, the stars, and the galaxies all aglow with Spirit's Light. We cannot help but feel and know our oneness with All That Is.

To give greater purpose to our time together, we share a heartfelt intention: We acknowledge our responsibility to one another as human family, and as caretakers of the earth; and we commit to *Living with an Open Heart*.

In setting this prayerful intention, we empower ourselves to see, hear, and feel the Spiritual Truth that by offering unconditional love, we are expressing unconditional freedom.

In the book of John in the Christian Scriptures, we read, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) We remember that we speak of spiritual love, we are speaking of God’s self-givingness; and that as we are expressions of the Divine, our own willingness to give of ourselves.

What does it mean to be a *disciple*? From the Latin, *disciple* means *learner*...one who learns. And when I learn something, I have a change of mind, or a change of heart. So, to be a disciple, I have to have an open mind and an open heart. In its religious context, a *disciple* is one who looks to a Higher Truth for Guidance; it requires the putting aside all that I think I know, and opening myself to change, to growth. So in the passage from John, Jesus is saying that as I let go of my smaller self and open my heart and mind to the presence of something greater within me, my unconditional Love and Compassion will shine.

In his book *Finding God in the Body*, Benjamin Riggs suggests that “As long as we are chained to the false self, we are a slave to *its* agenda. We do not see our fellow man, but only how *they* affect *us*. We see them through the eyes of the false self, the knowledge of fear and expectation. The ability to love others as our (Higher) Self is born out of freedom from (false) self. It grows out of the freedom *of* God to love our fellow man as they are.”

In other words, when I am grounded in my Divine Self, I no longer live in fear of other people and how their words and actions might affect me...I am no longer concerned about whether my neighbors and I hold similar religious, political or social views...I have no expectations of how they should live, or what they should believe. I accept them for who they are...I acknowledge the Divinity that is inherent in every being. I accept, I allow, I appreciate...we are equal. We are One in God.

SILENCE – 1 Minute – Bell

Rev. Diana

So, how do I know when I Am Living With an Open Heart? One of the things I notice is that when I am open-hearted, I tend to be curious rather than critical. If my neighbor is flying a political flag that represents a view other than my own, does my mind criticize and make wrong, or does it wonder what might have led to such a worldview?

What is it like to be him or her? Does this neighbor, like me, seek love, peace, and prosperity? Sometimes feel pain, fear, and self-doubt?

An Open Heart leads me to be curious rather than critical with myself, as well. When I do or say something regrettable, causing harm to another, I look within myself and ask without criticism, “What might have caused you to do that? What need is not being met? What are you feeling right now?” With curiosity, I listen to what my heart has to say...I listen for Guidance...and I do whatever my compassionate heart suggests in order to make amends.

In her book *Living in Gratitude*, Angeles Arrien says:

Any closed heartedness in our nature shows us where we are still holding on to our resentments, grudges, or disappointments, and reveals to us where we have forgiveness work to do. When our hearts are closed, we can be punitive, withholding, blaming, and critical of ourselves and others.

I notice that when I am open-hearted, I am more compassionate, kind, and generous. I am present with whatever is before me; my thoughts and actions are more mindful. My sense of adventure is high...I see wonder everywhere. I am able to set aside all that I thought I knew in favor of opening to whatever is here to be discovered. The world becomes a place to explore, to learn, to grow, and to enjoy.

Musical Meditation – *Open My Heart Again* by Daniel Nahmod

Rev. Diana

Let's take a moment to reflect on the powerful lyrics of this song...they ring out with a Powerful Truth.

“It hurts sometimes to live this life, some days I'd rather run and hide.

Maybe then the pain would hide as well. Maybe then I could protect myself.

But whose gonna' win? Is that really living? I wish I didn't know the answer is 'no.'
Nobody would win.

Cause I could close my eyes and pretend I don't see. I could close my mind and pretend that I'm free. But my soul knows the truth, life means stepping back in. I'm gonna' open my heart again.

Man, it hurts sometimes when I've done wrong, some days I'd rather just move on.

Maybe then I wouldn't have to cry. Maybe then I could protect pride.

But whose gonna' win? Is that really loving? I wish I didn't know the answer is 'no.'
Nobody would win.

Cause I could close my eyes and pretend I don't see. I could close my mind and pretend that I'm free. But my soul knows the truth, life means stepping back in. I'm gonna' open my heart again."

And we always do, sooner or later. We open our hearts one more time.

I love how Brother David Steindl-Rast speaks of the heart...that it "is not a static symbol. It is dynamic, alive...the heart is (the) center of our being where intellect and will and feelings, mind and body, past and future come together." He goes on to say, "When we reach our innermost heart, we reach a realm where we are not only intimately at home with ourselves, but intimately united with others. The heart is not a lonely place. It is the realm where solitude and togetherness coincide." And finally, "the heart is our meeting place with God in prayer. Prayer, in turn, is the very heart of religion."

Of course, he is using religion in its original context...that which re-connects us. Prayer is the very heart of what connects us to our Source.

Children know this inherently. There is no separation between intellect, will, and feelings in a young child. He tends to be present with whatever is happening in any given moment...he is content to play either by himself or with others...and he senses his own greatness, his own possibilities, and lives his own adventures.

Last month we talked about the importance of being like a child...fresh, curious...open to learning new things. From the book of Mark, we read "Truly, I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

And from Matthew, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in my name welcomes me."

And yet, in these challenging times, it becomes difficult for children to remain innocent and naïve for very long. There is a short reading from the Science of Mind Magazine that I would like to share with you. Many of us have children in our lives and might benefit from this reminder. It begins with a quote from Coretta Scott King: "The failure to invest in youth reflects a lack of compassion and a colossal failure of common sense."

Next, a short passage from Ernest Holmes, the Voice Celestial:

Each child is born immaculate on earth,
nor need await some mystic 'second birth.'
See in that child the offspring of your heart
and like your own let him be counterpart;

for love grows rich the more it is expressed.

Finally, the article written by Rev. Christian Sorenson:

Children arrive with infinite possibilities. It's not our responsibility to limit them but rather to fuel them with empowering love. It's not our place to tell them what is possible and what is not. They will discover on their own what they can and cannot do. Help them stay open to the mysteries of the universe that seek to express through them. Do not limit their perspectives with your boundaries; they are still in touch with the boundless.

Love children enough to encourage them to go beyond what you know. Encourage their courage to explore new frontiers. Do not scold them for their shortfalls.

Be there to help dust them off and point them toward their dream once again, rather than heading back to the comfort and confines of their previous margins of know-how.

Guide without control, help without worry. Look for the child's heart in all things, and you will know how to be what they need to reach the stars.

Musical Meditation – *Kind Child* by Daniel Nahmod

Chris – Meditation

The Buddhist mantra *Om mani padme hum* may be translated “Divine Spirit is the jewel within the lotus of the human heart...” When we contemplate Rabbi Jesus's phrase “the Father within,” many of us locate that Spark of Divinity as being in the heart... Thus, our heart serves as our physical, emotional, and spiritual center... <pause>

We are born into this world as children with hearts wide open... Full of wonder, curiosity, and awe, we cannot help but shine forth that Divine Light... that sparkling jewel... We participate fully in the Great Mystery... one with all we encounter... Completely inhabiting the Kingdom of Heaven...

Inevitably, this innocent vulnerability allows us to be hurt... and we learn to shield our heart for protection... We are taught to “live in the real world...” to leave behind the Paradise we “imagined” and participate in in a world of separateness... separate from others... separate from Nature... separate from God... and our heart closes...

But our heart cannot remain closed... The Spirit within will not remain trapped... When we experience a broken heart, it is really only God “opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape...”¹ Our heart will open... with or without our permission... The appropriate response to a heart broken open, is to *keep* it open...

Holding our heart open makes us vulnerable... and it allows us to receive love, gratitude, and compassion from others... It allows us to share the Divine Gifts that

God has given us... It lets us recognize that the same Spirit that dwells within us shines through the eyes of everyone else... There is no separation... We are one with each other... with Mother Earth... with all of Creation... and with God... The jewel in our heart sparkles with same light as all others in the Global Web of Consciousness...

Silence – 3:00

As we emerge from the Sacred Silence, we return our awareness to this time and place... Grateful for the courage to hold our hearts open... Grateful for the support of our Spiritual Family... Grateful for the Divine Light of Spirit that shines forth from deep within our open heart... Thank you God, for everything and everyOne...

I invite you to know with me that Spirit is moving powerfully through each of us, and through our Beloved Community... Individually and collectively, we are a powerful spiritual influence on our world... As we evolve in consciousness, the benefits of our growth ripple out, blessing the entire world...

We keep our hearts fully open and receptive to Divine Inspiration as Rev. Diana continues her message this morning, knowing that we are empowered to Live With an Open Heart...

Rev. Diana

The Dalai Lama shared an exercise that I offer as homework this week. By Practicing, you will notice your heart opening...you will become more loving, compassionate, and joyful. It will support your journey toward remaining full, strong, open, and clear-hearted, which will lead you in the direction of appreciation and thankfulness.

First, spend five minutes at the beginning of each day remembering that we all want the same thing; to be happy, to be loved, and to feel connected.

Then, spend five minutes cherishing yourself and others. Let go of judgments. Breathe in cherishing yourself and breathe out cherishing others.

During the day, extend that attitude to everyone you meet – we are all the same – with “I cherish myself and you, too.”

And, stay in the Practice, no matter what happens!

Let's join our hearts in prayer, to anchor what we know to be True.

There is one All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Everywhere-Present Source...and I call this One God.

That One, being the Whole of Creation and all that is forever becoming, is expressing perfectly as each and every person, all that is living and all that we would call non-living. And so, I know that I Am a perfect and intentional expression of Divinity, here to walk the earth as Its hands, feet, voice, and heart.

In this Holy Moment, I consciously choose to step into an attitude of open heartedness. I live and love from Compassion, Generosity, Kindness, Curiosity, and Wonder. As I ground myself firmly in these Qualities of Spirit, I pray our Vision of a Love-Soaked World into being.

We join our hearts as we envision a world that is peaceful, abundant, beautiful, and free...where all beings practice loving kindness and treat our planet with care and respect. We envision a world where all needs are met...where all beings have plenty of nourishing food, the safety of a warm and comfortable home, 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. 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. With humanity serving as the vessels through which God's blessings flow, there is no reason we cannot have such a world. And so, we know that it is being born, as we speak our Powerful Word.

I am so grateful to have Spiritual Community...people of like minds and hearts to share this journey called life.

I am grateful for the constancy of the Loving and Lawful Presence, by whatever name we call It. It is by this Constancy that I build my faith.

I give thanks for the many, many blessings of this and every day. May all beings know the endless flow of blessing.

By this act of prayer, we *Live an Open-Hearted Life*...trusting that our needs are always met...practicing gratitude rather than complaint...sharing what we have with others...practicing forgiveness and seeking wonder.

Knowing the Power of my prayer is mighty, I release my Word to the One Source of all Life, with absolute faith in Its corresponding action. I see it, feel it, know it, and call it done. And so we affirm this together by saying...and so it is. Amen!

Musical Meditation – *Last Song* by Daniel Nahmod

Rev. Diana – Moving Into Celebration

Please repeat after me as together we affirm... *There is Power in Community...in our Prayer and in our Vision...We are writing a new story for humanity...and for our world...right here and right now... And so it is! Amen!*

It's time for Celebration and Gratitude! Let's look at what a local no-kill shelter is doing.

Good News Video – Tails of Rescue

<https://www.facebook.com/tailsofrescue/videos/496350918594857>

<https://www.facebook.com/tailsofrescue/videos/864562700947195>

<https://www.facebook.com/tailsofrescue/videos/762976214205981>

<https://www.facebook.com/tailsofrescue/videos/461177174543088>

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, please speak this blessing, letting the words flow from your heart. And please feel our deep appreciation for 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!


Please enjoy Raffi as he sings a tribute to peace activist, humanitarian, and former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela.


Offertory Video – *One Big Family* by Floyd/Lula


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Hyp0UEayEY&list=PLI1mcuMXW1rV1cB4dq4htUYJ8DWHNEA-O&index=48>

11:10 Practitioner opens the brief Gratitude Prayer, Minister closes.


11:11 Lucinda as Prayer Practitioner:


 **Tuesday, February 22nd, 11 am – noon: Music in Motion: A Body, Mind, and Spirit Experience for Mommy or Daddy and Me!** There are flyers available if you know someone who might be interested. **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.**

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux's Book Club.** All are welcome to attend our final movie day for *Church of the Wild*. We will be watching *My Octopus Teacher* on **Tuesday, March 1. A New book beginning on March 8. *Made for Goodness*** by Desmond and Mpho Tutu. Contact Michael or our website for more information.

 **Thursdays, beginning February 24th, 12 - 2 pm: 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, Again, flyers are available if you are interested.

 **Thursdays, 3-5 pm – *Metaphysical Bible*** led by Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. No knowledge of the Bible is necessary. Drop-ins are welcome.

 **The Kingdom of Heaven: A Virtual Field Trip (in-person or on Zoom).** Join Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson on Saturday, March 5th from 10 am–2 pm for a mystical exploration of the biblical phrase “The Kingdom of Heaven.” BYOB - bring your own Bible (any version). Lunch will be provided. Suggested donation: \$20 – All donations appreciated. All are welcome.

Mark your calendars now...

 **Spring Tea Party and Easter Basket Raffle**, April 9th, 1-3 pm. Contact Ellie for more information.

 **Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Parking Lot Sale**, Saturday, May 21st, 7 am - 3 pm. Drop off your donations at the Gathering Place on Friday afternoon, May 20th. Mystic Heart will be open from 2:00 to 5:30 pm to take you donations. Please contact Kris Fortier to contribute goods, to help with the sale, or for more information.

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

¹ From 'Paracelsus' by Robert Browning