

Plant With Your Harvest In Mind

Sunday, May 29, 2022 Conscious Conversation

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



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Opening Music –

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

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

Congregational Song: *Morning Has Broken*

Chris – Welcome & Global Connection

Good morning, I am Chris Johnson, Prayer Practitioner here at Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, and I would like to welcome you home... To our Spiritual Home, and home to your own Mystic Heart – where Divine Wisdom dwells within you.

If you are comfortable doing so, I invite you to gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths... Allow all that has come before this moment drop away and center your awareness in this moment. Here and now, we enter into the presence of our Beloved Community, and into the Divine Presence...

Now take a moment to expand your awareness to those around you... each one a spark of Light in the Global Web of Consciousness... Now spiral out to include family and friends... neighbors... all in our city... our county... our state... the world... Connected by Spirit, we celebrate our Oneness with all of humanity... with all of creation... We see all the animals... plants... soil... water... air... planets, stars, and galaxies shining with the same Divine Light that we are... One Spirit... One Life, expressing in infinite variety... I invite you now to remain grounded in the Truth of Who and Whose we are, as we join together in musical prayer.

Chant – *The Garden*, written by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Chris

OK, we're prayed up, connected, and ready for Conscious Conversation!


Let's consider the garden image. It has been used as a metaphor for spiritual growth since the creation myths in the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Master Rabbi Yeshua used it in several of his parables. So our opening question is:


What are some of the elements that make the garden metaphor such a powerful teaching tool?

 Seeds planted in creative medium

 Seeds create “after their kind” – we reap what we sow

 The Creative Process unfolds in time

 The “ground” must be prepared

 The garden must be tended

New Thought teaches that our life is created from the pattern of our thoughts and emotions. Spirit brings our beliefs into form and experience, just as Mother Nature brings forth plants from seeds.


What are the correspondences in the metaphor? What do the different elements stand for?

 Seeds = thoughts, beliefs, mental/emotional habits

 Soil = Law, Subjective Mind, Divine Substance

 Water & Food = Affirmative Prayer, Meditation, Mindfulness

 Plant = Our experience, our “demonstration”

 Weeds = Random, unexamined thoughts

As the story goes, Mullah Nasruddin planted all sorts of seeds in his garden and waited for the beautiful flowers to spring up and bloom. A few did come up. But alas, the garden was mostly filled with unsightly weeds. He went to see the Palace Gardener to ask him what to do about them. When Nasruddin had presented his problem, the Palace Gardener asked him, “Are you doing anything to keep weed seeds from getting into your garden?” The Mullah replied, “No, they just blow in on the wind – How can I stop them?” The Gardener asked, “Do you pull out the weeds regularly?” “Yes! Well, sometimes I forget for a week or two. What can I do?” The Palace Gardener replied, “I suggest you learn to love the weeds.”

So here’s the problem:

We are always planting “seeds” of thought, but are we planting what we want to harvest?

In his letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul of Tarsus advised, “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.” Or maybe it could have been translated, “Stay positive and joyful. You are always planting seeds of prayer, so be grateful!” In our garden, we are always planting seeds of some kind. If we are unconscious, we are planting weeds, if we’re conscious we plant flowers/fruits/vegetables.

So, what are some of the ways we unintentionally plant “weeds” in our mental/emotional garden?

 Negative Self-talk

 Habitual worry

 Careless conversation

 Junk food entertainment


 Sensational news

It's pretty easy to recognize the weeds in our physical garden.


How do we identify the weeds in our invisible garden?

Commitment to rigorous self-examination:

 What triggers us?

 Listen to our language

 What negative patterns do we have?


 What is my growing edge?

 How do I self-sabotage?

What gets in the way of identifying our weeds?

 Denials

 Rationalizations

 "Default settings" – our habitual reactions

Established habits are hard to break. Author Og Mandino tells us that the only way to break a habit is to replace it with another habit, hopefully a more beneficial one!

Once we recognize them, what are some ways we can get rid of the "weeds" that are already there?

Do your spiritual practices:

 Prayer plants "green manure" that chokes out the weeds

 Meditation allows deep reflection into our subconscious habits

 Visioning allows us to ask our Higher Self for guidance and courage

So it takes a deep commitment to rigorous self-examination, a willingness to look at and address our subconscious negativity. Because if we don't, it may continue running our experience in ways that don't serve us. And by rigorous, I don't mean beating ourselves up for our mistakes, but simply bringing them into view so we can know what we're dealing with.

This is where non-attachment comes in handy. If we can pull our ego out of the equation, we realize that, "Hey, I'm just another imperfect human being doing the best I can" – there's no need for self-judgment; besides, it doesn't help. In New Thought circles we often hear the phrase, "Don't *should* on yourself!" As Rev. Diana reminded us a couple of months ago, "Start Right Where You Are." Because that is the perfect place to start.

OK, time to break out the gardening tools.

Can you remember all six pillars of spirituality that we teach here at Mystic Heart?

 Prayer

 Meditation

 Sacred Study/Wisdom Literature

 Sacred Service

 Circulation

 Celebration/Gratitude

All of these practices are helpful in our self-examination:

Meditation is the process of observing our mind. Silent Meditation allows us to turn our attention inwards to “hear” what thoughts and feelings come up from our subconscious. The subconscious is kind of like an artesian well: when we become very still, our hidden stuff seems to bubble up into our awareness.

Prayer is our communion with Spirit – an expression of our relationship with the Divine, in whatever form that takes. Affirmative prayer is essentially positive self-talk. Used consistently, it can neutralize and even reverse our negative inner dialogue. Indeed the purpose of Affirmative Prayer is to deactivate the detrimental subconscious thoughts and memories that are creating our experience. In prayer, we may also ask for Divine Guidance which can be revealed by our Higher Self – Spirit within.

Sacred Study of wisdom literature – scriptures, philosophy, spiritual authors – is “grist for the mill.” It provides us with truth and wisdom to contemplate in our meditation, and often gives us language we can use in our affirmations.

“Losing ourselves” in **Sacred Service** takes our focus off of ourself and takes our mind off of our problems. As those of you who attended the retreat know, working together shoulder to shoulder with partners on the spiritual path creates a camaraderie where there is no room for negativity.

Circulation as a spiritual practice means sharing what we have generously. I don’t mean “give ‘til it hurts,” or giving from a sense of obligation, but the kind of generosity that is an expression of your love. Negativity cannot survive in the presence of true generosity.

Celebration is a natural expression of gratitude. You can’t be grateful and indulge in negative feelings at the same time. It’s like trying to go two directions at once!

OK, we have identified our weeds and are removing them. But remember, when you pull a weed, you have to plant something beneficial in its place, or more weeds will grow. Through prayer we have planted “green manure” to help keep the weeds out. Green manure? It’s not really manure at all – it’s a cover crop that enriches the soil by keeping weeds out, provides habitat for micro-organisms, and preventing erosion.

Is the garden finally done? What do we need to do now?

That's right – we need to tend the garden: water it, feed it, pull the few weeds that do show up. And – if we have planted the right seeds – we have a harvest of Peace, Joy, Abundance, and Love.

But this isn't just a summer garden – we are planting seeds all year long. Our life is a continual harvest from the seeds we have sown. And like in the garden, there is a time lag. To paraphrase Ernest Holmes, "There is no process *of* [creation], but there is generally a process *in* [creation]. Or, as one of his teachers, Thomas Troward put it:

“My mind is a center of Divine operation. The Divine operation is always for expansion and fuller expression, and this means the production of something beyond what has gone before, something entirely new, not included in the past experience, though proceeding out of it by an orderly sequence or growth.”

Although miraculous spontaneous healings are possible, creation usually unfolds just as in our physical garden – through gradual growth and development.

So, if the goal is to harvest a joyful, loving, abundant life, we must be ever mindful of our inner dialogue – the seeds we are planting. We have to keep our spiritual vision at the forefront of our consciousness, and steadfastly refuse to indulge in negativity. Any thought or feeling we have that doesn't align with our vision must be dropped. We don't resist it, we don't do battle with it, we simply remove our attention from it. Without our mental/emotional energy, negativity simply ceases to exist. It has no power of its own to hold it in place. It “vanishes into its native nothingness.” And the seeds we have planted in prayer have room to grow and flourish.

Rev. Diana – Meditation

In order to plant seeds of thought and intention with the harvest in mind, I find little ways to weave the six pillars of spirituality into my day. Maybe I light a candle and sit quietly, enjoying every sip of my morning coffee...allowing myself to be present...simply observing the activity of my mind without attachment or judgment.

Maybe I spend some time thinking about all of the things I have to be grateful for...my comfortable chair, my healthy body, the dog curled up on my lap, the people in my life. I give thanks to my Source, knowing that the Guidance required to live this beautiful once-in-a-lifetime day is already given.

Maybe I choose some inspirational reading to remind me of what really matters, and to open my heart and mind to new ideas...maybe I take a walk in nature to connect me to the Divine Mother. Or if time doesn't allow, maybe I listen to an inspirational podcast or sing along to some uplifting music on my way to work.

But this is only the beginning...what quality of attention do I offer as I walk through the day...how do I greet a stranger? How carefully do I listen to the person before me? Do I notice the birds in the sky? Do I laugh at my human experience when I catch myself taking everything very seriously? Do I remember that it is all here for my Good?

Silence – 3:00

Do I allow myself to be joyful...to celebrate the wins...to be consciously aware that every moment, every breath, is a gift? Am I generous to myself, taking care of my body's need for rest, nourishment, and activity...and my mind's need for peace, positive input, and creative expression? Do I care for my emotional body by allowing feelings to move through without restriction?

And do I close each day in gratitude for all that has been given...letting everything be exactly as it is...no judgment, no regret...resting fully and completely, replenished by deep and blessed sleep? I invite you to know with me that it is possible to live such a life. One small step at a time, each of us can choose such an embodied spirituality...we can choose to Plant Seeds With the Harvest in Mind.

Chris

Let's review. We are already praying without ceasing – what are we praying *for*? If we are not paying attention, our habitual thoughts and feelings determine what we will experience. But the good news is that we can change our mental/emotional habits and patterns. “That’s just the way I am” is no excuse any longer. We can sing a different song to ourselves. And dance a different dance.

And it takes practice, determination, and the willingness to change. We will need to practice our new thought habits until they become our dominant way of thinking. The bottom line is that if we **want** more we must **be** more.

We've all heard the saying that if we keep doing what we've always done, we'll keep getting what we've always gotten. But when our mental habits become more positive, our life does too. And, if we're not willing to put out the effort to change our mental/emotional habits, we should just learn to love the weeds!

Prayer/Love-Soaked World

Please join me in prayer as we allow our hearts, minds, bodies, and souls to absorb what we have spoken... As my words resonate in your heart, I invite you to accept them as the Truth for you...

Centered in our awareness of ourselves as instruments of the One Creator, we focus on our deep desire to establish a Love-Soaked World... A world characterized by peace, love, generosity, compassion, and freedom... A world in which poverty, hunger, homelessness, violence, fear, and greed are things of the past... Where all have access to medical care, education, comfort, and creative expression... A world where healthy relationships, dignified work, and a sense of belonging are universal...

As we live and act from our highest intentions, we create a world where all people, animals, plants, and Mother Earth herself are valued as Sacred Creation... A world in which God's unlimited abundance is allowed to flow freely to all... Where all are recognized as deserving of all the blessings Life has to offer and are free to receive them gratefully.

God is a Spirit... No feet... no hands... no hearts but ours... As we work together to be the change we wish to see in the world, there is no reason we cannot have such a

world... Knowing that nothing can stop a Divine Idea whose time has come, we come together in consciousness, in prayer, and in service to the creation of Heaven on Earth...

As we speak our Powerful Word of creation, we affirm that our Vision is taking form here and now. We accept it... we release it... we let it be so... And so it is... Amen.

Music: *Get Together*, written by Jesse Colin Young

Affirmation for the Offering

This is the time when we invite you to join in the celebration of the work that we do in the world by sharing of your financial Good, if you so choose. If you are attending online, you can go to mysticheart.org to use our Donate Button or to find our Post Office Box address, if you prefer to mail a check.

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. Please let me know if you would like more information about this program.

Please join me in truly feeling the meaning of our affirmation for our offering:


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 offer this gift freely, in the spirit of Love... blessing and 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!

Here's a little tune about intention, attention, and presence: it's called ***Must Be Present to Win***.

Offertory Music – *Must Be Present to Win*, written by Chris Johnson

Lucinda – Blessing and Gratitude for the Offering

Closing Songs

 ***A Soul's Blessing***, written by Chris Johnson

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