

# *Rooted, Step By Step*

*January 29, 2023*



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with , Intern Practitioner Chris Netto, Lucinda Alton, RScP, Chris Johnson, RScP, and musician Gary French

## *Taizé*

### **Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

#### **Lucinda - Opening Prayer**

**Rev. Diana – Good morning and welcome...today we are celebrating all of our members and friends who have a birthday in January. If you were born this month, would you please raise a hand so that we can honor you? We have a cake and a special brunch for our fellowship time today. You're welcome to join us.**

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

#### **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, and letting it go, relaxing into your chair. 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 letting your shoulders relax as you release...breathing in breath in...noticing the space, the still point, between the in-breath and the out-breath...and letting go, letting your jaw to drop, your face to relax...calling in Goodness...and releasing it back into the world...calling in unconditional Love and sending it back into the world...calling in Light and allowing it to fill you...keeping the Light within, even as you send Light back out on the outbreath...

Feeling the Light within you growing to fill your entire body...then spilling out all around you...and noticing that as your Light fills this space, it is enmeshed with the Light of other beings...it is One Light. And now expanding our awareness, we sense that same Light shining in and from every human, out beyond these walls...beyond our city, county, state, country...all people everywhere are shining with the One Light.

As we fine-tune our awareness, we begin to notice that every creature is radiating that same Light...that every plant, every rock and grain of sand, is part of the radiance... the soil and the water...the clouds and the heavenly bodies...all part of One Light, One Life.

Feeling our connection, we acknowledge our personal responsibility 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 what it means to be **Rooted, Step By Step.**

We have spent this month exploring tools for awakening Peace in our body, mind, speech, and heart. Together, we have practiced freeing ourselves from the past and making peace with the future...and we have considered what it means to be at peace with the world, walking AS peace in the world...all for the purpose of Rooting ourselves in Spirit, and in preparation for the Journey ahead.

What is this Journey? The Journey of Life, which is a Journey of transformation...beginning here and now, today...whomever we are, wherever we've been, whatever we've done...we have the chance to begin again.

"To journey without being changed is to be a nomad. To change without journeying is to be a chameleon. To journey and be transformed by the journey is to be a pilgrim."  
(Mark Nepo, *The Exquisite Risk*)

The Sacred Scriptures of the world are filled with stories about pilgrimage...about journeys of transformation. In the Hindu text, The Bhagavat Gita, Prince Arjuna makes a journey to self-knowledge and self-acceptance. In the Sutras and other Buddhist texts, Prince Gautama makes his journey to enlightenment. And the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are filled with journeys. Adam and Eve are sent forth from the Garden of Eden into the world. Abraham and Sarah are called away from their homeland. Moses and Miriam lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Mary and Joseph seek a place to give birth.

The Prodigal Son leaves home and returns. And Jesus makes his final journey to Jerusalem accompanied by his disciples. No matter which tradition we look at, these stories have mysteries to explore and Truth to be discovered. And each is a story of transformation...a pilgrimage.

The Latin root of *pilgrimage* means *strange*, or *stranger*. Making a Pilgrimage means becoming a stranger in the service of transformation...it is an intentional journey into *not knowing* and *discomfort* for the sake of stripping away preconceived notions and expectations, so that we can begin again without the limitations of the past.

Poet John O'Donohue writes that,

Ideally, a human life should be a constant pilgrimage of discovery. The most exciting discoveries happen at the frontiers. When you come to know something new, you come closer to yourself and to the world. Discovery enlarges and refines your

sensibility. When you discover something, you transfigure some of the forsakenness of the world.

With every discovery, comes new possibilities.

Pilgrimage is an outer journey that serves our inner transformation. It is an archetype...meaning the journey is a metaphor or symbol for the spiritual life that is found throughout the world's traditions. Pilgrimage calls us to pay attention to the Divine Promptings of our hearts, to the Spirit moving through our lives. It calls us to deep listening and patience, to looking for the gifts that arise from discomfort, and to being willing to reach out to "our own wilder edges to explore new frontiers." (Christine Valters Paintner, *The Soul of a Pilgrim*)

No doubt we will encounter shadows...dark times and places where we will need to lean into the faith that there is a greater Good at work.

But as I take a breath and surrender to something bigger than myself, the darkness is transformed into Wisdom and Grace.

Let's pause a moment and reflect...what journey are you on during this season of your life? Which aspects of yourself, or your life, are calling for transformation?

### **Silence – 1 minute**

Some journeys that we make in life are welcome...and sometimes life forces us into journeys that we would rather not take. One way or the other, we are each called many times over the course of a lifetime. How will we answer? Yes, or no?

(From *The Soul of a Pilgrim* by Christine Valters Paintner)

We are brought into the world with what many indigenous cultures call 'original medicine.' This means that we are unique creations. We've never been in the past and won't be in the future. No one carries the same combination of gifts, talents, resources, opportunities, and challenges. This unique alchemy is our 'original medicine'...these carry "our power to act in the world. They enable us to explore, discover, express, and heal. Our original medicine emerges from our "true self."

This is the journey of a lifetime. Rooted in Spirit, we must take this journey step by step. There are no shortcuts. We must let go of whatever is false in our lives and throw out whatever is keeping us from offering our gifts to the world. And we must remember that what we seek is already within us...our True Self, our Inner Wisdom, our Divine Light, can never be apart from us. "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." (Tennyson)

### **Guided Meditation**

The Tao te Ching tells us that "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step..." followed by another step... and another... each footstep carrying us ever farther on our path... We keep moving forward...

The first stride is our point of choice... our commitment to the Pilgrimage... We may say we are committed to our path, but until we respond to that choice by taking action, we are still undecided...

The beginning of a journey is usually marked by excitement... That excitement may show up as enthusiasm and great expectations... or it may appear as anxiety, apprehension or even fear...

Either way, the initial emotions eventually give way to the routine sequence of putting one foot in front of the other... We may wonder what we will find along the way... how long it will take...

Committed to the journey, we simply keep going... Our inner child may call to us from the back seat, "Are we there yet?" ... But there is no there... The Spiritual Path has no final destination...

But there are many gifts and blessings along the way... Growth in Wisdom, understanding, and compassion... fellow travelers to help us... mentors and allies... and challenges along the way...

As we share these moments in Sacred Silence, let us review our Spiritual Journey thus far... Who are our companions? ... What blessings have we already received? ... What is my next step? ...

### **Silence – 3:00**

We bring our awareness now back to this time... to this place... retaining the inspiration we have received in our contemplation... Grateful for this short glimpse at the map for our Pilgrimage...

And grateful for our fellow travelers... for our mutual support and Love... Thankful for this Beloved Community that travels the path with us... and for the Divine Wisdom that guides and guards us...

An African proverb teaches, "If you want to travel quickly, go alone... If you want to travel far, go together..." We are on a long journey... Look how far we have come already...

Our time together this morning has been a moment of rest and renewal on our Journey... an opportunity to gather provisions and rekindle our enthusiasm for the next leg of our Pilgrimage...

As Rev. Diana continues her message this morning, we listen with open minds... with willing hearts... becoming ever more firmly Rooted, Step By Step...

### **Rev. Diana**

This journey to come home to our True Self can be challenging...it can come uninvited...the result of a great loss in our lives. We may have lost a job, a home, a loved one, our sense of identity...we may have become ill, experienced the loss of financial security or gone through a divorce. Or it can come as a natural stage of

life...leaving home for the first time, going off to college or to explore the world, having children, or moving into retirement. Either way, unexpected or part of life's cycles, we know that there is no turning back...the way is closed. This is the call to which we must respond. No means numbing out...living in denial of this change that is happening. Yes means acknowledging that even our most challenging or sorrowful moments can lead us to renewed vision, to a new way of being and living. And they will when we stay ***Rooted, Step By Step.***

### **Closing Prayer**

**Musical Meditation – *We Are Weaving Our Lives* by Alexa Sunshine Rose**  
<https://thebirdsings.com/weaving-our-lives-2/>

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!

This from the composer: "How is this song creating the world we want? It speaks to our interconnectedness, how we are all related. It speaks to the "bright and dark threads" of our lives' journeys, which are all a valuable part of the weaving. All the parts of each person's life experiences join together to hold us, in "a blanket of light/ a basket to hold all that's true". This is the kind of world community and recognition of our interconnectedness that I want in our world, and what I believe it is vital that we find, if we are to find a sustainable future to co-inhabit together."

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

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

**Offertory Music – *All is Well***, written by Jan Garrett, Karen Drucker, & Megan McDonough

### **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...if you're new with us here this morning... today we are celebrating all of our members and friends who have a birthday in January. If**

you were born this month, would you please stand up so that we can honor you? **(Sing Happy Birthday)** We have a cake and a special brunch for our fellowship time today. You're welcome to join us.

## 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 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 one another, and 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 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 person is a caring and conscious vessel through which Goodness flows. 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, no matter the appearance. Knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is not only possible, but *inevitable*, we align our *actions* to support and nurture its Graceful unfolding. With complete and joyful expectancy that it is moving 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 has been **Rooted**...Rooted in Spirit. In order to stay Rooted, or Grounded, we explored Practices to help us maintain Peace in the body and mind; to bring Peace to our speech and our hearts; to make Peace with the past and the future; and last week, we talked about the importance of living from states of unconditional loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, equanimity, humility, and gratitude.

If you're interested in trying out some Powerful Practices, you might want to check out the services online. But for the focus of our Conscious Conversation today, I'm going to shake things up a little bit. Can you imagine? Me?

During the Taizé this morning, we talked about Life as a Journey of transformation...a Pilgrimage, which is the theme for next month. We said that no matter who we are, where we've been, whatever we've done, or what has happened to us in our lives, in every moment, we have the chance to begin again. **Would you agree?**

We talked about how some journeys we make in life are welcome and sometimes they are not...and that no matter whether we chose it consciously, whether or not it is difficult, every journey brings growth, change, and is ultimately working for the Good...and that we can experience that Good if we are open and cooperative.

Finally, we spent a little bit of time contemplating...what journey are you on during this season of your life? Which aspects of yourself, or your life, are calling for transformation?

This morning, I'm going to start with a Practice designed to inform our journey. It is an ancient Hebrew Practice called Midrash. Here's how it works: I'm going to read you a short passage from a familiar Creation Myth. After listening to the passage, you are invited to use your imagination to enter the story. Let it become not a distant mythical account, but a story meant to become alive for you. Let yourself enter the scene with all of your senses engaged. What do you see, taste, smell, hear, and feel? Let yourself become one of the characters in the story...maybe a human character, or maybe an animal or plant...What are you thinking and feeling?

This requires no skill...it is not about the end product. We are looking for what the story reveals to you. Pay attention to what part of the story stirs the most curiosity or energy for you. Let the process surprise you and take you places you didn't expect. Are you game?

There is a note pad and pen under each chair. Feel free to write down anything that comes. After about five minutes of contemplation and writing time, we'll pause for another brief reflection...then some Conscious Conversation. Are you ready? This 'll be fun.

From Genesis 3 of the Hebrew Scripture...remember, this is a myth:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the

garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

At this point, God comes back and finds them, and sees what they have done. When reprimanded, Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the Serpent, and God curses each of them. Skipping ahead for the sake of time...And at the end of the chapter:

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Go ahead...enter the story...which perspective speaks to you?

**Bell – Now, listen to what comes next...what might this have to say about your own journey?**

**Bell – Okay, now the real fun begins. Does anyone want to share what came through?**

### **Closing Prayer**

We close today by giving thanks...

I Am so grateful to know that there is One Living, Loving and Lawful Presence, expressing in every moment as all of creation. Thank You Spirit for Life unfolding in Divine Order, in Spirit’s Perfect Timing. I Am so grateful to trust and know that each one of us is a perfect and intentional expression of God...here on purpose, with unique Journeys and Gifts to share.

It is so to know that as I bring my awareness back to Source, rooting myself again and again in the Truth of Who I Am, I walk ever closer to my personal version of God, knowing that all paths are equal...perfect...and lead each of us home to the heart of Love, to the heart of God.

Thank you, Spirit, 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 each week. And so, grounded in Living Universal Presence, and thankful for the many blessings of



this and every day, I release my Word, knowing that it plants the vital seeds of a Love-Soaked World. I accept, receive, and embody...and so it is! Amen!

**Closing Song – *Calling Out Your Name***, written by Rich Mullins

### **Offertory**

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!**


**Song – *It'll Happen in its Own Sweet Time***, written by Chris Johnson


**Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering**


**Lucinda – With your generous lunch donations, we just sponsored our fourth acre of land for Regeneration. Please enjoy a quick video from Farmer's Footprint...A Farmer's Montage for 2023.**


<https://youtu.be/NygJ7bdKomM>

### **Rev. Diana – Invitations**

 **Kavalya Poirier is offering Kundalini Yoga/Meditation** this Tuesday from 11:00 am – 12:15 pm, then taking two weeks off for vacation. She will return Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>.

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


 Kavalya is taking a two-week break from **Functional Movement Yoga** and will return on Thursday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Looking Ahead...

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

 **Sherry Barret** will be offering our next Sound Bath Meditation on Tuesday evening, February 7<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, here in Suite I.

 **Let's Talk Dirty**, our first Gardening Workshop for 2023 - Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Contact Rev. Diana to reserve your spot. \$20 suggested donation.

 **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Retreat at Coram Ranch in Shasta Lake** April 20-23, 2023. More details are in your bulletin and on our website.

**Prayer Requests, Information Cards** **(only if new people)**

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