

# Opening to Greater Good

Sunday, August 21, 2022

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Sherri Dotter, RScP,  
and Chris Johnson, RScP.

Music performed by Gary French, Diana Johnson,  
and Chris Johnson.



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

*Taizé*

## Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Sherri – 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...envisioning a web of Consciousness that surrounds and infuses our planet...and accepting that I Am, you Are, a radiant point of Light in that web...noticing that every human shines with the Light of Spirit...that every creature...every plant...every rock and grain of sand...the soil...the water...are all alive with the Divine Spark...extending far beyond our planet into the cosmos...there are no boundaries, no separation...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 our human family, to all life forms, and to our beautiful planet which sustains us all.

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, ***Opening to Greater Good***. We may think back to last week and remember that ***Prayer*** and ***Meditation*** can be compared to the Breathing In and Breathing Out of the Spiritual Life. Of the Six Pillars, they might be seen as the two most foundational Practices because they support us in knowing and accepting both our humanity and our Divinity.

This morning, our contemplations will be grounded in ***Circulation*** and ***Sacred Service***. Both of these Practices can be used as tools for ***Opening to Greater Good***. There is a Creative Process of Circulation forever at work...it is the cycle of giving and receiving.

We know it in the material realm as the circulation of carbon, oxygen, and water which supports life on earth. We experience it in the circulation of blood through our veins as the life of our bodies is sustained.

Because we can witness the effects of Circulation in our physical world, we know that it must also be functioning in the mental and spiritual realms as well; for they are all part of One Life. The Law of Circulation is at work, bringing circumstances and experiences according to our thoughts, our intentions and motivations, and our emotional states.

Humanity has been exploring this Process since ancient times. In the Hebrew Old Testament's book of Proverbs, we read: "Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity; the rod of his anger will fail." In other words, anyone who approaches life from an unbalanced state, having lost sight of his Spiritual Nature, will experience some form of distress.

In the Christian New Testament's book of Galatians, it was written by Paul: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." In today's language, "Don't fool yourself. Universal Law cannot be disregarded. The Law of Correspondence tells us that we always get back what we send forth." We do not always get what we want, or even what we give our attention to...we receive according to who we ARE...how we live. We set the cycle of giving and receiving in motion by who and what we offer the world.

Hinduism and Buddhism have comparable teachings. Basically, Karma, or Cause and Effect, says that what we experience depends on our actions in the world, and in past lives.

The Creative Process of Circulation is part of the Great Mystery...the Infinite Intelligence that guides the workings of the Universe. We cannot ever know how or why it works the way it does. But it does behoove us to accept that it is forever at work in our lives, and to learn to use it consciously.

## **SILENCE – 1 Minute**

### **Rev. Diana**

Circulation can be consciously Practiced in a number of ways. We might give of our material Good in support of a Cause or Mission that we feel is important. We might offer financial support to a group or organization that is doing work in the world that we deem valuable. We might give of our time, our skills, or our talents in the same supportive way.

There is a subtle but powerful shift in Consciousness between making a donation and Practicing Circulation. When I make a donation, I am giving TO the Source of *my* Good, my *community's* Good, or Good in the *world*, with the expectation that those who are receiving my gift will use it to make the world a better place. This in and of itself is an admirable act.

But if I want to transform my act of financial giving into a Spiritual Practice, I consciously give AS Source...as the Infinite Abundance of the Universe, offering of Itself for the Good of All, with no need for expectation because there is a deep knowing, that Good is always unfolding...that Source giving OF itself, TO itself, can only serve to uplift all of Creation.

The same shift in consciousness is present when we transform our volunteer time into Sacred Service. It is always a precious gift when we give of our time, skill, and talent. But when we lift our consciousness to a higher intention, that of serving God, serving the Whole, serving the Highest Expression of Divinity through our actions, that is Sacred Service. As we engage in this beautiful Practice, we allow Spirit to move through us...it is the Father within that does the work...and it is the very presence of Spirit in form that receives and appreciates our efforts.

We start the cycle in motion by our giving. As we make the conscious choice to engage in Circulation or Sacred Service, we let go of expectations. We do not give in order to get. We do not give in exchange for what we have been given. We give for the sheer Joy of giving. We acknowledge that it is not only what we give that returns to us; but even more, it is the motivation, intention, or Spirit of the giving that returns to us, becoming our experience.

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

Nearly all faith paths practice some form of Circulation and Sacred Service... All promote social justice as service to God... Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." ... or more succinctly, "Feed my sheep." ... We are One in the Spirit... Serving one another, we serve God...

The Prophet Muhammad said, "What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the wrongs of the injured." ... and, "Feed the hungry, Visit the sick, Set free captives."... And Mother Teresa said, "Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."

Like Sacred Service, giving of one's financial substance initiates the cycle of giving and receiving... When we support our Beloved Community or give to a worthy charity, we are contributing to the creation of a Love-Soaked World – Heaven on Earth... and that Love returns to us in untold ways... "...shaken together and running over..."

Anne Frank wrote, "No one has ever become poor by giving." ... And Maya Angelou, "When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." ... Stephen Covey said, "The great apparent dichotomy is that the more we give, the more we get." ... The Dalai Lama is more compelling: "You have to start giving first and expect absolutely nothing."

Kahlil Gibran reminds us, "You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." ... We are here to give of ourselves to one another... We are all aspects of One Spirit – so "Who's giving what to whom?"<sup>1</sup>... Selfless Service and Giving bring us back into Unity with God and HumanKind... As we

search our hearts in the Sacred Silence, let us remember why we're here... what it truly means to love one another... how we may become the change we wish to see...

### **Silence – 3:00**

As we allow the music to bring our awareness back to this time and place, we center ourselves in gratitude for these insights... Grateful for this time of communion with Spirit and one another, we receive and accept these blessings now... The Love-Soaked World is being birthed through us now... 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...

As Rev. Diana resumes this morning's meditation, we welcome inspiration with open hearts and minds... knowing that by our Sacred Service and Giving, we are indeed Opening to a Greater Good...

### **Rev. Diana**

The Universal or Spiritual Law of Circulation is very simple. When I give of my time, skill, talent, or treasure with the expectation of receiving something in return...whether money, gifts, or simply recognition...I attract others who do the same...give to me with the expectation of some return. When I give freely, in the spirit of Love...as an act of faith in the Goodness of Life...with no strings attached, and no need to see some direct benefit in my personal life, I attract others who find Joy and fulfillment in doing the same.

**Read “Honoring Worth”, *Prayers of Honoring Voice* by Pixie Lighthouse.**

### **Continuing with our deep knowing...**

There is only the One...one Source, one Life, one Heart, one Divine Intelligence...and I Am, you are, a perfect, intentional, and irreplaceable expression of the One. As I allow this Truth to infuse every aspect of my being, I Am at Peace. I know that who and what I Am is more than enough. I live my life in deep faith that my unique qualities and gifts are here on purpose. I am ready to offer them forth in ways that serve the Highest Expression of Life...my life, the lives of family and friends, and ultimately the lives of my global community. It can only be this way because there's only one of us here. I willingly express myself in all of my Radiance as I grow and evolve to become ever more mySelf. I Am so grateful...And so it is. Amen!

**Musical Meditation – *Holy, Holy, Holy* – music by Diana Johnson, text by Ernest Holmes**

### **Rev. Diana – 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***, written by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

**Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering/Announce Coffee, start of next half**

We'll be donating our lunch donations to ***Farmer's Footprint***, a coalition of farmers, education, doctors, scientists, and business leaders aiming to expose the human and environmental impacts of chemical farming and offer a path forward through regenerative agricultural practices.

**Closing Song – *A Soul's Blessing***, written by Chris Johnson

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## *Conscious Conversation*

**Opening to Greater Good...**

**Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

**Sherri – Opening Prayer**

**Opening Music**

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

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

 ***Chant – Spirit, Run My Life***, written by Rev. Andy Anderson

**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 embody the very Power of Creation...to connect with Divine Intelligence...to know that this is where a new story for our world is being written. Hold with me the Vision of a ***Love-Soaked World***, where Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, 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 and conscientious 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. Moving forward, we align our actions to support and nurture its Graceful unfolding. We call it Good...we let it be. 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***. Last week we talked about what a Conscious Conversation looks like. We agreed that it involves deep listening in all directions; that it requires us to be responsible for our words, that they might build up rather than tear down; it requires us to THINK, then speak...True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind; and to remember that the very act of having a conversation means we are engaging in creation, whether we know it or not.

This morning our topic has been ***Opening to Greater Good***, and in our Taizé Meditation we spent time contemplating the idea that ***Circulation*** and ***Sacred Service*** are two Spiritual Practices that set the cycle of giving and receiving in motion. If you missed it, you can check it out on our website.

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

**Where can we witness circulation happening in Nature?** (water cycle, carbon cycle, blood moving through our veins)

**Are there other examples of circulation in the material world?** (I give my time to help someone, and they return the favor; I open the door for someone, and the next person opens the door for me)

**What about examples of circulation in the mental, unobservable realm?**

(I bring a smile and relaxed attitude into a meeting and others are put at ease, which adds to the openness and enjoyment of the group)

**What is the Spiritual Practice of Circulation?**(giving money in support of a Cause or Vision; giving AS Source rather than giving TO Source; offering our Sacred Service is a form of Practicing Circulation)

**What are some of the effects we might see in our lives when we practice Circulation?** (We might increase Good/support in our own lives.)

**Are there potential pitfalls for someone offering financial support to a particular cause or vision?** (Becoming attached to outcomes, giving in order to get, a gift given with strings attached is not a gift.)

**Now let's talk about the Spiritual Practice that we call Sacred Service. What is Sacred Service?** (A form of circulation in which we offer our time, skill, or talent to serving God by serving a Cause, a Vision, another person, or organization)

Spiritual Teacher Guar Gopal Das offers this simple Truth: (paraphrased) We can analyze, theorize, talk, read, or watch videos about Sacred Service, or observe others as they engage in the Practice. But there is no substitute for being in Service. The only way to expand our understanding of Sacred Service is to serve. Once we start, even in the smallest of ways, the positive feeling that we feel in our soul impels us to do more.

**What are the potential pitfalls for someone offering service to a particular cause, vision, person, or organization?** (Becoming attached to outcomes, giving in order to get...even recognition or kudos...a gift not given freely and lovingly is not a gift.)

**Last week we talked about the four distinct stages of the Spiritual Journey as defined by Fr. Richard Rohr. Anyone remember what they are?** (Cleaning Up, Growing Up, Waking Up, and Showing Up)

**What is *Cleaning Up*?** (coming into right relationship with your physical body, and with the material world)

**What is *Growing Up*?** (becoming a psychologically and emotionally healthy and mature human being)

**What is *Waking Up*?** (overcoming your sense of separation from God/others)

**What is *Showing Up*?** (looking beyond *me* and *mine*)

We said that **Meditation** is one of the most effective tools we can use to make sure we are ***Cleaning Up*** and ***Growing Up*** and **Prayer** is one of the most powerful tools we can access in ***Waking Up***, or overcoming our sense of separation.

**How does the Practice of Circulation, either through financial support or Sacred Service fit into Fr. Rohr's stages?** (It is likely that we have done a lot of our ***Cleaning Up*** and ***Growing Up*** before consciously deciding to Practice Circulation. However, this Practice can lend Power to the process of if there is still work to be done; these Practices serve as Powerful tools as we pursue the path of ***Waking Up***; and either one is a Powerful way of ***Showing Up***)

You know it's happening, right? As one global family, we are ***Cleaning Up, Growing Up, Waking Up, and Showing Up***. Let's anchor that in Affirmative Prayer.

There is only one Thing going on here, and that is the perfect and intentional expression of Life. I Am That! And so are you. And so is everyone, and everything, no matter how it may seem.

It is no accident that humans are here on earth...given the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual gifts to fulfill our purpose. We are ***Cleaning Up, Growing Up, Waking Up*** and ***Showing Up*** in Sacred Service to Life.

Recalling the words of Lao Tzu, “If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.” Right here and now, we are ***Opening to Greater Good*** as we become the peace we wish to see in the world. As we give, serve, and share what we have and who we are, we are becoming instruments of kindness, compassion, and generosity in the world. We let it be, we let it be done. And so it is! Amen!

**Music – *Wholly Holy Way***, written by Ricki Byars

**Rev. Diana**

We’ll be contributing our Lunch Donations to ***Farmers’ Footprint***, a coalition of farmers, education, doctors, scientists, and business leaders aiming to expose the human and environmental impacts of chemical farming and offer a path forward through regenerative agricultural practices.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfuGgZz-9z0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnMRdLVfaqQ&t=15s>

<https://farmersfootprint.us/>

**Rev. Diana – Affirmation 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. You can find more information on our website.

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 – *What’s Your Gospel Gonna’ Be***, written by Gary Lynn Floyd and Jami Lula





## Sherri – Blessing for the Offering


## Sherri – 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 8<sup>th</sup>, 3 – 5 pm, Metaphysical Bible Study reconvenes** with Prayer Practitioner, Chris Johnson. Drop-ins welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

 **Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 13<sup>th</sup>.** 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 14<sup>th</sup> – November 30<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Children's program with Traci included.**

We need 8 more paid adults or 3-4 families with children to sign up with payment in full by September 4<sup>th</sup> in order to cover the costs of the campsite and food. Please get the word out to family and friends. All are welcome!

As always, more details are in your bulletin and on our website.

## Prayer Invitation

## Closing Songs

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

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<sup>1</sup> Eddie Watkins, *When You Give*, from his CD *The Answer*