

*The More Things Change,
The More They Stay The Same...*

Sunday, September 18, 2022

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



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

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

Chant – *Beloved*, written by Chris Johnson

Rev. Diana

We begin our meditative journey this morning by closing our eyes and settling into this space...letting go of all that has come before this moment, and allowing ourselves to be held...taking a deep breath in, and letting it go...taking a moment to sense and realize our Oneness with the Global Community...envisioning a web of Consciousness surrounding and infusing our planet...seeing and feeling ourselves to be a radiant point of Light in that web...knowing that every human is an expression of that same Light...every creature, every plant, every rock and grain of sand, shining with the Light of Spirit...the soil...the water...the clouds and wind...the heavenly bodies...all enlivened by the Divine Spark...my Light enmeshed with yours...There is only One.

Sensing our oneness, we acknowledge our role as stewards...we commit to caring for one another...for all life forms...for the planet that sustains us all.

Rooted in our Oneness, we center our hearts in this month's theme, ***Beloved Community*** and we acknowledge the paradox in this morning's topic...***The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same.***

We say that the only sure thing in life is change. We might ask ourselves...is that true? When we look at the material world, at the physical realm, at our bodies, our statement seems accurate. And we spend so much time engaging with the relative aspects of our lives, that we sometimes forget that there is more to the story.

Looking below the surface of the physical world, beyond that which can be seen and measured, the Great Mystery is always present...always at work.

SILENCE – 1 minute

We drop a solid object, and it falls to the ground. Not sometimes, but always. Gravity is a constant. And the Power and Intelligence that wills gravity into being never wavers.

For every action in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction. Not sometimes, but always. And the Cause behind this Truth is infallible.

When I, as conscious human, become interested in a particular situation, circumstance, or idea, I tend to bring it into my experience. Where attention goes, energy flows. The Creative Force that brings our experience into being is ceaseless.

When I, as self-reflective being, place my faith in something...when I live by and from that faith...embody that faith...the object of my faith is bound to become my experience. The Divine Life back of all things is unchanging.

There is a Light, a Spark of Native Intelligence, a Christ Consciousness, that lives in, through and AS me. It shares with me Its Power and Presence, Its Peace and Harmony, Its Joy, Beauty, Love, and Light. It offers me access to Its Wisdom and Guidance, Its Abundance, Wholeness, and Absolute Freedom. All that is asked is that I remember...that I consciously place my faith in Its Infinite Potential and invite the qualities of Spirit to express by means of me.

The teachings of the Rabbi Jesus are clear... "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do." (John 14:12) "It shall be done to you according to your faith." (Matthew 9:29)

He was not speaking only of himself...he was inviting us to follow his example...to seek Communion with that which is unchanging, eternal...the Christ within...and with deep faith, live our lives from that.

Musical Meditation – *Christ in Me, Christ in You*, by Gary Lynn Floyd

Rev. Diana

This is our invitation; this is our challenge. Amidst the apparently changing conditions in our lives and in the world, we are to anchor ourselves in the Infinite, Invisible, and Eternal Mystery that is our True Nature. We are to practice *Divine Audacity*.

Unity Minister Linda Martella Whitsett shares her insight:

Read from pages 3-5 of *Divine Audacity*

SILENCE – 1 minute

Chris – Guided Meditation

In Affirmative Prayer we acknowledge that there is only One... One Life, One Truth, One Love, One Power, One Source... That One is Absolute... never born... never dying... unchanging... And yet that One expresses in an infinite variety of forms... As these forms interact in space and time, the forms *do* change... but their spiritual essence does not...

Each of us is an expression of Divinity... Our essence *is* that One Spirit... eternal and indestructible... the Still Point of our Being... In our Spiritual Practices we turn our focus

inward to remember that Truth... to re-align our consciousness of Unity with God and all of Creation... And there we find that part of us that never changes... our Eternal Self...

Consistently centering ourSelf in this awareness allows us to access our Divine Gifts of Love, Wisdom, Joy, Peace, Power, and Healing... As conditions change around us, we can remain serene... peaceful... because we know that "This too shall pass..." Anchored firmly in Spirit, we are empowered to respond to changes productively...

Our Beloved Community is a form expressing in the field of time, therefore it changes... But the *principles* upon which it is founded are Eternal Truths... As Mystic Heart grows and evolves, our shared Spiritual Practice becomes keeping and perfecting our shared Vision... and serving and supporting one another in our growth and evolution...

As we commune together in the Sacred Silence, let us center our awareness on that Still Point within us... that aspect of our being that is birthless, deathless, and changeless... God within us... From that consciousness, let us contemplate the values we share in our Beloved Community, and see how they align with our own Inner Wisdom... Let us examine them in the Light of our deepest understanding of Divine Truth... We may ask, "Am I bringing my Best Self into my interactions with others? ... with the Earth? ... with mySelf?..."

Silence – 3:00

As the music brings our awareness back to the here and now, we give thanks for this blessed time of Communion with Spirit and with our Companions in Faith... Grateful for the opportunity to worship with like-minded individualizations of Divine Love, we bask in the support of our Beloved Community... 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 Spiritual Family... 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 continues her inspirational message this morning, we take it into our heart of hearts... We are transformed into more of who we truly are... With an Inner Knowing that The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same...

Rev. Diana

Practicing *Divine Audacity* anchors us to that which is eternal, unchanging. It centers us in our Goodness, in our Authority and Power, our Openness and Receptiveness, and gives us the Courage to reach out for connection in ***Beloved Community***.

In ***Beloved Community***, we find **safe space**. "Safe space is sometimes construed as being free from anything that one might find uncomfortable; free from anything that might trigger negative emotions or fear." (Lockard, *Creating the Beloved Community*) This is not what I mean by **safe space**.

"When seen from a spiritual perspective, **safe space** is a place where you can experience the challenges and dangers of deep and profound spiritual and psychological

transformation while surrounded by a supportive environment.” (Lockard, *Creating the Beloved Community*) You can be your authentic self, trusting that who you are and what you bring is valuable and valued. You are enveloped in warmth and compassion as you make the journey of becoming a more aware and awakened version of yourself.

In order that Mystic Heart serve as a **Beloved Community**, a safe space for any who are drawn to be here, we have made some Community Agreements. We listen, taking each one into our awareness, noticing whether they ring true. Do they create **safe space** in which to grow? Do they resonate?

1. We agree to always be respectful, compassionate, loving, honest, and authentic in our thoughts, words, actions, and communications. In doing so, we create a safe, loving, and supportive environment in which complete transparency is the norm, vulnerability is honored, and where people are free to evolve physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.
2. We agree to take personal responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions at all times. In doing so, we create a loving environment where spiritually mature individuals promote peace, joy, and celebration in all that we do.
3. We agree to reverently seek Spirit’s Guidance when resolving conflict. In doing so, we trust that Love is leading the way and that Peace prevails.
4. We agree that we are consciously choosing to create a Spiritual Family. In doing so, we are creating a space in which to belong, a place to call Home.
5. We agree to welcome all who come, gracefully honoring each individual as a unique child of God; accepting all faith paths and levels of awareness as a sacred part of the Spiritual Journey. In doing so, we attract a vibrant group of diverse members who practice this teaching to live in the consciousness of Oneness each and every day.
6. We agree to respect one another’s personal space. In doing so, we create a comfortable community experience in which everyone feels safe and honored.
7. We agree to live from a consciousness of Wholeness and Abundance. In doing so, we create personal lives and a Spiritual Home that are radiantly healthy and free from limitation of every kind.

My prayer is that, as the sometimes tumultuous and ever-changing world moves around us, our **Beloved Community** becomes an island of sanity, a safe space to which you can turn...in which you can grow and evolve, step by step, surrounded and supported by friends and spiritual family.

We anchor this in prayer...Please hold this Truth as your own...

We join our hearts and minds in knowing that the One Life, the One Intelligence, is forever expressing as, and moving through, all of creation. I Am that...a perfect and intentional emanation of Divine Light! I swim in the Infinite Potential that I call God, and

as I remember who I Am, and bring my Divinity into play, my circumstances are transformed. Wholeness is revealed in every area of my life.

I Am so grateful to know that I can count on a Loving and Lawful Presence. I Am grateful to have a safe space to express myself, and a spiritual family to support my journey.

Thank you, Holy One, for the many blessings and miracles of this and every day. I Am so grateful...Centered in gratitude, I release this prayer, trusting and knowing that it has already done its Work. And so, I allow it to come into form and experience in my life now. I let it be...I let it be so...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 – *Come, Spirit of God*, written by Daniel Kopp

Rev. Diana Blessing for the Offering

We'll be donating our coffee and lunch donations to ***Farmer's Footprint***.

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

Conscious Conversation

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Welcome...

Opening Music

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

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

 ***Chant – We Come Together***, written by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana

Go ahead and stay standing if you're able, or reaching your arms and hands out to feel and embody your Connection with Spirit...feel your feet rooted to the earth, feel the energy moving up through your feet, flowing through your body, and out through the tops of our heads...embody the Power of Creation...let your whole body join in the writing of a new story for our world. 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 Compassion, 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 awakened world, every member of the human family serves as a *conscious* vessel through which God's blessings flow...we "walk by faith, not by sight", knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is *inevitable* as we take steps, moment by moment, toward its creation. **There is no reason we cannot have such a world**, and so we call it forth from the realm of Infinite Possibility, knowing that it is taking form, right here and now, as we hold and speak our Powerful Vision. In every moment, we align our actions to support and nurture its Graceful unfolding. We call it Good...we let it be. And so it is! Amen!

Doesn't that feel good? Can you feel the shift in energy as we center ourselves in such a positive and powerful Vision? Are we ready to have a **Conscious Conversation**?

This morning our topic has been ***The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same***. It's a fairly common statement...**but what does it mean?**

This morning, in our Taizé, we spent time contemplating that which is eternal, unchanging...Universal Law, the Qualities of Spirit, the Divine Spark that enlivens all of creation, the Christ Consciousness that dwells within each one of us. We continued in our process of defining **Beloved Community** by saying that it is a **safe space**. I'd like to spend a little more time with this idea.

How do you define safe space?

In his book *Creating the Beloved Community*, Rev. Jim Lockard defines safe space in a Spiritual Community this way:

Read pages 93-94

Let's talk about that. This is a challenging path to walk...a delicate balance for us as Beloved Community members.

When might we need to be enveloped in Spiritual Community?

(In difficult times...when there has been a crisis or trauma of some kind, either present or past.)

What are some of the ways that we can appropriately envelop those in need?

(Prayer, spiritual counseling, bringing food, providing transportation, offering a listening ear, etc.)

Is there a time when enveloping someone is no longer useful, maybe even detrimental?

(If someone is showing no sign of healing, making no effort to move forward, becoming overly dependent, showing a pattern of living as a victim...then continuing to envelop enables the person to avoid growth.)

What is ours to do when this happens?

(Refer the person to an appropriate professional. Encourage the person to seek additional help elsewhere.)

When is it appropriate to contribute to the development of Community members?

(When a person shows signs of being basically psychologically and emotionally stable. Psychological and emotional stability is the necessary foundation for spiritual transformation.)

What might development look like?

(Spiritual Study, Sacred Service, Spiritual Practices, Celebration)

Enveloping and developing...both of these help to create **safe space**. “**Safe space** in spiritual community is not about eliminating discomfort – it is providing a supportive place where we can experience the inevitable discomfort of deep personal introspection and spiritual growth with support and understanding...**Safe space** means that we co-create a chrysalis of support for those who are wounded as well as for those who choose to do the deep and often painful work of personal transformation...**Safe space** includes the need to come to terms with the harsh and often difficult realities of being human...In **safe space**, we are not protected from disturbance, rather we are disturbed in a protected space.

You may have heard me say this before, but in my training as a Minister, I was told that my job was *to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable!* Am I doing my job? It's a razor's edge...to be kind, loving, compassionate AND honest, in service to another's growth and development.

Let's shift gears for a moment as we prepare to close our time together. You may remember that we will be resuming our quarterly Co-Creation Gatherings, where we will continue to develop our Beloved Community. Our next gathering is Friday, October 7th from 6:00-8:30 here in Suite I, and I hope you'll join us.

We'll be talking about all kinds of things, but the main theme will be **Safe Space**, and looking at whether or not the Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Agreements we have in place promote **safe space**. Or do they need to be tweaked in some way? We'll also talk about what the coming year's calendar might look like...what kinds of new experiences might we want to offer?

We have spent time during this month's gatherings talking about our Beloved Community...its Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Agreements.










Something we have not yet looked at is who we are and what we believe. If you've ever read the front cover of our Sunday Bulletin, this will sound familiar.

Mystic Heart is a welcoming and accepting Spiritual Community that supports, promotes, and celebrates your growth in body, mind, and spirit. It is a place where people of all ages, races, creeds, ethnicities, sexualities, and abilities come together, not as groups separated by their differences, but as human beings celebrated for their individuality.

We are an Independent Spiritual Center. We welcome all faith paths, philosophical points of view, and ways of life that acknowledge and honor the Divine, and support and uplift the growth and evolution of the planet and its beings.

We see Evolution and Creation as two aspects of one process that is forever moving life forward, and we understand that each of us is an integral part of that process, leaving our direct imprint on the evolution of humanity.

What do we believe?

-  We believe in a Higher Power that operates through all of creation.
-  We believe that all Life is sacred.
-  We believe that the Spiritual Journey is unique to each person.
-  We believe that all paths to God share common threads of Truth.
-  We believe that thought creates experience.
-  We believe that by aligning our thinking with the Higher Power, we create a more Peaceful, Joy-filled life.
-  We believe that the Spiritual Journey is an integration of body, mind, and spirit.
-  From these beliefs we draw principles and practices that are free of dogma and serve as tools for our modern lives. AND...
-  We're serious about Celebration...it is a vital part of our Spiritual Practice. We understand that by celebrating the Good in our lives, we bring more of it into our experience.

Join me in knowing that this Beloved Community is growing, thriving, and serving as a unique, perfect, and intentional expression of the One Divine Power...(finish prayer)

And as a reminder, a quote from author Anthon Sr. Maarten: "You are one thing only. You are a Divine Being. An all-powerful Creator. You are a Deity in jeans and a t-shirt, and within you dwells the infinite wisdom of the ages and the sacred creative force of All that is, will be and ever was." And I'd like to add...you're my kind of folks.

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 – *My Kind*, by Jason Mraz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esZSrn7ND7g&list=RDbG6m3GGHINQ&index=8>


Lucinda Blessing for the Offering


Lucinda – Invitations


 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux’s Book Club** is reading *Breakfast With Buddha* by Roland Merullo. Drop-ins welcome.

 **Wednesday, September 14th – November 16th from 2:00 – 5:00 pm**, Rev. Diana is offering *Divine Audacity*, the first of her *Conscious Evolution Series*. Registration is open for one more week.

 **Thursdays, 3 – 5 pm, Metaphysical Bible Study** with Prayer Practitioner, Chris Johnson. Drop-ins welcome.

 **Co-Creation Gathering - Friday, October 7th, 6:00 – 8:30 pm**: Join the Leadership and Volunteers of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center for an evening filled with luscious desserts, beverages, reflection, brainstorming and Conscious Conversation. Let’s begin the process of Co-Creating 2023! All are welcome!

 **You Can’t Take It With You - Shasta College Performing Arts Theater, Friday, October 21st at 7:00 pm**. *You Can't Take It With You* is a madcap, idealistic comedy that reinforces the idea that you can only live life to the fullest by doing whatever makes you happy. **It's gonna' be a blast! Tickets: \$15 are available today!**

 **2nd Annual Spring Retreat at Coram Ranch in Shasta Lake, April 20-23, 2023**. A non-refundable deposit of \$100/adult, \$50/child 13-17, or \$20/child 5-12 is required by November 1st to hold your space, as Mystic Heart needs to make a large deposit to hold our reservation. Additional payments can be made as you’re able. Payment in full is due by April 1, 2023.

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

Prayer Card/Invitation and Information Cards(Lucinda)

Also, We'll be contributing our Lunch Donations to ***Farmers' Footprint***.

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