

# *This is Soooo Uncomfortable*

*March 5, 2023*



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Sherri Dotter, RScP & Chris Johnson, RScP

## *Taizé*

### **Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**


#### **Sherri - 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.

#### **Taizé Chants**

 **Welcome Home to Your Mystic Heart**, written by Diana & Chris Johnson,  
© Barefoot Angel Publishing, ASCAP & SeaJay Music & Publishing, ASCAP

 **Blessing to the World**, written by Karen Drucker

#### **Rev. Diana**

So let's begin by making a Conscious Connection with the Whole, gently allowing the eyes to close if you are comfortable doing so, and taking a couple of deep breaths...letting go of everything that led to this moment...being fully present...

Feeling and knowing our connection to all of Life...sensing the Radiant Light of Spirit that shines from within us, and honoring that Light in all other beings...human, other-than-human, plants, rocks, soil and water, stars and planets...one Light...

The Essence, Substance, and Intelligence of all that is, flowing through each one of us now, offering Its Wisdom to our time together this morning. We feel our oneness with All That Is...

Sensing our oneness, we acknowledge our responsibility to one another as human family, and as caretakers of our beautiful and life-giving planet.

Centered in our Oneness, we turn now to this month's theme, ***New Beginnings.***

Each one of us is on a Sacred Journey, a journey of transformation. Day by day, moment by moment, we are changing...our lives are changing. This is the nature of things. Sometimes these changes are graceful...easy... welcome. And sometimes they are not...this is when it can be ***Soooo Uncomfortable.*** The challenge we face in difficult

times is to learn to be at peace with whatever is going on...to learn to flow like water around the seeming obstacles in our path...to move through life's sadness and grief without letting it take us over completely.

This life is a Sacred Journey...a Pilgrimage into the unknown, each day bringing new opportunities for discovery. And "if your journey is indeed a pilgrimage, a soulful journey, it will be rigorous. Ancient wisdom suggests if you aren't trembling as you approach the sacred, it isn't the real thing. The sacred, in its various guises as holy ground, art, or knowledge, evokes emotions and commotion." (Phil Cousineau, *The Art of Pilgrimage*)

The challenge is the same for each of us as we walk the daily journey of life...to remember that we are perfect and intentional expressions of the Divine. The purpose of our being here is twofold. First, our life experience offers the opportunity to discover our own Divinity. And second, it is only through our physical existence that the Divine comes to experience Itself as human. The One Source has given us the gift of life, and collectively, we are giving It the full range of human experience.

And so, we have come full circle...back to the idea that the nature of Life is change...that as humans, we tend to like things to be predictable. Our illusion of control gives us a sense of security.

The Spiritual Invitation for each of us is this...to go to the edge of my discomfort...to rest there, remaining fully present in my experience...allowing the edges to soften as I breathe...allowing it to be what it is, without action...without *re*-action.

We each have a threshold for uncomfortable or painful experiences. When we stay within this range, we can be present to what life brings us in the moment. When we drop below our threshold, we become numb and seek things out that help us avoid the pain. The numbing agents...drugs, overwork, media, shopping...blind us to real healing. We reach for them when anxiety kicks into overdrive...when we feel panicked, unsettled, sad, angry, or ill at ease.

The only way to widen our threshold of tolerance is to dance at its edges, explore uncomfortable places, and stay present. When we risk the unfamiliar, our resilience grows and we become more capable of living life peacefully, gracefully. The call is to cultivate patience...to not run away when things become challenging. Stability demands that we stay with difficult experiences and stay present to the discomfort they create in us.

As a culture, we rarely acknowledge the value of being uncomfortable. We strongly discourage grieving people to stay with their sadness. Instead, we tell them to 'cheer up' or 'move on.' Rarely are we encouraged to explore what grief can teach us. We are forever seeking the next thing to make us feel good. So much of our culture's spirituality is about making us happy, about affirmations and positive experiences. We take a moment to acknowledge and honor all that life brings...to admit that life can be difficult at times, and that there is not one of us who escapes feeling pain and discomfort.

Perhaps we can hold this in mind as we move through our days, interacting with others. Every one of us is holding the full range of human experiences. What might this *Beloved Child of God*, the one before me now, be carrying?

Sometimes we need to be uncomfortable. Sometimes we need to remember a God of wildness who calls us beyond our edges to a landscape where we might discover a passion and vitality we never knew we could experience. We may cultivate a freedom we have never known before because our fears become something to move toward rather than away from. Developing the capacity to endure and remain open to difficult feelings is part of the movement toward spiritual maturity...By staying present to the discomfort of life, we grow in our resilience and our ability to recover from the deep wounds that life will offer us. We grow in our compassion for ourselves as we learn to embrace all of the vulnerable places inside of us. Plus, as we embrace these in ourselves, we grow in our compassion for one another. We grow in our ability to experience deep presence and peace in the midst of life's messiness and uncertainty.

(Christine Valters Paintner, *The Soul of a Pilgrim*)

## **Chris – Guided Meditation**

One of the goals of the Spiritual Path is to grow beyond our perceived limitations... to expand into a realm of greater possibility... of higher fulfillment...

Our limitations are what define our comfort zones... they form the outer border of what is familiar... what feels good... what we are accustomed to... what we know...

And what is on the other side of that border?... Uncertainty... discomfort... fear of losing control... the unknown... dreadful phantoms of our own imaginings...

When we confront our limitations, we must do so on their turf... We have to meet them at the outer limits of our comfort zones... where it feels most dangerous to us...

Challenged by our discomfort ... our fears... our confusion... we are tempted to retreat back to the familiar... the comfortable... to our small, uninspired situation...

It is here that we must sacrifice our fear... call forth our faith... remind ourselves that there is a Divine Wisdom within us, ever guiding and guarding us...

In this time of shared, Silent Communion, let us find where we are being called to expand beyond our current limitations... our growing edges... and muster the courage to stay there despite discomfort, and do the work that must be done... **Silence – 3:00**

Three of the Gospels tell a story of Yeshua and his disciples sailing across the Sea of Galilee when a storm arose... As Yeshua slept, high waves rocked the ship, terrifying the disciples...

They woke him, and he arose and said, "Peace, be still!"... But was he addressing the weather?... or was he calming the storm within the disciples themselves?...

Outside of our comfort zones, when we become anxious, might it help to allow the Christ within us to command, “Peace, be still!” to quiet our fearful imaginations?...

Pilgrimage leads us into unfamiliar territory... uncharted waters... Let us set an intention to become more comfortable with discomfort... to lean into that which we fear... and to stay the course we have committed to...

As Taizé continues, we give thanks for Rev. Diana’s encouragement to continue growing... even when it’s Soooo Uncomfortable...

### Rev. Diana

From the poet Rumi...“God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches you by means of opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly – not one.”

It is in the gift of silence that I am reminded, yet again, that exhilaration and discomfort, joy and sorrow, clarity and ambiguity, are all part of my experience...I can and do contain the full range of human experience. And this is as it should be. The richness of life embraces all of it. I need only show up to every moment, willing to embrace the wholeness of who I am...no grasping...no resistance...ignoring the internal and external voices that want me to push ahead before I am ready...welcoming the tender grace of not knowing and “giving myself over to the fertile darkness, despite the fears or voices that long for certainty or the ones which think they have already got it all figured out.” (Paintner)

***New Beginnings*** require change. Change, especially unbidden change, can be **Soooo Uncomfortable**. Our world is in a time of transformation. And as self-reflective and choice-making members of the global community, each of us is a part of that transformation. Much of the change that is occurring in the world is not of our choosing. And it may be uncomfortable, or even painful at times to watch or experience. But we are made for times such as these.

The invitation this week is this...to welcome a profound sense of self-love, no matter what is going on in your life...and to honor the truth of your experience, moment by moment.

Where in your life are experiencing discomfort? Can you simply be present with it? Can you very gradually move toward welcoming it as a loving teacher? What are the voices that hold you back from such a gracious act of hospitality?

### **Musical Meditation – *In This Moment*, written & performed by Karen Mitchell 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.

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

**Offertory Music Video – *The Prayer***, Words and Music: Carol Bayer Sager and David Foster; Italian Lyrics: Alberto Testa and Tony Renis

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKf\\_LJoKHDo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKf_LJoKHDo)

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

Closing remarks – Spring Tea, tickets and raffle – still supporting Farmers' Footprint with lunch donations – check your new bulletin for activities coming up – please consider spending a service now and again with Traci and the kids. She has sign-ups next door.

### **Closing Song**

***A Soul's Blessing***, written by Chris Johnson, © SeaJay Music & Publishing, ASCAP

## *Conscious Conversation*

### **Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

### **Sherri – 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, © Barefoot Angel Publishing, ASCAP & SeaJay Music & Publishing, ASCAP

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

 ***Song – Metta-Chant***, written by Tienne Beaulieu

### **Rev. Diana**

I invite you to remain standing and take a moment to feel the Presence of Spirit in your body...the Life moving through...the Love 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 a world that works for all beings. *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 moment to look around and notice who is sharing this space with you this morning. This is one of your support systems, your Spiritual Family should you choose it.

Let me set a little context for our **Conscious Conversation**. Our theme this month is **New Beginnings**. Nature has a way of reminding us in the Spring **10:46** that it's time for growth, for change, for making a new start. But we're not quite to Spring yet, are we? We're still in that place of waiting. **How many people in this room are good at waiting?**

We've been talking about the process of real transformation, and how life is really all about change. **How many people in this room love change?** (Welcome change? Unbidden change?)

During the Taizé this morning, we talked about the importance of sitting still in the discomfort of not knowing what's coming...of getting comfortable with being **Soooo Uncomfortable**...and how some of the benefits of simply being present with what is, without reaction, are greater Peace, Clarity, and Contentment.

**What are some of the things that make you Soooo Uncomfortable?** (How about not having control over a situation? Anyone else join me in that one?)

**What are some of the Spiritual Qualities that we call draw on when we're feeling out of control?**

**Faith/trust...how does this help?**

**Peace...what does this do for us?**

**What are some of the gifts that come from practicing being still and present when things are out of our control?**

(loss of control teaches us to depend on one another, to admit that we are not self-sufficient; lets us practice letting go, surrender; builds resilience)

**What do some of the world's spiritual traditions say about control?**

**Is anyone familiar with Taoism? What would a Taoist say about control?**

Taoist Master Lao Tzu said this: "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them – that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like." The attempt to control runs counter to the natural ebb and flow of the universe. Taoists believe in the principle of Wu Wei, or non-action. This principle suggests that trying to undermine the natural order does not achieve happiness.

**What about Buddhism? What would a Buddhist say about control?**

Buddhism teaches that we must learn to surrender to our grasping to control...that by dropping into the body and noticing the fear, uncertainty, and anxiety that are causing you to want to get control, staying with it and allowing ourselves to feel it, we learn to relax and surrender. Both Buddhism and Hinduism would also teach that the only thing we can learn to control is ourselves, our thoughts, words and actions.

**What would Paganism have to say about control?**

There are many flavors of Paganism, just as in any of the world's traditions. But in general, and please correct me if I'm wrong, Pagans are those who understand Spirit to be manifest within nature. They believe that nature is sacred and that the natural cycles of birth, growth and death carry profoundly spiritual meanings. Human beings are seen as part of nature, along with other animals, trees, stones, plants and everything else that is of this earth. In Paganism, Gaia is in control.

**Who or what is in control according to Christian Theology?**

The Bible teaches that God's sovereignty is an essential aspect of who he is, that he has supreme authority and absolute power over all things.

**And what does it say about self-control?**

Proverbs 25:28 "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." It also suggests that humans are best able to control themselves when they put God first.

**What about New Thought? What does it believe about control? Self-control?**

We are co-creators with God, and with all of creation. We have control over our own thoughts, words, actions, and how we experience what happens to us. Divine Law is always at work. We can work with it in ways that are life-affirming, or we can work against it, in ways that are life-denying. We will always experience the effects of the causes we set in motion.

**Is this starting to sound familiar?**

**Why is there such animosity between religions?** We have so much in common. The world's traditions teach Love, Compassion, Kindness, Generosity, Surrender, and Self-Control.

I'm going to wrap up by talking a little bit about this second Sunday of Lent.

We're approaching Easter, and we said last week that the Season of Lent is the six weeks prior to Easter. In the Christian tradition, it is a time for fasting from what no longer serves us, and feasting on what does. It is a time of self-reflection in preparation for transformation. We talked about how important it is to come to a shared understanding about those parts of our spiritual background that have left us wounded...about the language and how it can trigger us, robbing us of our freedom. We talked about how repentance, an important part of the Lenten Season, means simply to turn around, to change one's mind and heart and act on that change.

And we talked about how we can use this season, every year, as a time for healing, for bringing order out of chaos, for asking hard questions and facing hard choices. We can use it for questioning the stories we tell ourselves, about ourselves.

**What did we talk about as the focus of last Sunday, the first Sunday of Lent?** The three temptations of Jesus. And we were invited to look at our own temptations and how we deal with them.

**Does anyone know what part of the story is the focal point of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent?**

**The transfiguration of Jesus. I'd like to read a short accounting from the book of Luke...it appeared in Mark and Matthew as well.**

'About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John, and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)'

'While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I



have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.’

**Is there anyone here from the Christian Tradition who would like to share briefly what significance this story has for you?**

**Is there anyone else who finds significance, something we can use to guide our lives today?**

I'd like to offer one metaphysical interpretation using some of the symbology of the Unity tradition. According to Charles Fillmore, this story, is symbolic. Peter symbolizes faith, James represents order, and John exemplifies Love.

Moses indicates Spiritual Law, or the evolutionary process of nature, which causes the upward trend of all things;

and Elijah symbolizes the effect of that Law, or the discerner of Truth, bringing rapid change to physical conditions using the mental faculties.

The two appearing together is referring to cause and effect.

According to Fillmore, Jesus represents God in human form, and the Christ is the Divinity in humankind...or the human self, raised to Divine Understanding.

So, let's put it all together...Jesus, the man, goes to the mountain (a higher state of consciousness) to pray; he applies his faith, his sense of order, and deep love to empower the process. Resulting from his deep communion, his very countenance is changed. The Peace, Goodness and Light radiate from him. As he aligns himself with Divine Will, or Spiritual Law, and allows it to work through him, he is transformed. This is pointing to the need for the mind and heart to be set right first, through spiritual understanding; then comes the demonstration or change of conditions. The proposal of building three tabernacles represents the manifestation of substance.

All of this to remind us that our prayer is powerful. When it is infused with faith and love, and includes bringing order to the mind, it is even more powerful. And not until we come into alignment with Spirit, working *with* Spiritual Law...going *with* the flow...we will see change in our life.

**Closing Prayer:** Join me in knowing that...

**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](http://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!**






**And just because it's fun and I haven't played it in a long time, feel free to get up and Dance, Dance, Dance.**

**Offertory Music Video – *Can't Stop the Feeling***, written by Johan Karl Schuster / Justin R. Timberlake / Martin Karl Sandberg, performed by Justin Timberlake




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru0K8uYEZWw>

**Sherri – Blessing for the Offering**

**Sherri – Invitations**

-  Michael Bordeaux and the Mystic Heart Book Club is continuing through the month of March with ***Lunch with Buddha*** on Tuesdays from 3:00-5:00 pm.
-  **Kavalya Poirier will be offering Functional Movement through Yoga** for the month of March on Thursdays, 11 am – 12:15 pm beginning this Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. There is a sliding fee scale for the class: \$40-\$60 for the four remaining classes this month with reservation and payment made in advance.
-  **Fast Track to Wellness** with Rev. Diana meets on Thursdays from **12:30 – 2:30** pm. This is a physical health and wholeness support circle. Drop-ins are welcome.
-  **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson meets on Thursdays from 3:00 – 5:00 pm. Drop-ins are welcome.
-  **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...**


-  **Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 pm, Sherry Barret will be offering our next Sound Bath Meditation.** Suggested donation is \$10-\$20 (sliding scale). Please see our website for more information.
-  **Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 3:00 pm,** Ellie Thompson and Kris Fortier are hosting their ***Spring Tea, which is the next Celebrating Community Event.*** More details to come. Tickets are available today. Contact Ellie for more information.
-  **Wednesdays, March 22 – May 24 from 2:00-5:00 pm,** Rev. Diana's last class of the 'school year', ***Conversations with the Divine: An Exploration of Prayer.*** The

suggested donation is \$95 for 10 weeks or \$10/class session. Contact Rev. Diana to register – more information is available in your bulletin or online.

 **Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday Release and Renewal Ceremony – 10:00-11:30, a single service for this week only.**

 **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.

### **Planning way ahead, because we want you to be there...**

 **Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> , 6:00-9:00 pm, Our Annual State of the Heart Gathering.** This is what might otherwise be called our Congregational Meeting...except we like to turn it into a potluck and music jam. You will, of course, learn how we've done this past year, how we're doing now, and what our plans for the future are. This year's Gathering is once again being hosted by the very gracious Gary and Angela French. More information will be available soon.

### **Prayer Requests, Information Cards**

#### **Closing Song**

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



©2023 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.