

Peace On the World

Sunday, January 22, 2023

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 – Good morning and welcome – We begin our meditative journey this morning by joining our voices, deepening our intimate Connection in Spirit.

Chants

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

 **Dropping Down**, written by Karen Drucker, Gary Lynn Floyd, & Amy Bishop

Rev. Diana

We move more deeply into our meditative journey this morning, with eyes closed or gaze turned downward...taking a slow deep breath in, filling your cells with the Energy that is coming in on the breath. Is there anything you wish to leave at the door before we continue our journey? Is there any intention that you wish to bring into our time together? Take another slow, deep breath in, and fully arriving as we exhale...calling in the Light with every breath in...noticing the space, the still point, between the in-breath and the out-breath...and letting go, sending that Light back out into the world...calling in the Goodness...and releasing that Goodness back into the world...surrendering to the unconditional Love and Light of Spirit...deeply Rooted in this moment...Entering into sacred Practice...

Using the Power of Inner Vision, we picture a vast web of Consciousness, surrounding and infusing the earth...we see and feel ourselves to be a point of radiant Light in that web, a place where Spirit takes form...feeling the Light that you are radiating from deep within you...and now expanding our awareness, we sense that same Light shining in and from every human.

As we fine-tune our awareness, we acknowledge that every creature is an expression of Light, a point of Divine Expression...every plant, every rock and grain of sand, alive and radiant with Spirit...we are awakening to the Life that exists in the soil and the

water...in the clouds and the heavenly bodies...and all of it shines with One Light, One Life...

We feel our inherent interconnectedness. We acknowledge our personal responsibility and our role as caretakers, in Sacred Service to one another, to all life forms, and to the Sacred Mother Earth. Grounded in our Oneness, we consciously sense and feel our **Rootedness**, and we explore what it means to awaken **Peace in the World**.

Over the past three weeks, we have explored tools for awakening Peace in our body, mind, speech, and heart. And we have joined in Practices to free us from the past and make Peace with the future...all for the purpose of Rooting ourselves in Spirit. Unless we are grounded and open to Divine Guidance, spiritual nourishment cannot reach us.

We have heard it said that we are the ones we've been waiting for. Spiritual Teacher Craig Hamilton says it another way: (paraphrase) The only way for God to show up as Peace in the world is through humankind...through *people* choosing to step out of their comfort zones and grow spiritually.

But which humans? He suggests that if you are taking part in a community like this, it may be up to you...up to us and others like us. He asks: "If not you, then who?" And he invites us to consider...is there anything else that is more important right now to the future of humanity, and to the world?

This morning, we take this time out of our lives to sit together, breathing Peace, flowing Peace, creating Peace, and we do this by being Peace.

7000 years ago in Ancient Egypt, there was a belief and a practice that when a person died, their heart would be weighed by the god Anubis. The heart of the deceased would be placed on a scale. On the other side of the scale was the feather of Truth. If the heart was heavier than the feather, that being would not make it into the afterlife. If their heart was so light that it knew only Peace, then they would be permitted to enter the Land of Two Fields, a place of joy, happiness, and complete Peace. This was a place where the people would meet their loved ones that had died before them. Thousands of years later, this basic understanding remains: the state of the heart holds the secret to this life...determines how we live and how we die.

In 600 BCE, the Buddha codified a way for us to keep our hearts lighter than a feather, to truly dwell each moment in Peace, in a state of benevolence towards all living beings; to have joy at others' success; to behave with compassion and sympathy for the afflicted, and for those we have issues with. In the Buddhist tradition, these teachings are referred to as The Divine Abodes...Holy places to live or dwell.

The Divine Abodes are four states of being: unconditional loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. We are encouraged to embody and live from these states in every moment...and they can be cultivated through Practice.

Before we Practice together, let's come to a deeper understanding of each state. Unconditional loving kindness begins with loving yourself unconditionally, without self-criticism or judgment, so that you can love others purely. As we practice loving kindness in all of our affairs, bringing Peace to our words, thoughts, and deeds, we find any grievances we may have dissipating.

The second state is true compassion...the antidote to pain and the seed of Peace. There is a wide spectrum of Compassion, beginning on one end with pity, a feeling of discomfort at the distress of another...with pity, we don't see the other as our equal.

Moving along the spectrum is sympathy, which is the ability to take part in someone else's feelings, mostly by feeling sorrowful about their misfortune. Continuing along the spectrum is empathy, the ability to truly understand other people's feelings, as if we were having them ourselves. And moving even further along is a feeling of empathetic care and concern accompanied by a wish to see a person better off or happier. At the far opposite end from pity is the purest description of compassion...actually feeling another's pain, wanting their suffering to end, and being willing to bear their burden...perhaps helping in whatever way we can.

How do we move ourselves from pity, all the way to the other end of the Compassion Spectrum? According to Vietnamese Teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, "Before we can be kind to another, we must be kind to ourselves. Before we can forgive others, we need to forgive ourselves. Before we can have compassion for others, we must have compassion for ourselves." The Christian teachings might call this having mercy with yourself, so that you can practice mercy with others; giving yourself Grace, so that your support of others becomes Graceful.

Coming back to the Divine Abodes, after true compassion we find empathetic joy, true excitement at someone else's good fortune or success, even if you don't like the person...celebrate all victories because every victory uplifts the world.

Take a moment to call to mind a recent victory in your life, some kind of win. How do you feel? Now think about a friend or loved one who has recently experienced a success. Feel the same emotions you had for yourself bubbling up inside you for another. Feel gratitude for their happiness. That's Empathetic Joy.

The Fourth Divine Abode is Equanimity...even-mindedness. This is being balanced, serene, tranquil...treating people impartially. Equanimity doesn't mean you don't care.

It is the unshakeable freedom of mind to maintain an underlying Peace, even as you are experiencing anger or shame or blame or judgment building up inside of you. It is to be unwavering in the face of gain *and* loss, honor *and* dishonor, praise *and* blame, happiness, *and* sorrow.

True Empathetic Care acknowledges that all of us, in every moment, are dealing with some degree of each of these. Equanimity says that you can be unwavering in the face of any of them...it is a sense of freedom from all points of self-reference. It is an indifference to the demands of the ego. Equanimity is the power of the present moment, the ability to be the calm amidst the storm. It is the Practice of not getting pulled into the drama.

Ancient Hebrew and Christian teachings tell us much the same things. Paul tells us in the book of Ephesians, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you."¹ In other words, a loving Presence, or the Christ Consciousness within, does not hold grudges. Its Nature is to respond to us by corresponding in kind. Whatever we sow is what we will reap. Its forgiveness is that as we begin to sow a better quality of seed, our lives become more graceful.

Where compassion is concerned, Peter shared the teachings of the Master Yeshua: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble."²

In the book of Romans, again from Paul: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn."³

In 1 Corinthians: "...God is not the author of confusion, but, of peace."⁴ And in Philippians, "...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds..."⁵

And centuries before Paul and Peter, the Hebrew Prophet Isaiah spoke this beautiful teaching: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."⁶ No matter what is happening, putting God first, making prayer your first response, will bring Peace into your life.

Through all times, and in many cultures and religions, the way to bring Peace to the World was by **Rooting** ourselves in unconditional loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity...and in something larger than ourselves.

Guided Meditation

What happens within us when we imagine World Peace? ... We may start out with a lovely vision... But then, often our minds dredge up images and news reports that erode our image... and our faith...

We hear of wars raging around the world... violence and social injustice in our own land... Peace begins to feel like an impossible dream... and we feel insignificant... not up to such a daunting task...

So, where do we begin our quest for World Peace? ... How do we transcend centuries of hatred and conflict? ... What can you and I do right where we are and with what we have that could possibly make a difference? ...

An ancient follower of Lao Tzu and Confucius provided a road map to guide us... *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.....

We must remove our attention from conflict, and spiral inward to our Spiritual Core... to the Temple of our heart... the Holy of Holies where Spirit has placed Divine Peace... the Peace that passes human understanding...

In this time of Sacred Silence, let us rediscover the Divine Peace within our own heart... and let it radiate from us, spiraling out to our home... our neighborhood... our towns... our country... to the whole world...

Silence – 3:00

As the music gently brings our awareness back to this time and place, we remain centered in Peace... We allow Divine Peace to flow out from us in every word... every gesture... every action...

We make Peace our primary motivation... our reference point from which to live... We respond with Love... We release judgments... We remember that we are *all* the image and likeness of God...

We become a peaceful presence wherever we go... a beacon of hope for the world... When we see souls in conflict, we wonder, "What is it like to be you?" ... We change the world one interaction at a time...

Rabbi Yeshua said, "Peace be unto you... My Peace I leave with you..."⁷ The Peace of the Christ dwells within each of us... It awaits only our recognition of it... and our commitment to share it...

With peaceful, receptive hearts, we welcome Rev. Diana's continuing words of inspiration... As we practice Peace together, we promote the growth of Peace in the World...

Rev. Diana

Let's drop down even deeper, into a Practice that will begin to increase the amount of time we spend Rooted in Peace. Practice is how we turn a state into a trait, a state of mind or state of being into a character trait that embodies itself in us.

Take a long, slow, deep breath in, and gently release. Stay in this space together, watching the breath as it silently moves in and out...noticing that your mind is calming, your body is relaxing. Nowhere to be, nothing to do but be here in this sacred and precious present moment. Notice the swirl outside of you is slowing down just a bit...the swirl inside is settling as well. On your next inhale, breathe in Love...let it come into your heart, and then send it out to all of your teachers...both conventional and unconventional teachers...any person, animal, or circumstance can be one of your teachers.

Now take another long, slow, deep breath in...the heart expands with kindness...and flow it out to all your loved ones, near, far, and in the beyond.

Now again...breathe in...heart expanding...and then flow that unconditional love and kindness to all your friends.

Now one more deep breath in, letting your lungs fill, feeling your heart expand, and breathe out Love to all your acquaintances...those in your awareness and behind the scenes that make your life possible...those who grow and ship your food, sew your clothing...those who built your house, who maintain the roads you drive on...

Deep breath in...and send it out to someone for whom you may be holding a grudge. Remember, this is not about forgiveness...it's just who you are...a hole in the flute, a conduit for Love...you have so much Love to share.

Deep breath in...feel your heart expand...and flow that Love and Kindness out to all sentient beings...you're a river of Love Energy, a channel of Healing...

Now with your inner eye, call to mind someone who's in pain or is struggling...Make eye contact with them. Now as you breathe in, feel your heart expand and send that Love out to this Beloved, from your heart to theirs...as healing Light.

Now let's invite kindness into your heart and see if you can flow that kindness from your heart to theirs...

Invite Compassion on the next breath in and send it out on that thread that connects from your heart to theirs...

One more long, slow, deep breath, deeper than ever before...filled with so much Love, Kindness, and Compassion, and flow it out on the breath...the two of you are one.

Breathe in, maintaining eye contact and bow to one another. Feel the healing.

Now call to mind all your friends and family, those who love you...see them encircling you with their Love and support, rooting for you and feeling Joy at your success, wanting your pain, and suffering to end, encouraging your growth as you walk your life's path. You bow and look into each set of eyes, moving around the circle, and you receive their bows in return.

There is a great circle of Love that carries you every day...deep breath in...receive the Love, appreciate it, give thanks for it. This is what it's like to live in the Four Abodes, every day, in any moment that you choose to remember. Let it be so...And so it is! Amen!

Coming back into this space, we open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds. Take a look at who is here celebrating with you this morning. This is your Spiritual Family...one of your support systems.

These are some of the people who care about you, who are there for you if you need anything. Let it be so...And so it is! Amen!

Rev. Diana – Offertory

As we close our Taizé Meditation, 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.

We feature another short video from Farmers' Footprint...

Offertory Video – *Convenience* and *Be Willing* with Mollie Engelhart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjAlud2K1TA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtgkfF3-huo>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

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

Conscious Conversation

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Lucinda

Rev. Diana – Welcome...if you're new with us here this morning...

Opening Music

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

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

 **Chant – Stand** by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana

I invite you to remain standing, or in some way 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...hands and arms coming alive, feet and legs feeling the energy coming up from the earth, feeling the heart center expand...embodying our Divine Connection, we join in Sacred Ritual...

Feel the Power of Creation moving through you as together, we hold our Vision of a **Love-Soaked World**, where all humans are embodying and living from Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice, and Freedom as the living principles that guide our lives...where all humans practice loving kindness and Compassion, honoring and caring for our beautiful 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 and respected 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 caring and conscious vessel through which Goodness is forever flowing. By the Power of our collective intention, we craft a new template, a new way of living on the earth. We *will not* lower our Vision until it has come into form. Knowing with our whole hearts that

such a world is not only possible, but *inevitable*, we take the necessary steps toward its creation. We align our actions to support and nurture its graceful unfolding. With complete faith that Spirit is bringing it into form and experience here and now, we give thanks, we let it be. And so it is! Amen!

Let's take a slow, deep breath in, and let it go...feel the shift in the room, in your body, in your heart. When you're ready, let your eyes open and notice who is sharing this space with you this morning.

Let me set a little context for our **Conscious Conversation**. Our theme this month is ***Rooted***.

What does it mean to be Rooted?(We're talking about being Rooted in Spirit, Rooted in God)

What kinds of Practices have we done this month to help us maintain our sense of Rootedness? (body scan; finding the space or still point between breaths, heartbeats, thoughts; inquiry – is our speech True, Kind, and Necessary, improving upon the silence; bringing Peace to our hearts by Practicing True Compassion, “What’s it like to be you?”; making Peace with the past, ho o pono pono; and making Peace with the future, the Infinite Breath Practice)

10:46 During Taizé this morning, we spent time with the deep Practice of living in the Divine Abodes, four states of being: unconditional loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. If you weren't here, you might want to check it out online.

But for the focus of our Conscious Conversation, I'd like to talk about two additional states of being that can help bring Peace to the World.

The first one is Humility. What does that word mean? (Of the earth, like humus; I of myself can do nothing - it is the God within that does the work)

Does having humility place us below another? (No, it recognizes our equality in the eyes of God; it encourages us to know our Spiritual Authority, but also to grant that same Authority to others)

What is false humility? (Pretending to be 'humble' because this makes us better than another)

What does humility demand of us? (be in service with no real attachment to outcomes; To stay grounded in the Truth of Who and Whose we are; resting in the Lord, in God)

If every person practiced humility, how would this bring Peace to the world? (Egos would not be in control; We would not need to be right; We would listen more and speak less; We would all sense our equality, our Oneness...be tapping into a Higher Wisdom...be more cooperative, kind, loving, and compassionate)

Okay, let's shift to the second state I wanted to talk about...the state of gratitude. What is gratitude? (The thankful appreciation for what one receives, whether tangible or intangible. The acknowledgment of what's good in our lives, both inside and outside.)

Does anyone here have a dedicated Gratitude Practice?

How are you with verbally expressing thanks? Are you better at remembering with close family or people outside your household?

What does gratitude demand of us? (pay attention, mindfulness; not taking things for granted; to be a complete cycle of gratitude, we must experience the feeling, then express the feeling – thank you)

If every person practiced gratitude, how would this bring Peace to the world? (We would be constantly aware of our interconnectedness, that Peace and Abundance in our lives depends on the kindness, compassion, generosity of others; we would maintain an awareness that everything we do makes a difference, makes an imprint somewhere in our world; our sense of belonging and contribution would increase)

I have recently shifted my Gratitude Practice, because every once in a while, it's good to shake things up a little bit. For years, I have been starting the day by writing down five things that I'm grateful for...five new things, every day, never repeating. This has been a very powerful Practice.

But last week, I started something new, and I'd like to share it with you this morning. Are you game?

Okay, take a slow, deep breath in, and as you exhale, allow your eyes to gently close. Let yourself settle into the Peace of this moment...

Looking through the lens of gratitude, and expressing thanks...what is right in your life right now? What are all the good things? What brings you comfort and joy?

Looking through that same lens, and giving thanks...who or what inspired you today?

Again, through the lens of thanksgiving...who or what brought you comfort today?

And finally, giving thanks for...who or what brought you joy today?

Closing Prayer

We close today by giving thanks...

I Am so grateful to know that there is One Loving and Lawful Presence, in and through all that is, expressing as all of creation. Thank you, Spirit, for your infallible Nature...Life unfolding in Divine Order...in Spirit's Perfect Timing. I Am so grateful to know that each one of us is a perfect and intentional expression of God...Source...Life...no accidents...here on purpose, with unique gifts to share.

Isn't it good to know that as I bring my awareness back to Source, rooting myself again and again in the Truth of Who I Am, I grow in unconditional loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. As I commit to my Practice, I grow in humility and gratitude fills my heart and mind. I walk ever closer to my personal version of God, knowing that all paths are equal...are perfect...and lead each of us home to the heart of Love, to the heart of God.

I give thanks for this beautiful morning, and for each person joining us today. I am so grateful for the precious time we spend together in Communion and Celebration. We are all so blessed! And so, grounded in Presence, and thankful for the many blessings of this and every day, I release my Word, knowing that it plants seeds of Kindness, Compassion, Generosity and Peace in the world. I release it fully, trusting Spirit to work Its Magic...I accept, receive, and embody...and so it is! Amen!

As we prepare to share our financial good, I have one more invitation...pick someone for whom you are truly grateful...someone who blesses your life, or has blessed your life in some way, and write an old-fashioned, snail mail card or letter this week, expressing your thanks. Write one every month, or every week. Just another powerful way to keep the cycle of gratitude going on our way to a World of Peace.

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 Video – *Peace Train*, by Playing for Change <https://youtu.be/0QpjR6-Uuks>


Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Rev. Diana Highlights Chris and his contribution as Web Master...


Angela – Invitations

We will be making our invitations brief... You can find more information in your Bulletins – feel free to take one home or share one with a friend. You can also go to our website for details.

 **Kavalya Poirier is offering Kundalini Yoga/Meditation** on Tuesdays from 11:00 am – 12:15 pm.

 Michael Bordeaux and the Mystic Heart Book Club is reading ***Lunch with Buddha*** on Tuesdays from 3:00-5:00 pm.


 Kavalya is also offering **Functional Movement Yoga** on Thursdays from 11:00 am – 12:15 pm.


 **Fast Track to Wellness** with Rev. Diana meets on Thursdays from **12:30 – 2:30** pm. ***Note the time change.**

 **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson meets on Thursdays from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.

 **Please sign up with Traci to assist with the Junior Mystics once every 4-8 weeks.** You'll have a blast!

Looking Ahead...

 **Anton Mizerak and Laura Berryhill will be offering Special Music for the Sunday Gathering on February 5th.** You won't want to miss it!

 The next **Sound Bath Meditation** will be offered here in Suite I on Tuesday, February 7th, from 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

 **2nd Annual Spring Retreat at Coram Ranch in Shasta Lake** April 20-23, 2023.

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

Prayer Requests, Information Cards

11:27 Closing Song – *Love Be With You*, written by Lainey Bernstein, RScP and Gary Lynn Floyd



©2022 Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, All Rights Reserved
Permission is granted to duplicate for non-commercial educational use only.
All rights to music performed remain with the copyright owners.

Notes

¹ Ephesians 4:32

² 1 Peter 3:8

³ Romans 12:15

⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:33

⁵ Philippians 4:7

⁶ Isaiah 26:3

⁷ Luke 24:36 & John 14:27