

Crossing the Threshold

February 12, 2023

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



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda - Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Welcome...if you're new with us here this morning... my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I want to welcome you Home to our Community, and Home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

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

 **Behold! I Make All Things New**, written by Dalton Fitzgerald

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...let your shoulders relax as you release...taking a moment to give thanks, to express gratitude for having another day on the planet...helping your body, mind, and heart register that you are happy to be alive, that Life is a gift...noticing the breath, following it into the body consciously, creating reverence, deep love and respect, for Life Itself...remembering that all Life is sacred.

Breathing in, and with the next out breath, sending that reverence, love, and respect out to the entire world...feeling the Light radiating within you...now allow it to expand until it shines from you into the room...out into the world...and grows to encompass all of creation...the human family...

...all other creatures...plants of every size and shape...every rock and grain of sand...the soil and the water...the clouds and the heavenly bodies...every single part of

Creation, down to the smallest microscopic particle or wave of energy...all shining with the Light of Spirit.

We send love, respect, and reverence to all of Creation. Feeling our Oneness with everything, we acknowledge our personal responsibility as caretakers, in Sacred Service to one another, to all life forms, and to the Sacred Mother Earth. Standing in our Unity, we continue our **Pilgrimage**.

Packing lightly for this journey of transformation means leaving behind all expectations, preconceptions, and judgments...letting go of how we think things should be...releasing the need for control...fasting from internal and external influences that don't nourish us in body, mind, and spirit. And what will we need to bring? Faith, trust, willingness, open-mindedness, open-heartedness, curiosity, anticipation, discernment, and commitment will serve us well, every step of the way...both in beginning the journey and in **Crossing the Thresholds**.

A threshold is the moment of liminal space between that which once was and what is to come...a pause in which a transition is given the space to unfold...it is a time of becoming. As human beings, thresholds can be uncomfortable...we like to think we know what is coming, what the next moment, or day, or year, will bring. But we never really know for sure. Surrendering to this Truth can feel challenging.

Living in the threshold is not about figuring things out, but instead, resting in the mystery and responding consciously to whatever arises...being aware of our thoughts and feelings...attending to the internal voices that occupy our inner space.

From the book of Matthew:

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life and there are few who find it.

Crossing the threshold...living in a state of not knowing, learning to be peaceful and accepting of *becoming*...is what leads to Life, and yet few choose to cross. Few people are brave enough to step into the inner chamber and remain present to the storms of life.

Whenever we prepare to cross a threshold, we are faced with the immensity of our unknowing. We are called to admit that we don't know what the future brings, and a choice emerges...turn and run the other way or find humility and stay the course. A journey of real transformation demands that we face the uncomfortable...

From *The Soul of a Pilgrim*, page 54, Christine Valters Paintner shares:

Thresholds, liminal space, being on the edge, living in the borderlands when we have a spirituality that is committed to exploring these rich places, is the opposite of comfortable, safe, secure...Thresholds require that we be vulnerable, that we acknowledge that we simply do not know what is to come. They call us to surrender to

something much bigger and more meaningful, even as it calls us away from familiar patterns that are loved.

Journeys can be both exhilarating and frightening. There might be wild beasts to encounter, the wild ones of your own heart. But right there, in your most fearful moments, if you call upon your Inner Knowing...the Still, Small Voice of Spirit...you will be Guided.

Musical Meditation – *Pray Me*, Written by Diana & Chris Johnson

Rev. Diana

Going deeper...the poet John O'Donohue offers these words:

At any time you can ask yourself: at which threshold am I now standing? At this time of my life, what am I leaving? Where am I about to enter? What is preventing me from crossing my next threshold? What give would enable me to do it? A threshold is not a simple boundary; it is a frontier that divides different territories, rhythms, and atmospheres.

Once we cross over, our lives will never be the same.

Chris – Guided Meditation

A Pilgrimage is a Hero's Journey... *Your Pilgrimage is your Journey as a Spiritual Hero...* The Hero's Journey begins with a Divine Call... The Hero is summoned into an adventure... willingly or unwillingly...

Often, we may refuse or deny the Call... it seems too much... it feels dangerous... I'm not ready yet... We may try to negotiate it down to a more manageable task... less threatening... less scary...

At this stage we meet our Mentor... a Merlin... a Gandalf... or an Obi Wan Kenobi... a wise one who encourages and advises us... Freshly emboldened, we surrender to our Pilgrimage... We approach the first threshold...

Forsaking the comfort of our familiar world, we cross over into the unknown... we must rely on Spirit to guide us now... As we give ourselves over into God's Care, we find unexpected help... allies... friends...

We also find obstacles... trials that test our resolve... and we find new strength as we overcome them... spiritual fortitude that we will soon need... for we realize that our greatest challenge still lies ahead...

Joseph Campbell tells us, "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek... It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life... Where you stumble, there lies your treasure..."

As we commune together in the Silence, let us consider... What is the cave I fear?... What is it that I least want to face?... Why is it so terrifying?... And what is the Spiritual Treasure that it guards so fiercely?...

Silence – 3:00

Emerging from the cave in full possession of our treasure, we begin the journey back... Our Pilgrimage has not been for us alone... the world to which we are returning needs that which we have attained ...

So we approach another threshold... back into the world we knew... But we have changed... and as we share our Spiritual Gifts, that world changes as well... We can never go back to how it was before...

We give thanks for the Love and support of our Beloved Community on our Journey... And we are grateful for the mentorship of our Pastor and Prayer Practitioners...

The Hero's Journey is a cycle... we will cross the threshold again... and again... Our Faith grows stronger each time we surrender to the Call... and find that Spirit never leaves us without Divine Guidance...

As Rev. Diana's continues sharing her inspiring message, we embody the Wisdom of her words, knowing they support us in Crossing the Threshold...

Rev. Diana

In the book of John, Jesus is accredited with this poetic message to Nicodemus: "The Spirit is like the wind, blowing wherever It pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot hear where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." With these words, Jesus all but guarantees that those who seek a Spirit-led life will regularly encounter liminal spaces. We will cross thresholds as often as the breezes blow.

When we cling tightly to our past experiences, we fail to recognize and be present with what is. It is only in the present moment that we can outgrow one version of reality after another...letting go of what we thought we knew and entering a new world...one that is different than we imagined...one filled with possibilities...and we are encouraged to ***Cross the Threshold.***

The Spiritual Life is about movement and evolution. Every moment, we stand on a new threshold, with its invitation to step into the tension and be stretched in frightening and exhilarating ways.

The sooner we abandon our desire for sameness, for constancy, the sooner we will discover, and get comfortable with the Truth...that "In the unknown space between here and there, younger and older, past and future, life happens" (Sheryl Fullerton)...that there's nowhere to get to, no time when we will have arrived...that the Journey *is* our Home.

Taizé Closing Prayer

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.

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.

Offertory Music (Live) – *Let It Be Easy*, written by Diana Johnson

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Taizé Closing Song - A Soul's Blessing

Conscious Conversation

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana

Welcome...if you're new with us here this morning... my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I want to welcome you Home to our Community, and Home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Opening Music

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

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

 ***Song – I'm A Believer***, written by Neil Diamond

Rev. Diana

I invite you to remain standing and take a moment to feel the Presence of God in your body...the Life Energy moving through...the Love Energy filling you up...and join me in our Sacred Practice of Visioning for a ***Love-Soaked World***.

...where all humans are embodying and living from Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice, and Freedom as 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...where mental/physical health, education, and healthy relationships are ensured by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness... where right livelihood, creative contribution, and a sense of belonging are known as Gifts of the Spirit and experienced by all...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 Generosity flows. By the Power of our collective intention, we write a new story...we create *The More Beautiful World that our Hearts Know is Possible* (C. Eisenstein). 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 stand firmly in, for, and AS Peace...in, for, and AS Love...in, for, and AS Unity. We open our hearts, our doors, and our arms in Radical Welcome, erasing all lines of apparent separation. We create a Bigger Table, to which all are invited, and at which all have an equal voice. Our Powerful Vision is moving into form and experience here and now...we feel it, we know it, and we give thanks...we let it be. And so it is! Amen!

Let's take a slow, deep breath in, and let it go...When you're ready, let your eyes open and notice who is sharing this space with you this morning. Doesn't it feel good to have the support of Spiritual Community?

Let me set a little context for our **Conscious Conversation**. Our theme this month is **Pilgrimage**...a journey of transformation. We know that as we move through our lives, we experience more Ease and a greater sense of Peace when we leave certain things behind...

...judgments, expectations, our need for certainty and control. And having other things on board will assist us in making the trip a Graceful one...faith, trust, open-mindedness, curiosity, excitement, generosity, humility.

During the Taizé this morning, we talked about **Crossing Thresholds as part of the Journey of transformation**.

For whoever was here this morning, what does that mean? What are we talking about?

Another name for *threshold* is *liminal space*. The Celtic Tradition calls them thin places...times when we feel we can see through the veil of what is to come, but not quite...where we can feel the presence of the holy by stepping outside of our normal awareness or activities and moving into the present moment.

Is anyone here experiencing a threshold at this time in your life?

What about as a country or a culture?

As a global community...are we experiencing a threshold moment? Maybe more than one? What are some of the global thresholds we are preparing to cross?

Philosopher, author, and I would say modern-day prophet Charles Eisenstein offers a lens that I have found helpful, a global perspective that unifies all that we are seeing into one large threshold that encompasses the rest. He calls it *A New and Ancient Story*...that we're actually in a space between stories. The old story is a story of separation, of domination and control of *the other*, that life/the world/nature is something we extract, forcefully if necessary...it is here for our consumption, for human benefit.

In this story, *the other* might pose as a person, a country, or Mother Nature herself. The new story is one of unity, of interconnectedness, of realizing that *there is no other*, and that *all life is a gift*.

The old story says *someday our triumph will be complete*; the new story says *this isn't a competition...what I do to the world, I do to myself*. The old story says *how can I get the most*; the new says *how can I enrich, regenerate, and heal the world around me in the greatest way possible?*

Using the metaphor from Pastor John Pavlovitz of *A Bigger Table*, the old story invites only those who are like us to our small and exclusive world table, where there is uniformity which breeds an affinity for the familiar and fear of what isn't. He says that "When the table you're used to sitting at is small, so, too, is your understanding of those seated elsewhere." He asks: "Can the table really be expanded so that everyone has a place?"

The new story says, "Yes, and here's how to do it." The mystics and sages of every age and tradition have known and practiced this message.

Does this story sound familiar? Which great souls have spoken these words before?

Yes, it's a New and Ancient Story. We've seen it before. Lao Tzu, the great Yogis of India, Rabbi Jesus, Chief Seattle, Martin Luther King, Jr., and countless others have spoken the same message.

How is this time different?

(There is more at stake this time. We have the technology to destroy all human life. No border or defense system can protect us from what is happening in the world. The population has never been this large. So many powerful decisions have never been made by so few people.)

I didn't come here to depress us this morning. So let's turn a corner here.

What are some of the things we are doing as a Spiritual Community to live into the new story?

That we exist at all is living into a new story. If you haven't taken a look at the front cover of our bulletin, here's what it says: *Mystic Heart* is a welcoming and accepting Spiritual Community that supports, promotes, and celebrates your growth in body, mind, and spirit. We are an *Independent Interfaith Community*, 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 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.

In other words, we're standing for a new definition of Spiritual Community, a new (and ancient) definition of Church.

Okay, now it's your turn. What are some of the things you're doing to live into a new story?

Okay, take a moment to reflect on an answer to this last question...Is there something you haven't yet done, a change you haven't yet made but are willing to make, that would contribute to the creation of *The More Beautiful World our Hearts Know is Possible*?

We are living a time of transition...we are Crossing a Threshold...each of us individually and collectively. As we walk together on this journey of transformation, as we make this collective Pilgrimage, I invite us to remember that we are Divine Beings having this continual human experience. We have inherent qualities...Love, Peace, Generosity, Authenticity, Beauty, Joy, and Freedom...freely given of Spirit...not only so that we will have a good life...nothing wrong with that...but even more, so that we might serve one another and our world as conscious, loving, self-reflective beings. Tap into those gifts, those qualities, those spiritual resources...don't let them go unnoticed or unused. They can empower any physical, mental, or emotional change or healing that you are seeking in your life. Don't hold back your gifts.

You have heard *Pray without Ceasing*, and maybe even thought *that's not possible!* Well guess what...as humans, we *are* praying without ceasing...we don't have to try. Every thought, word, and feeling is creative...it sets a direct imprint in the collective consciousness. Spirit is receptive and affirmative by Nature...God always says Yes. Here's a powerful question...by my every thought, word, and action, what am I asking God to say Yes to today?

Closing Prayer

I begin our closing today with a prayer Honoring Transformation by Pixie Lighthouse:

"Thank you for this beautiful day of changing. My shell is shifting, my skin shedding, and I am uncomfortable with what is leaving me. Help me find the language to describe the discarding, the baring of my branches. Bring understanding so that I can welcome what is coming. When I am unsure about how to go forward, help me prepare for my new stage. Help me trust that I will love myself through it. Encourage me, when the time is optimum, to let go of what is past."

“When those around me are not eager to know my restored original spirit, soften me with the realization that, if I am uncomfortable with my changing, they must be, too. Let me be an example of becoming more whole while I am leaving unneeded parts of my previous shape behind. Startle my senses with cellular renewal, awakening my purpose and direction. Move me through the dark nights and ease the pain of liquification inside the chrysalis. Excavate my soul’s gestural poetry and help me find what is next with fluid movement. Unfurl my damp, untested wings and lift my willingness to the limitless skies.”

“Rouse my interest in the world I am seeing with newborn vision. Reinforce my sacred commerce with the Divine. Guide my hands to build altars to the portals of existence I can now pass through with ease. Protect me as I construct relationships that are more complex than those I have previously known. Strengthen my small shelter in the woods, my room of one’s own to re-create, re-invent, and re-imagine.”

“Help me to weave healing medicine with my acquired gifts and experiences. Harmonize my fresh layer with knowing the meaning of this shift. Ease me through the other side and set me down delicately to fully embody my unusual, more-me form. Clear me of any blockages that stop the flow of goodness from me, and the flow of goodness to me.”

“Salt me with grateful tears and cleansing rain. Bathe me in the distilled waters of evolution.”

Right here and now, I know that the Living Universal Presence is with us always, living Life in, through and AS each one of us...in, through and AS all of creation. As I accept all that life brings me as Goodness unfolding, my life becomes easier, more graceful. I relax and let go of all that is no longer serving my conscious evolution and growth. I am made new by my intentions, and where I place my attention in every moment...may this newness unfold in ways that serve the Whole.

I am grateful for our time here together. Thank you, Spirit, for the many, many blessings of this and every day. I release this prayer now, trusting that it has already done its work...opening the way for new life to unfold. And so, in deep faith, I let it be. And so it is! Amen!

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 Song – *Must Be Present to Win*, written by Chris Johnson

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Lucinda – Invitations

-  **Kavalya Poirier will return to lead Kundalini Yoga/Meditation** next Tuesday, Feb. 21st.
-  Michael Bordeaux and the Mystic Heart Book Club is reading ***Lunch with Buddha*** on Tuesdays from 3:00-5:00 pm.
-  Kavalya will return to lead **Functional Movement Yoga** this Thursday, Feb. 16th from 11:00 am – 12:15 pm.
-  **Fast Track to Wellness** with Rev. Diana will be taking a week off, and will return next Thursday, February 21st from **12:30 – 2:30** pm. This is a physical health and wholeness support circle. They are currently using *The Yoga of Eating* and *The Miracle of Fasting*, as well as personal experience, as the basis for their discussions. Drop-ins are welcome.
-  **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson will take this week off, and will return on Thursday, February 23rd from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.
-  **Please sign up with Traci to assist with the Junior Mystics once every 4-8 weeks. She has the sign-up sheet next door...many hands make light work.**

Looking Ahead...

-  **Let's Talk Dirty...** First of all, I will apologize for this change of plans. I am just now learning how to think things through more thoroughly before throwing them out there. I'm looking for a group of folks to join me in attending one or two Shasta College workshops Gardening and Permaculture workshops, both on Saturdays, March 4th and April 1st, from 10 am to noon. The same topics will be covered as my previously planned workshop (and more!), but I will be free to learn right beside you. Pack a brown bag and join us for lunch on the beautiful Shasta College Campus. There is a flyer on our Bulletin Board for more information.
-  **2nd 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

Closing Song

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