

Acting From the Heart

Sunday, March 13, 2022 Taizé

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

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana - Introduction... Good morning
and welcome

Chant – *Love, Serve, and Remember*,
written by John Astin

Rev. Diana

This morning we are asking ourselves... **What does it mean to Act From the Heart?**
As we spend the month of March contemplating Compassionate Service in the world,
how do we move in the direction of acting from the heart?

Let's begin by bringing our awareness to the breath, remembering that Spirit is moving into our bodies, giving us life through the breath...that our breath is our connection to Spirit...and that as we exhale, relaxing our bodies, and settling into the flow of Taizé, we are sending Peace into the atmosphere...we breathe in Life, we breathe out Peace...we breathe in Life, we breathe out Love...we breathe in Life, we breathe out Contentment. And in this moment, we are fully present...awake and aware of the gift of Life we are given, and grateful for the experience of being human.

In this state of Loving Acceptance and Gratitude, we feel our oneness with all that is...we sense and feel the Infinite Intelligence that infuses every living thing, every rock, and grain of sand...the Life that expresses Itself as the soil and the water, both essential to our survival...we know that every cloud in the sky, every star in our galaxy, and every galaxy in the cosmos is teeming with the same Life, the same Presence. We experience our oneness with All That Is...we are all connected.

Together, we acknowledge our responsibility to one another as human family, and as caretakers of the earth; we open the pathway from the head to the heart, so that we might **act from the heart** in our day-to-day lives. In setting this prayerful intention, we come to know how to bring Compassionate Service into our every interaction.

There are many ways to bring ourselves into greater alignment with our hearts. One is the active Practice of Gratitude. It is no secret that when we are grateful for the gift of life, and for the many blessings that rain down upon us in every moment, we are giving our attention to the unfolding Goodness in our lives. And whatever we give our



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

attention to is what we get more of...the Goodness multiplies as we offer our humble and sincere Thanks.

Gratitude and Thanksgiving are forms of Celebration. We may not normally see them in this light. But the word *Celebration*, from its Latin roots, ***the act of frequenting or honoring***. *Frequenting* means ***to visit often***. Seen through this lens, Celebration means bringing our awareness to something often, and in the case of gratitude, noticing and giving thanks for our blessings. And so, Gratitude and Thanksgiving are forms of Celebration.

SILENCE – 1 Minute – Bell

Rev. Diana

In our culture, it is easy to define Celebration as having a party. We picture balloons, streamers, cake, and ice cream, maybe even music and dancing. And it is a wonderful thing to celebrate the birth of a child, a partner, or a friend in this way if this is what is called for. I think God, by means of us, loves a good party. But this is not the only form of celebration.

We teach that there are at least Six Pillars to a Spiritual Life. These Six are Prayer, Meditation, Study, Sacred Service, Circulation, and Celebration. Celebration is an integral part of our Spiritual Journey...it is one of the ways we Commune with God.

We engage in these Six Pillars each week as together, we attend to the message, music, and meditation...we pray...we offer our time, talent, and treasure, and we celebrate our togetherness in Spirit. Coming together in Community, to support and witness one another adds such depth to our lives and to our Practice.

We Celebrate each week as we give thanks for our Spiritual Awakening, for our welcoming and loving Community, for the friendships we build, and the fellowship we partake of. And every part of our time together moves us closer to *Acting From the Heart*...to thinking more loving thoughts...to speaking more kindly...and to interacting with one another in more compassionate ways.

Attending church on Sunday is not something we do out of duty or habit...we give of ourselves as a way of supporting one another in Sacred Community, and we give **TO** ourselves as we take the time to connect with God. In community, we can experience our personal connection to Source...have insights and revelations as we listen deeply...**AND** we can experience God as the other beings who share our space...as the shared energy and vibration that is so palpable when two or more are gathered. This is a deep and meaningful kind of Celebration. This is attending to the heart and honoring the soul in its Journey.

Musical Meditation – *Circle of Fire Prayer* by Cari Cole

Rev. Diana

Unity Minister, Eric Butterworth, speaks these powerful words to shed light on Celebration:

As the universe rushes and streams into you from all sides, it is a veritable cosmic celebration of ecstasy. It could be said, and should be, that you are the universe celebrating itself as you...one wonders why many of us who seem to be intelligent persons let thoughts that corrode our minds blind us to the sheer thrill of living. The truly intelligent person is one who can grasp the fact that it is a curious experience to be alive, so curious in fact that it is madness not to sacrifice everything to get the full taste of being alive.¹

Sacrifice everything...those are powerful words...our minds might be moving into resistance mode right now. We hear that word, and we want to run the other way. Human beings don't tend to want to sacrifice anything...we see sacrifice as giving up things that we would rather keep. We still have the sacrificing of animals (and even humans), moving through the Group Mind. We might have had previous religious experiences that left us with a bad taste for the idea of sacrifice.

But the word *sacrifice* comes from the same root as the word *sacred*...*to make holy*. We have to remember that the sacrifice of animals was a spiritual practice during a time when mankind had not yet evolved to where we are today. What if *sacrificing everything to get the full taste of being alive* is an invitation to see the sacred in everything so that we might experience life more fully? Another way to define sacrifice is to give up one thing in exchange for something more important, valuable, or worthy. What if *sacrificing everything to get the full taste of being alive* means giving up our negative tendencies, habits, and patterns in exchange for perceiving the Goodness and the blessings that are forever available?

Silence – 1 minute

Rev. Diana

This is one way to Act From the Heart...to look for the Goodness in life, to see the Divinity in all things...and to Act From That. Unity Founder Charles Fillmore said that life should be a "journey in jubilation", a constant experience of Celebration.

And Scottish Philosopher Thomas Carlyle was expressing a similar idea when he said,

Every day that is born into the world comes like a burst of music and rings the whole day through, and you make of it a dance, a dirge, or a life-march, as you will.

None of what I am saying is intended to grant license to living indulgently or superficially...it is just the opposite. To celebrate means to honor...true celebration

makes you an “involved participant” and a “conscious channel for the cosmic flow.”
(E. Butterworth)

Again from Butterworth,

In a celebration consciousness you can look around you and bless your family, friends, and co-workers as fellow travelers along the journey of life. As you make your way to or from work, if you can bless the sunshine or the clouds, the trees and grass and flowers, the friendly people in the part, you are rich. Without this sense of celebration, you are poor no matter what your net worth may be.²

Chris – Meditation

Meditation may be thought of as a quiet celebration of the Spirit within... When we truly contemplate the fact that the Infinite Presence – the All-That-Is – dwells within us and expresses as us, the only appropriate response is reverent, awe-filled, humble appreciation... Celebration is our grateful response...

We generally think of the Spirit within as being centered in the heart... When we follow our breath, it focuses our awareness in that area of our body... And it is there that we feel the Divine Presence... It is there that we evolve our relationship with God... It is there that Spirit is made known to us...

Because God dwells there, our heart is known as the seat of wisdom... Indeed, Spirit is often referred to as our Higher Wisdom, our Higher Self... When we remember to check in with our heart, our thoughts, words, and actions proceed from a purer, more compassionate place... We allow Spirit within to act freely through us...

I invite us now to gently touch the area of our heart, and focus our consciousness there... Invite Spirit to be revealed... to give us a sign... Open to God’s guidance... Let our thoughts and feelings come from that deeper place... Let our intentions and dreams flow forth from the Divine Temple of the Heart...

Our actions out of from our desires, dreams, and intentions... As we align these with our highest knowing, we are surrendering to the Divine Wisdom within us... we are letting Spirit guide us into a greater expression of Love... Beauty... Truth... Joy... Life ItSelf... As we move into the Sacred Silence, let us contemplate: “What can I do to center myself in my heart throughout each day?” ... “When I slip out of my heart centeredness, how gently can I bring mySelf back?” ... “What would acting from my heart look like?” ...

Silence – 3:00

With grateful hearts we allow the music to gently usher our awareness back into this time and place... In gratitude for this time of heart-centered contemplation, we give thanks for abundant opportunities to respond to Life as the Divine Spirit within... Thank you, God, for everything, and for everyOne...

I invite you to know with me now 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...

With our hearts open for the outflow of Spirit from us, we also allow the influx of inspiration as Rev. Diana continues her message this morning... Generous, deep listening is one way that we Act From the Heart...

Rev. Diana

We close our time together with a reading from Eric Butterworth's *Celebrate Yourself!*

Walt Whitman has been mercilessly abused for his beautiful declaration, "I celebrate myself!" Few persons have understood that this was a conscious commitment to let the universe celebrate itself through him. It is the celebration consciousness, not looking forward to things, but looking forward from an inward flame of life.

Take time to be still and listen to the beat of your heart and feel the throb of your pulse. The universe is celebrating itself in you as an instrument of life. It is singing itself into your soul, saying, "You are alive, you are whole, and you are being healed and renewed in a constant rhapsody of life." Celebrate yourself. Say yes to life, to health, to renewal. Sing your song of wholeness.

This is what work is, or should be – a celebration of yourself. Khalil Gibran says that if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, then you should quit your job and go to the temple and beg alms from those who work with joy. Get a new insight into the creative flow involved in labor. Celebrate yourself in your work.

This is what love is, a great celebration. It is the great heart of the universe streaming into and through you, and willingness to let it shine. When you really understand what love is, you find that by loving you ennoble yourself, you are in tune with the cosmic flow. Get a sense right now of the infinite heart of God flowing forth through you and out to embrace all the persons in your world. Celebrate yourself through love.

This is what joy is, a celebration of life. But let's be sure we understand the process of happiness, or else we might sometimes say, "I am unhappy because there is nothing in my life to celebrate." The thought is predominant with most persons that happiness comes from relationships and experiences. The fact is, the happy life is one that is in tune with the inner flow. When you are inwardly centered, you

are happy. And your happiness is not the effect of things or conditions, but more likely the cause of them. The poet sings: *All things respond to the call of rejoicing; all things gather where life is a song.*³

Begin your day, every day, in a celebration consciousness. Within you is the unborn possibility of limitless life, and yours is the joyous privilege of giving birth to it. Let the child of your great potential be born. Happy birthday! The universe is celebrating you. Celebrate yourself!⁴

This is what we spoke of in February, living a full-hearted, strong-hearted, open-hearted, and clear-hearted life... a whole-hearted life of integrity. This is what it means to Act From the Heart...all different language for how we can come into closer relationship with God and one another.

Let's join in Whole-Hearted Prayer, to anchor what we know to be True.

(Affirmative Prayer) God is...I Am...Here is what I know...

As we are left with a great fullness, we are moved to offer a new Vision for our world.

We envision a world where all beings Act From the Heart...a world that is peaceful, loving, abundant, and free...where people everywhere practice loving kindness and care for one another and for our planet. 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 within shows up as a world free of violence.

We feel and know a world without greed, where there is abundance and contentment in simply 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 openly 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 our Vision is taking form as we speak our Powerful Word. Prayer is powerful medicine.

We give thanks for this Beloved Community...for the support and friendship of like-minded, like-hearted people.

We give thanks for the Loving and Lawful Presence of God, forever moving through our lives.

We say Thank you, Holy One, for the many, many blessings of this and every day. May all beings know an endless flow of blessing.

By this act of prayer, we commit to Celebrating our lives, to Acting From the Heart...trusting that all needs are always met...practicing gratitude rather than complaint...sharing what we have with others...practicing forgiveness and seeking Beauty and Joy in accepting the Grace that flows freely through our lives.

With Absolute faith in the Power of my Word...(Release)

Musical Meditation – *Everything is Holy Now*, by Peter Mayer

Rev. Diana – Moving Into Celebration

Please hold this affirmation silently as I speak it into form... *There is Power in our Prayer...There is Power in our Vision...As we recognize the Beauty and Sanctity of all life, our world is born anew we... And so it is! Amen!*

I trust that as we move into Celebration today, we have a different perspective, a deeper understanding of what it means to celebrate. I pray that you hold your presence and participation here in a slightly different light than when you walked in...and that you find Joy in celebrating Life with one another often.

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 join in the Celebration as we pick up the tempo just a little bit...feel free to get up and dance.

Offertory Video – *Look for the Good* by Jason Mraz




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPq2Vo3yWIk>

Lucinda & Rev. Diana – Gratitude Prayer

Lucinda – Invitations

-  **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux’s Book Club. A New book beginning this Tuesday, March 15. *Made for Goodness* by Desmond and Mpho Tutu.**
-  **Connections: Book Club and Meditation Circle.** Please join Rev. Diana in this journey through *Heart Minded: How to Hold Yourself and Others in Love*, Thursdays, 12 - 2 pm.
-  **Thursdays, 3-5 pm – *Metaphysical Bible*** led by Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. No knowledge of the Bible is necessary. Drop-ins are welcome.
-  **St. Patrick’s Day Dance Party with Narayan and Janet**, Thursday, March 17th, 7-9 pm. Refreshments will be served. Suggested donation for Tickets: \$20. Get your ticket early. Seating is limited. Contact Rev. Diana for more information.
-  **Saturday, March 19th, from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm . *Praying in Color - Mala Beads*** with Ellie Thompson. \$20 suggested donation.

Mark your calendars now...

-  ***The Universe is Calling: (Are You Listening?) Wednesday Classes Continue, beginning March 23, from 2:00 – 5:00 pm. In-person or via Zoom!*** No need to have completed parts one or two of this series. All are welcome. Only two required texts: *The Universe is Calling: Opening to the Divine through Prayer*, by Eric Butterworth; and *Finding God in the Body: A Spiritual Path for the Modern West*, by Benjamin Riggs. This class will include more interactive experiences and guided meditation. **\$95 suggested donation in advance or \$10/class**
-  **Spring Tea Party and Easter Basket Raffle**, April 9th, 1-3 pm. Contact Ellie for more information.
-  **In case you were planning to participate...the *Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Parking Lot Sale*** has been cancelled due to a busy calendar full of more fun things to do than we have time for!

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 and Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service

¹ Eric Butterworth, from *Celebrate Yourself!*

² Ibid.

³ Christian D. Larson, from *Just Be Glad*

⁴ Eric Butterworth, from *Celebrate Yourself!*