

*Seasons of the Year,  
Seasons of a Lifetime*

*November 20, 2022*

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP, Chris Johnson,  
RScP, and Musician Gary French

*Taizé*



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

**Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

**Lucinda – Opening Prayer**

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

**Chants**

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

 **The Little Church**, written by Donovan Leitch

**Rev. Diana**

We begin our meditative journey this morning by closing our eyes and turning the gaze inward...settling into the breath...noticing any tension, and letting it go...breathing in, then pausing...breathing out, then pausing...taking a few breaths in which you are aware of all four parts...inhale...pause...exhale... pause...savoring the experience of breathing...remembering that it is the Presence that breathes you...grounded in this Powerful Presence, we enter into sacred ritual...we form and hold a powerful Vision.

Together, we envision a web of Consciousness, surrounding and infusing the earth...we see and feel ourselves to be a point of radiant Light in that web...can you feel the Light that you are radiating from deep within you? Now expanding our awareness, we sense that same Light shining in and from every human.

One by one, we acknowledge every creature as an expression of Light...every plant, every rock and grain of sand...everywhere on the planet, the soil, and the water shimmer with God's Radiant Light...the clouds...the heavenly bodies...all aglow with the Light of Spirit. We know that there is no separation between us...we are all of One Light, One Life...we feel our inherent interconnectedness. As one human family, we acknowledge our personal responsibility and our role as caretakers...in Sacred Service to one another...to all life forms...and to the planet that sustains us all.

Grounded in our Oneness, we center our awareness in this month's theme, **Sacred Time**, and we explore the powerful ebb and flow of Spirit moving through the **Seasons of the Year, (and) Seasons of a Lifetime**.

In our daily lives, we seek to move gracefully between Chronos, or clock time, and Kairos, or a flowing sense of timelessness. We are reminded that as we attend to our

cycles of breath, the sway of our dance with time becomes more elegant...the perceived boundaries between the two start to dissolve.

We spiral out from the cycles of our breath to the recurring cycles that we call our days. We find ways to remember to stop...breathe...connect with our Divine Nature...with our personal experience of God.

This movement into Sacred Time invites us to continue the spiral...from the daily cycle, we expand our awareness to include weekly rhythms. We attend to the naturally occurring seven-day cycles of nature to remind us that all of creation needs regular times of rest and renewal...and we consider what it means to build Sabbath into our weeks.

Weeks become months, and we mark time by noticing the phases of the moon...how she serves to remind us that there are times of waxing and waning, times to bask in fullness, and times to move into darkness.

This morning, our contemplations move even further outward along the spiral...we bring our awareness to the Seasons of the Year. We shift our attention from lunar to solar cycles...being present to the changing of the seasons as thresholds of invitation.

Spring is a dynamic time of blossoming when the world begins to break open through the splendor of color. Summer is a season of fruitfulness and fullness, when the earth's bounty comes to her fullness, and we are well nourished. Autumn enters into the great release of the earth, harvesting the gifts and releasing what is not necessary. Winter calls us into the grace of stillness and incubation, knowing the dark has her own wisdom that must be embraced before spring arrives again. (*Sacred Time*, Christine Valters Paintner)

### **Silence – 1 minute – Bell**

We acknowledge the connections between the Celtic movement through the seasons and the Christian liturgical year...how the Christian feasts became aligned with the great turning of the year...Winter Solstice with the birth of Christ...the summer solstice with the birth of John, the Baptizer...the Spring Equinox with The Annunciation, when Mary says Yes to bearing the Christ Child...and the Autumnal Equinox with John the Baptist. "The two great figures of the New Testament are intimately linked to the stations of the sun." (Paintner)

Other Christian feasts coincide with the mid-points that exist in each season. All Saints and All Souls Days are celebrated at Samhain (Saw' win), which recognizes when the veil is thin between heaven and earth, and the dark half of the year begins. The Feast of St. Brigid and the Presentation of Christ in the temple occur near the Celtic celebration of Imbolc (Im' bolk), the beginning of the earliest signs of spring and the agricultural year. The Easter Season and Pentecost fall near Beltane (Bel' tin), which begins the brightest half of the year. And the Feast of Christ's Transfiguration falls near Lughnasa (Loo nah' sah), which honors the first fruits of the harvest.

"Each of these points on the wheel of the year offers us a threshold in time. A threshold space is a doorway into a new way of being, a new season of life, and a new invitation.

If we are attentive to the turning of the seasons, we can discover their rhythms deep within our own hearts.” (Paintner)

Thresholds...liminal spaces are places or states of unknowing, openness, ambiguity, and indeterminacy. We let go of our definitions of who we are...and of old stories and understandings and welcome in new ones. There is uncertainty about how each season will unfold in our lives... “how the questions raised by the earth’s turning will interact with our life story” in this particular moment in time.

Each new season calls us deeper within...calls us to yield to its invitation...to stop striving and grasping... and to fully embrace what the moment has to offer.

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

Each Sunday we gather together in Beloved Community to acknowledge and celebrate our Spiritual Nature... our inherent Divinity... that part of us which is Eternal... We set this day aside as Sacred Time... dedicated to the contemplation of The Mystery which is beyond time... beyond space... yet *in which we live, move, and have our being*<sup>1</sup>...

Thomas Kelly writes: *In periods of relaxed listening and expectancy, the silence within us seems to merge with a creative silence within the heart of God and we hear Eternity’s whispers, and we become miracles of Eternity breaking into Time. Live a listening life. Order your outward life so that nothing drowns out the listening.*<sup>2</sup>

In seasonal time, we are about halfway between Samhain and the Winter solstice... Temperatures are cooling... trees gently release their leaves... daylight hours shorten... and we spend more time in the embrace of darkness... The Sacred Night envelopes us in silence, where we may hear the *whispers of Eternity*...

Listening in the Dark, Sacred Silence, we are reminded that *this too shall pass*<sup>3</sup>... our faith assures us that the Light will return... and that for a time, we are being nurtured and protected in the dark womb of the Divine Mother... All of creation is born in darkness... and in the fullness of time, emerges into the Light...

With eyes closed, sharing the Sacred Silence, we make ourselves fully available to Spirit... Knowing that the Silence is a container for our communion with the Creator, we reach out with our thoughts to the Divine Mind... with our feelings to the Heart of God... with our spirit to the One Spirit... We open our hearts as we listen with our inner ear, in relaxed expectancy... for the inspiration that is uniquely ours... trusting that it finds its way to us in the *Whispers of Eternity*...

### **Silence – 3:00**

Returning our awareness to this room... this time... to our experience in this sacred moment, we give thanks... Grateful for this time together in communion with Spirit... Grateful for the sweet inspiration contained within our very own *Whispers of Eternity*... Thank you God for everyone and for 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...

We open our hearts, minds, bodies, spirits, and souls now, receiving the Divine Wisdom imparted to us, as Rev. Diana continues to guide our exploration of the Seasons of the Year, and the *Seasons of our Lifetime*...

### **Rev. Diana**

We move now into reflection on the rhythms of your life and its wider arc as part of the sacred rhythms of time.

Every human life moves in seasons...childhood, young adulthood, midlife, and elderhood...which can be compared to the earth's seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter.

As we grow in spiritual maturity, we increase our capacity for being present to the sacredness of every moment...we discover, and spend more time engaging with, the Great Mystery...the unknowable and indefinable nature of Life, of God...and in that experience, there develops a kind of tension. Our minds want to know, want to understand, but have a limited range of perception. And so, we must learn to live with a certain amount of ambiguity.

This is the nature of life...there will always be a certain amount of tension between our experience of God as both immanent and transcendent...between the colorful blooming of spring flowers outside and the darkness of our inner life...between the joy of a new relationship and the simultaneous grief at the loss of a loved one. Life is forever offering both hope and loss, woven together.

“Our call is to hold the full spectrum of our experience, honoring it all and allowing nature to be a wise guide in the process. The rhythms and cycles of the seasons help us to cultivate this capacity for full presence in the face of tension. We must resist the dualistic ways we have trained to think in this culture and befriend the full range of what is happening in a given moment.” (Paintner)

### **Rev. Diana – Prayer**

**Music – *Life Means So Much***, written by Chris Rice

### **Rev. Diana – Offertory**

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](http://mysticheart.org). And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

**Offertory Song – *So Many Blessings***, written by Steven Walters

### **Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering**

**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 – I Start My Day** by Karen Drucker

### Rev. Diana

I invite you to remain standing, if you like, and get your whole body involved in our Vision of a Love-Soaked World. Take a moment to feel the vibration, the presence of God in your body...the Life Energy moving through...the Love Energy filling you up...now coming alive in your hands and arms, coming up through your feet and legs, and coming together to fill your torso...your chest, your heart. As we embody our Divine Connection, join me in Sacred Ritual...

Feel the Power of Creation moving through you as together, we hold our Vision of a **Love-Soaked World**, where Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice, and Freedom are the living principles that guide every life...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 new world of our creation, every member of the human family serves as a *conscious* vessel through which God's blessings flow. Like Nehemiah, "We are doing a good work and we cannot come down"... we *will not* lower our Vision. Knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is not only possible, but *inevitable*, we take the necessary steps toward its creation. We call it forth from the realm of Infinite Possibility, knowing that it is taking form, right here and now, as we hold, sense, and speak our Powerful Vision. We align our actions to support and nurture its Graceful unfolding. We give thanks, we let it be. And so it is! Amen!

Let's just bask in that energy for a moment...our prayer and Visioning creates a shift...you can feel it. Now that we're all charged up, let's have a **Conscious Conversation**.

This month we've been talking about Sacred Time. During Taizé this morning, we recalled our contemplations about the cycles of breath. We spiraled out from the breath, recalling the ways that daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms call us back to our True Nature...call us to being present. And then we spent some time in contemplation of the seasons of the year and the seasons of our lives. So I thought we would start our Conversation this morning talking about the seasons. Is that okay with you?

We've had some beautiful seasons this year, don't you think? We had a long, gentle spring that lasted well into June. We had June and early July rain and didn't hit triple digits until mid-July. And this autumn, now that it has settled in, has been mild, with more rain. So much to be grateful for. Let's start with spring.

**What are the words associated with springtime for you?**

**Do you have any special memories associated with spring?**

**Are there any special events that happen in your life during the spring?**

**If you were to complete this sentence, how would you complete it? Spring is the season of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Isn't it nice to savor these things? Now here is a question that you may want to answer out loud, or you might want to take it home with you for contemplation:

**Where in your life are you remaining tight in the bud? What is the risk of blossoming?**

**What are the words associated with summer for you?**

**Do you have any special memories associated with summer?**

**Are there any special events that happen in your life during the summer?**

**If you were to complete this sentence, how would you complete it? Summer is the season of \_\_\_\_\_.**

We don't often spend time lingering over such things. Now here another question that you may wish to answer here or take home with you for contemplation:

**Where in your life is feeling most fruitful? What are you on fire for?**

**What are the words associated with autumn for you?**

**Do you have any special memories associated with autumn?**

**Are there any special events that happen in your life during the autumn?**

**If you were to complete this sentence, how would you complete it? Autumn is the season of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Another question for contemplation:

**Are you longing to return to some essential self? What would need to be peeled away and released to reveal it?**

**Finally, what are the words associated with winter for you?**

**Do you have any special memories associated with winter?**

**Are there any special events that happen in your life during the winter?**

**If you were to complete this sentence, how would you complete it? Winter is the season of \_\_\_\_\_.**

More savoring...more lingering. We often think of winter as a season to get through as we wait for spring to arrive. But what if we could honor it for its own integrity and depth? What if winter was simply a gift that we needed to unwrap slowly and with great care? And one final question for contemplation:

**What gift might that offer for your own journey of discernment?**

(All questions taken from *Sacred Time: Embracing an Intentional Way of Life* by Christine Valters Paintner)

From the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verses 1 – 8 (NIV):

- <sup>1</sup> There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:  
<sup>2</sup> a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
<sup>3</sup> a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
<sup>4</sup> a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
<sup>5</sup> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
<sup>6</sup> a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
<sup>7</sup> a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
<sup>8</sup> a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

There is a time for everything.

During Taizé this morning, we contemplated the idea that like the turning of the year, our lives also have seasons. And in moving from one season to the next, we are crossing thresholds...we move through periods of uncertainty as we start all over again. From childhood to young adulthood...and then to mid-life...and on to elderhood. At each stage of life there is a sense of starting over...not quite sure how to proceed.

**Have you experienced this? What are some things that have made your transitions a little bit easier?**

I would like to close our conversation by sharing a couple of paragraphs from this amazing book, *Sacred Time*.

**Read from pages 86 and 92.**

**Closing Prayer**

Together, remembering...acknowledging the One Source of all Life...God, the One Creative Intelligence, the One Love, the One Law, the One Process, expressing as all of Creation...right here, right now, and in every moment. I know that I Am created for such a time and place as this...that my heart is capable of holding both fullness and emptiness...the rise and fall of everything. I imagine the seasons as a wisdom text about how to live with Grace in the presence of paradox and uncertainty. I feel myself ripening. I feel the sacred Presence reaching out to me through the rhythms and cycles of the world. In every moment, I am making new discoveries. And so I give thanks...I Am so grateful for every step along the way...

for every new awareness. As I grow and expand in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, I am at peace. I trust that my purpose here is being fulfilled and I am content. Allowing myself to simply rest in this season of my life, I release my Word, trusting that it is opening the way for the next season of my life to unfold in Grace and Beauty. And so I let it be...and so it is. Amen!

### **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- *No Time to Kill***, written by Clint Black & Hayden Nicholas

**Lucinda – Blessing for the offering**

**April – The 12 Days of Kindness update**

**April – Invitations**

**These three activities are taking a break this week, but returning next week:**

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



- ♥ **Thursdays, 12 – 2 pm, Fast Track to Wellness**, a book study and support circle for bringing the Body Temple into a healthier state of being. We are currently listening to and discussing *The Obesity Code* and *Life in the Fasting Lane*.
- ♥ **Thursdays, 3 – 5 pm, Metaphysical Bible Study** with Prayer Practitioner, Chris Johnson.
- ♥ **Please join us for the Shasta Interfaith Thanksgiving Service TONIGHT, 6:30-8:00 pm**, at the Church of Latter-Day Saints.
- ♥ **We will be holding Taizé and Conscious Conversations next Sunday.**
- ♥ **Mark your calendars for North State Giving Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.** Mystic Heart is on the list this year to be able to receive donations...pass it on!
- ♥ **Saturday, December 3, 2022 from 10am to 2pm. Merry Christmas, Mother Earth!** Contact Amanda Hunter or Rev. Diana for more information.
- ♥ **Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 – 7:30 pm.** Sound Healer Sherry Barret will be offering a Sound Wash Meditation Experience in Suite I.
- ♥ **Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30-8:00** *You Are the Light: Christmas Candle Lighting Service.* Childcare available.
- ♥ **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Retreat at Coram Ranch in Shasta Lake, April 20-23, 2023.** A non-refundable deposit of \$100/adult is required to guarantee your space. Payment in full is due by April 1, 2023.

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

## Lucinda – Invitation to Prayer

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



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<sup>1</sup> Acts 17:28

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Kelly, *The Eternal Promise*

<sup>3</sup> Persian proverb