

Breathe In, Breathe Out

Sunday, August 14, 2022



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

Taizé

A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

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

Feeling the shared vibration that lingers after we have joined our voices, we take a moment to acknowledge our Oneness with Spirit, with one another, and with our Global Community...we envision a web of Consciousness that surrounds, infuses, and connects all that is...I Am, you Are, a radiant point of Light in that web...noticing that every human shines with that same Light...that every creature...every plant...every rock and grain of sand...the soil...the water...all alive with Spirit's Light. We know that the Light of Consciousness extends far beyond our planet, into the heavenly bodies...and on out into the cosmos...hold that Vision, one Infinite Light...and take a moment to feel how the Light that *you* are is enmeshed with the Light that *I AM*...with the Light of all beings...with all of creation.

Sensing our oneness, we acknowledge our responsibility to one another as human family, and as caretakers of our beautiful and life-giving planet. (Pause)

Centered in our Oneness, we turn now to this month's theme, ***Six Paths to Deeper Connection*** and we shift our attention to the title for this morning's Gatherings, ***Breathe In, Breathe Out***. We may think back to last week and remember the ***Six Pillars of a Spiritual Life*** that Lucinda spoke about...Meditation, Affirmative Prayer, Sacred Study, Sacred Service, Circulation, and Celebration.

Breathe In, Breathe Out...establishing a peaceful rhythm, a healthy rhythm, an easy pace that allows the breath to flow according to a relaxed body's needs...and letting each breath fill your body with life.

The in-breath and the out-breath...of the ***Six Pillars***, or the ***Six Paths to Deeper Connection***, we might consider Prayer and Meditation to be like the in-breath and the

out-breath of the Spiritual Life. We might think of Prayer as a time to talk to God; to affirm the Good in our lives; to seek the strength to move through a challenging situation; to admit mistakes; or to offer forgiveness. Prayer might be compared to the in-breath, in that it seeks Guidance and Support.

And Meditation can serve as a time to allow things to be as they are...to let go of our thoughts, desires, and expectations...to surrender to what is, and to simply be. The release we feel during meditation might be compared to the out-breath of our Spiritual Journey.

Or maybe for you, it is just the opposite...Meditation might be a time to actively contemplate, to use affirmation, or to express gratitude for the many blessings in your life...***the in-breath***. And prayer might be a time of complete stillness...a time of deep listening for the Still Small Voice that is forever available...a time of deep, silent communion...***the out-breath***.

However we relate to prayer and meditation, they are the foundation of a Spiritual Life...they offer us the opportunity to connect with our Highest Wisdom...they provide an opportunity to put everything else aside so that we might come to find a deeper connection to ourselves, to our world, and to our God...to come to know Who and Whose we are...

Musical Meditation – *Breathe*, by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana

What is prayer? Some might say that it is the lifting up of heart and mind to God. Brother David Steindl-Rast shares that “It is not saying prayers; it is not even an action doing this or doing that. It is an attitude, an attitude of lifting up heart and mind to God. So, start the other way around and ask, “What lifts up your heart and mind? What gives you a lift?” That will be one of the ways you pray. And of meditation, he says that whatever form you choose, “you must have an open, child-like surrender and a receptive heart.” Only then can prayer and meditation transform you. (Pause)

In the Hindu tradition, prayer and meditation are acts of devotion that praise the one supreme God, or Brahman.

For a Buddhist, the purpose of prayer and meditation is to free the mind from attachment in order that one might reach enlightenment.

A Muslim uses prayer and meditation to create a sense of unity with fellow beings, to find comfort and peace, and to seek Guidance from Allah.

As a Christian, one uses prayer and meditation to come into closer relationship with God.

In Judaism, prayer and meditation help build a sense of connection to the past and to other beings; they are acts of celebration and help to develop a sense of the sacred.

The Practitioner of New Thought/Ancient Wisdom uses prayer and meditation to seek Communion with God, so that one might cleanse and perfect consciousness so that Wholeness may be revealed in his life.

As a Universalist Franciscan, Fr. Richard Rohr offers another view to consider. He says that we do not know how to pray...there is an in-dwelling presence that prays in us, and through us, and AS us. That is why the Master Teacher Jesus could say, "Ask and it shall be given to you...knock and the door shall be open"...in other words, whatever you pray for will be answered... "because it's not really you praying. It's the Spirit praying in you."

SILENCE – 1 minute

Chris – Meditation

This morning I would like our meditation to take the form of Affirmative Prayer... the form of prayer developed by Ernest Holmes... It consists of five steps: Acknowledgement of Spirit as All That Is... Identification of ourSelf as One with that Spirit... Affirming our desire as being fulfilled NOW... Expressing our Gratitude... and releasing our prayer completely...

We recognize that all of creation is simply God expressing in an infinite variety of form and experience... The dynamic Universe is the Play of Divine Consciousness... Every person, animal, landform, body of water, or incident has Divine Spirit as its essence... There is no place we could go where God is not fully present...

That means that you and I are also emanations of God... Made in the Image and Likeness of the Creator, the Word we speak in Prayer creates in the same manner... The Infinite Wisdom and Power of Spirit are fully available to us here and now... Centered in our Oneness with God, we speak our word now, fully expecting our desired outcome...

The purpose of this prayer is to establish ourselves in a regular routine of Spiritual Practice... Knowing that we are here because of our desire for a greater connection with God, we set our intention to deepen our practice... We make a commitment here and now to do whatever it takes to grow in Spirit... We are determined... Our commitment is irrevocable...

We set aside time each day for the Practice of the Presence of God... This is our Divine Appointment, and must not be missed... Every day we pray in our own unique way... we meditate using the method that works best for us... we read mystical literature or scripture... we love and serve one another... we share our resources... and we celebrate in gratitude for the Divine Gifts we have been given... As we enter the Sacred Silence, imagine your revitalized practice... How does it look? ... How does it feel? ...

Silence – 3:00

With profound gratitude we receive the blessings of this prayerful time in the Presence of the God and our Spiritual Family... We accept the Divine Guidance that leads us

tirelessly into our highest expression of Life, Love, Peace, Joy, Beauty, and Truth... Thank you, God, for everyone and everything...

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...

Returning now to Rev. Diana's message, we open to greater inspiration... to greater encouragement... to deeper consciousness... Knowing that all we have to do is Breathe In and Breathe Out... Amen...

Rev. Diana

Read "Honoring Practice" from *Prayers of Honoring Voice* by Pixie Lighthouse.

Let's close together by joining our hearts in prayer.

There is only one Source, one Life, one Heart, one Divine Intelligence. As there is only One, I Am a perfect expression of Divinity Itself. As I allow this Truth to move through me, permeating every aspect of my being, I Am free. I Am Whole. I Am exactly who and what I'm meant to be. And so, I embody this Truth...I live my life from my Highest Self...trusting and accepting that I Am already perfect...and expressing that perfection as I grow and evolve to become ever more mySelf. I Am so grateful...And so it is. Amen!

Rev. Diana – Affirmation for the Offering

It is time for us to close our Taizé Meditation. As we do, we offer the opportunity for you to share of your financial good in support of the work we do should you choose to do so. If you're joining us online, you can find a Donate Button and our mailing address at mysticheart.org. And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

Offertory Music – *Thank You God*, by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Closing Song – A Soul's Blessing



Conscious Conversation

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

Rev. Diana – Good morning/Welcome

We begin our Conscious Conversation this morning by acknowledging our oneness, with all that is, and by recognizing the Power of that Unity. Take a moment to take a nice deep breath in...hold it...and let it go. As we take another breath, let's stand up and use the breath to gather our creative juices...to feel the very Power of Creation moving through your...know that this is where a new story for our world is born. Hold with me the Vision of a **Love-Soaked World**, where peace, joy, abundance, justice, and freedom are the living principles that guide our lives...where all humans practice loving kindness and care for our planet as the Sacred Home that she is.

We are creating 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 all beings are valued for their inherent Goodness and Light...where the Peace we cultivate within shows up as a world free of hatred or violence.

We are creating a world that knows no greed, where there is abundance in simply having *enough*...where every being deserves and receives all that is needed for a full, rich, and contented life.

In this more conscious world, every member of the human family serves as a vessel through which God's blessings flow, and so **there is no reason we cannot have such a world**. We call it forth, knowing that it is taking form, right here and now, as we hold and speak our Powerful Vision. And so it is! Amen!

One of the powerful tools we have at our disposal when we set out to create anything new is **Conscious Conversation**.

What are some of the characteristics of a Conscious Conversation?

...deep listening, both within and without

...knowing the power of words to build up or tear down, we use them carefully

...THINK, then speak...True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind

...remember that as we listen, speak, and act in the world, we are engaging in creation whether we know it or not.

This morning our topic has been **Breathe In, Breathe Out**, and in our Taizé Meditation we spent time contemplating the idea that Prayer and Meditation might be compared to the in-breath and out-breath of a Spiritual Life. If you missed it, you can check it out on our website.

But I'd like to begin the Conversation by asking...

What is prayer? (communication – speaking and listening - with God) **What forms are you aware of?** (supplication, blessing, communion, thanksgiving, affirmation)

And what is meditation?(observation of self)

What forms do you practice?(self-inquiry, mindfulness, contemplation, no problem/no preference)

How are they similar, and how are they different?

So why might we say that prayer and meditation are the in-breath and out-breath of a Spiritual Life?

One offers the opportunity to get to know our human self better...the physical, mental, and emotional parts of ourselves. The other gives us the opportunity to connect with a Higher Power by whatever name we give it...to build a personal relationship with Source...to commune with our Highest Wisdom, our Deeper Knowing. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. We cannot grow and evolve gracefully if we by-pass any of these aspects of ourselves.

Do you know what Spiritual Bypass is?

...addressing the physical, psychological, and emotional aspects becomes too much work, or too painful, so we just ‘think happy thoughts’ instead

...we try to bypass the need to change habit patterns, to forgive ourselves and others, to do the human work required to become psychologically, emotionally mature adults

...we attempt to bypass the shadow or unconscious aspects instead of bringing them into the light doing the work to integrate them

Fr. Richard Rohr speaks of the Spiritual Life as happening in four distinct stages. They are: **Cleaning Up, Growing Up, Waking Up, and Showing Up.**

Cleaning Up refers to coming into right relationship with your physical body, and with the material world. This means learning to take good care of what you eat, how much exercise you get, how well you take care of your physical surroundings...and to do what is appropriate in the world...things like not stealing, following laws, that sort of thing.

Growing Up deals with learning what it means to be human and becoming a healthy human being, accepting yourself and others and treating all with respect, generosity, and compassion.

Waking Up means overcoming your sense of separation from God/others.

Showing Up is about stepping out of *me* and *mine* and being of service to others.

Meditation is one of the most effective tools we can use to make sure we are **Cleaning Up** and **Growing Up**, or becoming physically, mentally, and emotionally *healthy and mature adults*.

And **Prayer** is one of the most powerful tools we can access in **Waking Up** or overcoming our sense of separation.

Can you imagine how much closer we will be to living in a **Love-Soaked World** when every human gets as far as **Cleaning Up** and **Growing Up**? And what a huge leap we will make for the evolution of mankind and the entire planet when a large enough group of us begin the process of **Waking Up**!

It is happening...you know that, right? You do believe it, don't you? Despite appearances in the world, the process of evolution that is forever unfolding says that it **must**. This is the meaning of the idea that all things are ultimately turned to Good, or that God uses all things for Good...whatever language you prefer.

With our intellectual and intuitive powers, we find ourselves in the unique position of being able to help steer the course of Evolution. I have deep faith in humanity...I have deep faith in Life...I have deep faith in the One Loving and Lawful Presence that is the Source, the Essence, the Substance, and the Process guiding all of creation.

I know that I Am a perfect and intentional expression of that One Life. I know the same is true for every being.

It is no accident that humans are here on earth...given the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual gifts to fulfill our purpose.

And so we commit to **Clean Up**, to **Grow Up**, and to **Wake Up** so that we can **Show Up**.

We **Breathe In**, we **Breathe Out**, we let it be, we let it be done. And so it is! Amen!

How was that? Is there anything that wants to be spoken at this time?

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. You can find more information on our website.

Rev. Diana – Affirmation for the Offering

As we move into this time of giving, hold these words close to your heart 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 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!


Offertory Music- *Everyday People*, by Playing for Change; written by Sylvester "Sly" Stewart <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-g4UWvcZn5U>


Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering, Invitations


 **Wednesdays 3:00-5:00 pm. *The Power of Myth: A Video Discussion Gathering*** with Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. Drop-ins welcome!

Mark your calendars now...

 **Thursday, September 8th, 3 – 5 pm, *Metaphysical Bible Study*** with Prayer Practitioner, Chris Johnson. BYOB...bring your own Bible! Drop-ins welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

 **Saturday, September 10th, 10 am – 1 pm-ish: *Praying in Color...Prayers in the Wind*** with Ellie Thompson. Make a personalized set of prayer flags. Lunch will be included. Suggested donation is \$20. Contact Ellie ahead of time to make your reservation.

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux's Book Club will be starting up again on Sept 13th.** He will begin a light-hearted, thought-provoking, and moving novel, *Breakfast With Buddha* by Roland Merullo. Drop-ins welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

 **Wednesday, September 14th – November 30th from 2:00 – 5:00 pm,** Rev. Diana will be offering *Divine Audacity*, the first of her *Conscious Evolution Series*. This class will be offered in-person and on Zoom and is appropriate for anyone wanting to grow! Suggested donation: \$95/or \$10 per class. Contact Rev. Diana to register.

 **Fall Church Family Campout at Sue-Meg State Park. September 24th – 27th, 2022. Children's program with Traci included.** As always, more details are in your bulletin and on our website.

Prayer Invitation

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