

Release, Remove, Replace, Repeat

Sunday, May 7, 2023



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

Taizé

A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

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. We welcome you home to our Spiritual Community (should you choose it), and welcome home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

This morning we center our reflections on the process of **Cultivating New Life**, and contemplating Prayer as a tool for **Releasing, and Removing, Replacing** the seeds of thought, emotion, and action that do not serve us.

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

 **When I Pray**, written by Daniel Nahmod

Rev. Diana – Join me in taking another deep breath in, allowing yourself to feel the Presence of New Life moving into and through your body...and then gently breathing out, allowing your body to let go...Breathing in the Aliveness of Spring, and then letting that Life flow out into the world around you, creating an atmosphere of Vibrant Energy, both within and without.

Taking another moment to follow the breath as it settles into its own natural flow...and then slowing the breath down just a little bit more. Now letting your awareness move away from the breath, trusting in the constancy of Spirit as it breathes your body...

...And turning inward to the Peace, the Love, the Beauty, the Joy, and the New Life that are forever within you, settling into the eternal nature of your being, where you feel and know your Oneness with the Creative Intelligence of the Universe...where you feel at home in the here and now...as together, we attune ourselves to the high vibration we are co-creating with the Infinite. Feel yourself to be an irreplaceable strand woven into the fabric of Creation, perfectly and intentionally made...you are the very image and likeness of pure Spirit. You are pure Light expressing...

Slipping fully into the flow of meditation, we acknowledge and experience the Radiant Light of Spirit as it glows within us...we recognize and honor the same Light in everyone and everything. There is nowhere that God's Light does not shine. From the *Book of Matthew*, "You are the light of the world...let your light shine."

We take a moment to feel the Oneness of our global community...Sensing a web of consciousness that covers the planet, each of us a radiant point of Light...all beings who in this moment, are drawn to the Presence of the One...the very atmosphere in which we live, move, and have our being. The Holy Dance of Spirit...I in Thou, and Thou in me...inseparable...each bringing completion to the other. (Pause) As we envision all beings, all of creation, joining the web, we see that there are no spaces between us...our web has become the fabric of Life in which we find our place, our purpose, our unique gifts...our Authentic Expression.

Feeling the shared intention that brought us here, there is a deep sense of communion with that which is beyond time and space, beyond definition and description...and we feel the impulse to grow and evolve. As we consciously acknowledge our connection with all of life, our collective Work here is empowered... our collective prayer and meditation leave a positive imprint on the world...on the cosmos...transformation has begun...Wholeness is revealed. You are refreshed and renewed by the Light and Love of Spirit.

As we speak of ***Cultivating New Life***, we must look at what it means to cultivate. Cultivation is a multi-step process. We begin by breaking up the soil, as with a plow or shovel. In this way we make water, nutrients, and oxygen available in soil that has become compacted. Then we get rid of whatever weeds have taken root, making room for new seeds to be sown. We add nourishment to replenish what has been used up. Then finally, we sow the seeds and tend the plants until they have grown strong enough to stand on their own.

We use meditation, contemplation, and reflection to notice and loosen the roots of unwanted, thoughts, emotional reactions, habitual patterns, and actions that are not serving our Highest Good, ***Releasing*** ourselves from their influence. In order to ***Remove*** them for good, we must recognize them for what they are, deny their power over us, and ***Replace*** them with more constructive thoughts, words, actions, or behaviors. And then, we must do it again...and again...again...until finally, we embody this Higher way of being. We are made new.

Musical Meditation – *The Garden*, by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

Rev. Diana – Prayer is a powerful tool for breaking up or interrupting old, rigid, calcified ways of thinking and acting. When we speak of prayer, we are not only referring to the *words* we use to communicate with Divinity...we are also pointing to the *feelings behind the words*. It is suggested by ancient wisdom traditions, and by modern mystics and scientists alike, that before something new can come into our lives, we must be able to

embody the experience in prayer. We must be able to *feel* that our prayer is already answered and sense what our lives are like with the new condition made manifest.

Take a moment now to call to mind something you might take into prayer.

(Pause)

Rather than using words to pray for a particular outcome, use the powerful silent language of human emotion. Put your imagination to work...sense and feel gratitude and appreciation, as though your prayer has already been answered. See, hear, feel, taste, and smell all that is unfolding as you live *in* and *from* your answered prayer.

Silence - 1 minute

Chris – Guided Meditation

The book of Genesis in the Hebrew Torah begins with two Creation stories... The first tells us that before Elohim set the Creative Process into motion, there was nothing... just a formless void... God had a blank canvas... nothing from which to fashion the cosmos... and nothing in the way, needing to be cleared out...

We use the same Creative Process that Spirit uses... but we don't get a blank canvas... we don't create in a void... We have stuff in our lives... inner stuff... emotions... opinions... beliefs... judgments... attachments... all of which affect the character and quality of our creations...

Meditation and prayer help us to loosen our mental and emotional attachments, so that we may remove the "weeds" in our consciousness... thoughts, beliefs, and emotions that attract undesirable conditions... As in the garden, the affirmative "seeds" we sow will thrive when the soil is well prepared...

Once we have cleared away our negative feelings and beliefs, we must replace them with positive ones... Just as we plant our seeds right after weeding the garden... because we know that if we don't, the weeds will return... And then we repeat, nurturing the affirmative "seeds" we have sown...

As we move into the Sacred Silence, I invite you to continue the process that Rev. Diana started with us a moment ago... Use your Creative Imagination to put yourself into the picture of your answered prayer... How do you feel?... What do you see?... Take in the sounds and smells... Who is there with you?... What can you do now that you couldn't before?... Keep filling the picture in... look around... What is the one piece of evidence you can find that proves that your prayer has been answered?...

Silence – 3:00

Gently returning our awareness to the here and now, we give thanks for this time of Blessed Communion with the Divine and with our Beloved Community... Grateful for the Gift of Creative Imagination that allows us to create the future we desire for ourselves and for our world... Thank you, God for everyone and everything...

As we use this Creative Power together to establish an atmosphere of peace, plenty, cooperation, respect, and compassion, we bring our vision of a Love-Soaked World into fruition... We are the change we wish to see... We become our best Selves... and we help create Heaven on Earth...

As Taizé continues, we receive Rev. Diana's inspired words with open hearts... And we are encouraged to Release, Remove, Replace, and Repeat...

Rev. Diana

(From *Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer* by Gregg Braden)

Feeling is the prayer...ask without hidden motive and be surrounded by your answer...feeling-based prayer acknowledges our ability to communicate with the intelligent force that 95 percent of us believe in, and participate in the outcome."

When we ask for something *to* happen, we give power to what we do not have. Prayers *for* healing empower the sickness. Prayers *for* rain empower the drought...by praying *for* world peace, while feeling tremendous anger toward those who lead us into war, or even war itself, we may inadvertently be fueling the very conditions that lead to the opposite of peace! (In other words,) Continuing to ask for these things only gives more power to the things we would like to change.

Author Gregg Braden suggests that:

Without any words, without our hands held in a certain position or any outward physical expression, this (feeling) mode of prayer simply invites us to *feel* a clear and powerful feeling as if our prayers have already been answered. Through this intangible *language* we participate in the healing of our bodies, the abundance that comes to our friends and families, and the peace between nations.

And so, call on the power of imagination...call on the power of emotion...feel and know life in the midst of the answered prayer. Use the power of gratitude and appreciation to conclude your prayerful time...grateful for the privilege of co-creating with Spirit...thankful that from the infinite range of possibilities, we can help to bring the ones we choose into the world. This or something even more beautiful...

Taizé Closing Prayer

And so, we know this as Truth...one Source, one Essence, one Substance, one Process...expressing and experiencing themselves as all of creation...including me, including you. Holding myself in this Divine Light, I feel and know only Goodness, and I shine it into the world. Remembering the Truth of who and Whose I Am, and the Power I am granted as an image and likeness of the Creator, I feel and know Love, Generosity, and Peace as the truth of my experience, and of my world.

Trusting in the Power and Presence of Spirit, in, through and AS all of Creation, I feel and know that I Am here to serve. And so I do...through my conscious thoughts, words, and actions...by my deep faith in all that is Good...and with gratitude for the gift of Life, and for the many blessings of this and every day. In deep faith that every prayer is heard and answered, I release it now to the one who takes it and makes it so.

And so it is...Amen...Sathu...Ashay...Aho!

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 Video–

***One By One* by Sam Garrett**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a58kXKMmMsl>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Closing remarks – still supporting Farmers' Footprint with lunch donations – check your bulletin or the website 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

Conscious Conversation

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. We welcome you home to our Spiritual Community (should you choose it), and welcome home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

This morning we center our ***Conscious Conversation*** on ***Release, Remove, Replace, Repeat***...in other words, the process of consciously walking the Spiritual Path we call life.

Let's get started by joining our voices in song and giving our bodies a chance to wake up!

Opening Music

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

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

 **Song – We Let It Be**, written by Rickie Byars

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 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 our Sacred Home.

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 accepted as Gifts of the Spirit and enjoyed 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 know that our Good Work is bearing fruit. 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*. It is coming into being now...and we trust that this prayer is an integral part of its Graceful unfolding.

We open our hearts, our doors, and our arms in Radical Welcome, erasing all lines of apparent separation. We create an open and loving community to which all are invited, and *in* which all have an equal voice. Our Powerful Vision is moving into form and experience here and now, and so we simply let it go and let it be. And so it is...Amen...Sathu...Ashay...Aho!

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.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that we have been looking at **Cultivating New Life**. For those who weren't there, we talked about how important it is

to have a consistent set of Spiritual Practices as we do the inner work of **Releasing** ourselves from negative thought and emotional patterns, actually **Removing** and **Replacing** them with more constructive and life-affirming patterns, and **Repeating** this process ad nauseum! Even a quick look at modern neuroscience tells us that repetition and consistency are necessary when it comes to breaking or changing habits.

What are some of the Practices that can help in rewiring the brain's circuitry?

(meditation, prayer, study, gratitude, sacred service, mantra, mindfulness – after each one, **How is this helpful? What does it do?**)

This is not news, right? From the Buddhist text known as The Dhammapada, from the 6th century before Christ, we find this:

If you meditate earnestly, pure in mind and kind in deeds, leading a disciplined life in harmony with the dharma, you will grow in glory. If you meditate earnestly, through spiritual disciplines you can make an island for yourself that no flood can overwhelm...Those who meditate earnestly attain the highest happiness.

And from the Christian New Testament, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God...”

How would you define *the will of God* in that verse?

(this is your nature; it is how you can make best use of the Spiritual Principles and Qualities that are always at work)

This morning, we gave a lot of focus to the Practice of Prayer.

How do you define prayer?

What kind of prayer did we focus on during Taizé?

(Affirmative prayer to set the tone and ask a question; listening prayer; feeling prayer)

I'd like to share a short reading from Gregg Braden's book, *Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer*. (Read *Praying Rain*, pages 10-12)

What did David mean... “if I had prayed *for* rain, it could never come?” (holds us apart from what we desire; puts it always in the future)

What is the Power behind this form of prayer?

(the Power of imagination to evoke the feeling of the prayer answered)

What is the primary Spiritual Principle at work here?

(The Law of Expectation – energy follows thought; we move toward, but not beyond what we can imagine. What we assume, expect, or believe creates and colors our experience.)

Quantum Mechanics seems to verify the Law of Expectation. **What is The Observer Effect in Quantum theory?**

(The outcome of an experiment changes according to the expectation of the one observing; the act of observation alters the behavior of the particles being observed)

From the ancient Hermetic teachings on into modern mysticism, we are told that “As within, so without.” Whatever we are feeling and being in any given moment is reflected back to us in our world.

How does this apply to the creation of a new experience in my life?

(I don't get what I want, I get what I am...what I imagine to be true)

How does it apply to the creation of a new paradigm in our world?

(Do we see the world as broken? Do we feel and know the presence of Wholeness, Peace, Joy, and Sufficiency as the truth of our world? Where do we place the majority of our attention and feeling energy? What might we create if we changed our focus?)

Prayer is an act of creation...it sparks and empowers our creativity.

Let's take moment of feeling prayer...to really feel our Love-Soaked World...how does it look? How does it feel? What are the people doing? Are they peaceful, joyful, loving, generous? How do you know? Give yourself a moment to really sense this More Beautiful World...

You can use this in your own life. Is there somewhere in your life that feeling prayer might be useful?

We close this time together with two interpretations of The Lord's Prayer.

First, a translation by Aramaic scholar Neil Douglas Klotz from Aramaic into English. O Birther! Father/Mother of the Cosmos. Focus your light within us. Make it useful. Create your reign of unity now, through our fiery hearts and willing hands. Help us love beyond our ideals and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures. Animate the earth within us so we feel the wisdom underneath supporting all. Untangle the knots within so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back from our true purpose. Out of you, the astonishing fire, returning light and sound to the cosmos.

And from the Unitarian Universalist tradition:

Indwelling God, who art infused throughout all existence, we hallow thee with many names. Thy Kingdom is within the human heart. We accept life for all that it can be, on earth as throughout all creation. May we continue to draw sustenance from this earth, and may we receive forgiveness equal to our own. May we ever move from separation toward union, to live in grace, with love in our hearts, forever and ever.

And finally, my own interpretation:

Living Universal Presence, expressing and experiencing Life in, through and as all that is; You are Most Holy, by whatever name we call you. Your Essence and Substance are within and all around me. Your Divine Order is forever guiding all of creation, both here

on earth and into the far reaches of the cosmos. You provide all sustenance...our needs are always met. Your justice is absolute – your response to our thoughts, words, and actions is in perfect measure. Your Grace lifts me above temptation and erroneous thinking when I hold You at the forefront of my heart and mind. You are the One Light...Yours is the One Power, a Power for Good...and the One Intelligence that directs the Music of the Spheres. My devotion is forever Yours. And so it is... Amen...Sathu...Ashay...Aho!

I invite you to bring your awareness back to your body, to your senses, to the atmosphere in the room. And when you are ready, open your eyes to re-enter the space. Welcome back.

Last week, we showed a video during Taizé, and I've had several requests to bring it back this morning so that more of us can see it.

This is Rev. John Pavlovitz, the author of *The Bigger Table*, sharing his thoughts about what it means to be in ***the Humane Middle***

<https://youtu.be/A2lxlgLTL2s>

Rev. Diana – Affirmation for the Offering

Each Sunday, we invite you to join in the celebration of the work we are doing in the world by sharing of your financial Good, should you choose to.

If you are at home, you can go to **mysticheart.org** to use our Donate Button or to find our mailing address.

We also have a Gracious Giving Program for those who would like to make a heartfelt monthly commitment of support so that we can more effectively plan for our growth. You can find more information on our website.

As we move into this time of giving, hold these words close to your heart and know how much we appreciate your gifts:

As I awaken to the God within me and all around me, I see Abundance everywhere I look. I consciously step into that flow of Abundance by this act of giving. I offer this gift freely in the spirit of Love, blessing and sending it forth to heal and prosper. It is evidence of my deep faith. It does good work in the world and blesses all of Creation. I give from a consciousness of Abundance! And so it is! Amen!

Offertory Song – *Look for the Good*, by Jason Mraz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPq2Vo3yWIk>

Sherri – Blessing for the Offering

Invitations

 **Michael Bordeaux** and the **Mystic Heart Book Club** is reading ***Dinner with Buddha*** this Tuesday from 3-5 pm. We listen and discuss, so no book needed.

- ♥ **Kavalya Poirier is offering Functional Movement through Yoga** on Thursday, 11 am – 12:15 pm. May 11th – June 1, sliding scale; \$40-\$60 for four classes.
- ♥ **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.**
- ♥ **Mystic Heart's first day at the Farmer's Market is Saturday, May 13th – 7:30 – noon. Come and see us!** Also, sign-ups are available to take a turn working the booth. We'll be there through October!

Mark Your Calendars Now...

- ♥ **Friday, May 19th , 6:00-9:00 pm, Our Annual State of the Heart Gathering.**

Looking Far Ahead...

- ♥ **Next year's retreat at Coram Ranch is booked. What you need to know for now... Dates: Thursday, April 25th – Sunday April 28th, 2024. There was a substantial gap between the amount collected and the actual cost of the retreat this year. (More details at the State of the Heart Gathering.)** Next year's cost will be \$350 for adults; there is a lesser amount for children (more information will be sent out via email). The good news...If you start this month, you can pay \$30/month with a final payment of \$20 next April and have your payment in full. We'll keep track of everything for you. Plan ahead!

Prayer Requests, Practitioner available after service, Information Cards if new people

Closing Song – *Love Be With You*, written by Lainey Bernstein & 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.

Diana Johnson's music is ©2023 by Barefoot Angel Publishing, ASCAP.

Chris Johnson's music is ©2023 by SeaJay Music & Publishing, ASCAP.