

There Are No Accidents

June 4, 2023



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP, and Chris Johnson, RScP

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

This morning we center our reflections and contemplations on the idea that ***There Are No Accidents.***

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

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 ***I Am So Blessed***, written by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana – Each of us is so blessed, right here in this moment, by the breath moving into and out of our bodies...the very gift of Life...feeling the Presence of Peace, expanding from within me with every in-breath...and flowing out into the world on the outbreath, creating an atmosphere of Peace, both inside and all around me...allowing awareness to move away from the breath, settling even more deeply into the stillness...feeling the Presence of the Divine...and acknowledging your Oneness with the global community...

Sensing the Divine Intelligence that surrounds and infuses the planet, each of us a radiant spark in Consciousness...every human, every creature, every plant...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars and planets...infused with Presence, with Sentience...part of one ever-present, all pervasive Life.

Acknowledging our connection with all that is, our collective Work here is empowered...we are a powerful Force for Good. Our collective prayer and meditation

leave an imprint of Peace, of Love, of Grace, on human evolution, on the world, for all time.

Our topic for contemplation today is ***There Are No Accidents***. I do not mean that there are never things that *just happen*. But I do mean that ***You Are Here***, in the midst of whatever is happening, for a reason. Your life has purpose...you have gift so offer. You are not done with your journey of becoming.

One of life's biggest questions is...why am I here? Br. David Steindl-Rast suggests that:

Only by looking at the dynamic interconnection of everything with everything can we hope to find our own place as human beings withing the widest network of networks and understand our function within totality.

In other words, we have to look at the bigger picture to begin to see where and how our piece of the puzzle fits in. Only then can we make the choices that will lead us to our Highest Expression. We are choice-making creatures. While I don't always get to choose the conditions I am presented with, it appears to be the truth that I have some freedom as to how I will respond.

Dr. Ernest Holmes tells us that "Your own choice has decided you." How does my choice decide me?

My choices do create my experience of life. But not in the sense that I create all the negative that happens in the world. It's trickier than that. There are situations in life that I do not directly choose or create. They just happen. There are circumstances in which I had no direct input. The question is, instead of focusing on where I wasn't given a choice, can I give attention to where I *was*...where I *do* have agency...and can I use that freedom to improve my overall situation or understanding?

There are situations where the choices of others determined my outcomes. I am not aware of choosing where or when I was born, or to whom, or any of the circumstances that came along with my birth. I don't recall choosing the color of my skin and the privilege that came with that...my gender or sexuality...and I have no memory of choosing the level of economic status I was born into.

I did make choices, although unconsciously, that set me squarely in the path of whatever I am facing. I cannot help feeling that there must be a reason. Might there be something for me to learn, a gift to move my soul along its way?

Spiritual Living is about becoming aware, in the moment, of the choices I do have. It's not about going back in time and changing, or even questioning, past experiences. It's about starting here and now, right where I am, and exploring where I might have some options and possibilities. What am I free to think, feel, say, and be? Because it is my response, my choice, in that moment that impacts how I show up the next moment, and the next.

Sadness is a choice, anger is a choice, despair is a choice. It is very challenging to NOT react this way when you're in a difficult, unjust situation...to choose not to resent, blame, or hate...these are not frivolous changes of mind.

They are gut-wrenching, life-changing decisions that are very difficult to make without the supportive, compassionate Presence that lives within you.

I have a lot of background in the New Thought/Ancient Wisdom traditions. It is easy to misunderstand New Thought teachings...I did for a long time... believing that if I experienced hate or anger, I was not being Spiritual enough. But we can't pretend our way through it. This would be Spiritual bypass...would not address the need to process our human emotions...and we would eventually experience negative side effects. Instead of denying life and banishing feelings, we have to learn to accept them, and to be gentle with ourselves and others.

Instead of thinking I was doing something wrong, or being spiritually weak, I had to learn to accept that difficulties are part of the human journey, and to pay attention to them, notice, learn what they have to teach...to simply hold the space for them to move through...to not get stuck.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me. They rod and The staff, they comfort me."

Notice that the Scripture says "Though I walk *through* the valley of the shadow of death"...it does suggest building a home there...or even pitch a tent. We are meant to come out the other side, to climb the mountain once more.

I had to learn that there is a Power and Presence greater than my human self, that lives within me, and is always available when I'm in need of strength, courage, or love...and I needed to learn to lean into *That*, to become a channel...to let it flow through me and into every circumstance. Because It will, if we let It.

Chris – Guided Meditation

New Thought and Perennial Wisdom teachings tell us that we humans are creative beings... expressions of our Divine Parent... made in the image and likeness of the Creator... chips off the old block... This means that we author our experience of Life just as Spirit authored the Universe...

But we don't create in a vacuum... there are nearly eight billion other people using the same Creative Process that we use... and Spirit responds to *all of it*... blending it all together in ways that ultimately move evolution forward... perpetually moving us toward the highest good of all...

This is the "dynamic interconnection" that Brother David wrote of... Each of us contributes to the ongoing creation of our universe... Every feeling, thought, and belief we have has some effect on the Collective Consciousness... and we can choose to be a positive influence in the world...

Just as we don't create in a vacuum, our spiritual development thrives most when we are in community... We grow best in an environment of love, support, compassion, and mutual accountability... where we gently hold one another to our highest possibilities... and celebrate our progress together...

It is no accident that we are here together this morning... We are here by Divine Appointment... beckoned by the Divine Evolutionary Imperative... summoned of Spirit to join our creative faculties to inspire and influence our world... To use our spiritual authority to write a new story... and then boldly walk into it... In this time of silent contemplation, let us release the story of separation we were born into, and move in consciousness into a Story of Oneness and Wholeness...

Silence – 3:00

Allowing the music to guide our awareness gently back to the here and now, we give thanks for this time of blessed communion with Spirit... of oneness in Beloved Community... and for the promise that it ripples out into the world... Thank you, God, for everything and for everyone...

This time together has enriched us collectively as well as individually... We have shifted the entire universe ever so slightly toward greater Beauty, Peace, Compassion, and Joy... *We are making a difference...*

Open and receptive to the inspiration of Rev. Diana's continued message, we embrace and embody the truth that indeed *There Are No Accidents...*

Rev. Diana

I recall the examples set by Viktor Frankl and Nelson Mandela. These men came through absolute atrocities with their Light intact. I want to remember these amazing beings...such examples of Strength, Courage, and Determination...because I don't want to minimize how difficult it is to choose Life. I want to follow their example to the best of my ability, so that more and more, I live in this world as a channel for compassion, kindness, and Light. I want to grow in Awareness of my connection to All That Is.

It is important for me to remember that the point of prayer is not to get rid of life's challenges. The point of prayer is to remember more and more often to tune in to the Highest Vibration I can in any given moment. Prayer is the Practice of tuning in to the Presence within...feel Its Love and Its Strength, so that I can face whatever it is I am facing.

The point of prayer is not to get what I want, although sometimes the answer shows up that way. What I needed to understand is that the answer to my prayer is a mirror for who I am *being* in the world. And it is the reassurance that I am not alone...that Spirit is always with me, Guiding and Guarding, when I remember to connect.

You Are Here...I Am Here...in this time and place...and There Are No Accidents.

10:01 Musical Meditation– *I Am Light*, by India Arie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lzm4RBICCQo>

Rev. Diana – Closing Prayer: Please join me as we close in prayer.

We ***Lean in Toward the Light*** as we connect with the One Source of all Life, trusting and knowing that each of us is a perfect and intentional expression of that Light. The One Presence that I call God is right here, fully abiding in every part of creation...nothing and no one left out...expressing Wholeness right here, where I Am, as I Am, Breather of my breath. Spirit is the very life of each one listening, holding, supporting, sustaining...all that we are. Nothing can separate us from our Source.

I Am so grateful for my deep connection...so grateful for this community...showered with more blessings than I can count. For all of this and so much more, I give thanks, in full faith that this prayer is active and vital. As I relax into Spirit's Sweet Embrace, feeling Its Warmth, Presence, Intelligence, and Love, I simply let go...get out of the way and let God do Their thing. 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.

Offering

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.

10:09 Offertory Video–Lean In Toward the Light, by Carrie Newcomer

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

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Closing Song

A Soul's Blessing, written by Chris Johnson

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Good morning and welcome, or welcome back...welcome to those joining online. 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 Gathering Place and to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Conscious Conversation Opening Music

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

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

Rev. Diana – Feel free to stay standing or whatever serves you in noticing the Presence of Spirit into our bodies, as we join in the Sacred Practice of envisioning a **Love-Soaked World...**

...where all humans embody and live from Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice and Freedom as Living Principles, practicing Love, Kindness and Compassion, honoring and caring for one another, and for our beautiful planet.

We are creating a world where all needs are met...where all beings have plenty of nourishing food, the safety and comfortable of home...where mental/physical health, education, and healthy relationships are ensured by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness...

...where all beings Serve the greater community doing what feeds their souls and are well supported for their time and talent...and in their Service, each one finds a sense of belonging...A world in which all beings are valued and respected for their uniqueness...where Authenticity and Integrity are the norm...where the Peace and Kindness 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. By the Power of our collective intention, we write a new story...

We *do not* lower our Vision, no matter the appearances in the world, knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is not only possible, but *inevitable*. We align our actions to support our vision, and a new world is born.

We open our hearts, our minds, our doors, and our arms in Radical Welcome, erasing all lines of apparent separation. In keeping with our Vision, we create an open and loving community to which all are invited, and *in* which all have an equal voice. Trusting in the power of prayer, we call it done, and in Sweet Gratitude, release it now to the Living, Loving, Lawful Presence. 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...your Spiritual Family should you wish. These are some of the people who care about you. You can count on their support.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that we have been considering the idea that **There Are No Accidents**.

I don't mean that there are not things that just *happen*. I do mean that, *whatever* is happening, we can choose how we respond. And we reflected on how those choices determine our *experience* of whatever is going on in our lives and the world. Finally, we were reminded that prayer is a powerful tool; but that it is not a magic lantern. We don't

always get what we want – we tend to get what we are being in the world reflected back to us.

I'd like to turn a corner right now and ask a seemingly unrelated question.

How many people in the room have Spiritual Practices that they do on a daily basis?

What are some of your Practices?

How often do you change Practices, try new things, or consciously deepen or grow a long-standing Practice?

Do you ever hear yourself repeating the same quotes from the same teachers from a long, long, long time ago? I do once in a while.

This might be an indication that you need to stretch.

What are the Practices that stretch you the most?

Do you engage in those willingly and regularly?

I *want* my spiritual practice to stretch me. I want to think in new ways, open to new ideas about myself and the world, about what I have to offer and who I'm here to be. I don't want to get stuck in old patterns or understanding from days gone by. **Why?** Because I'm not done growing into who I'm here to be.

Do you remember the story of Cinderella? There is a scene where she sees herself for the first time in that magnificent gown. She realizes for the very first time that she may actually be more than what she thought she was...she may be more than her lot in life...she may be more than what has been put on her by family and society. The vision reflected back to her told her that she might be more than what she was currently experiencing. It showed her a way of being that she had not yet grown into, and it encouraged her to step into a new Vision. She's never the same again. Her posture changes. Her desire for new adventures grows. She's willing to risk the change.

Have you ever had an experience like that? When the person staring back at you was somehow bigger, stronger, more courageous than the day before and you had to step into it?

Anyone want to share?

I want that for you, I want that for me, I want that for our children. I want that for our world. And some part of us knows it's possible.

So, where do we start? How do I step across the chasm from who I am today to the person I am here to become?

How about "Stop asking for permission...looking for confirmation or agreement." Note to future self...stop asking for permission to express your greatest potential. Get in touch with what is good and true and enduring in you, and let it lead you to what is good and true and enduring in the world, because you're not done becoming who you are.

Sometimes stepping into the bigger me requires *acting as if*.

What do I mean by that? (use the power of imagination)

While this practice is fun, and can be very useful, it has to be followed by action. I can walk around affirming that I Am a doctor, but if I don't get the skill, training and education I need, it's not helpful. What is that old saying?

Inspiration without application is hallucination and does not lead to transformation!

Imagination is useful but you have to be careful with it. **Why?** (It can obsess on the negative stuff in the media, or in my life.)

The imagination can be triggered or sparked. What's the difference? (When my imagination is triggered, it runs away with me.)

What feelings come when it's triggered? (Fear, anger, sadness, etc.)

How about when it's sparked? (When sparked with curiosity, it's filled with awe, wonder, possibility thinking, hope, ideas, acceptance, humor.)

I want more spark and less trigger. How about you?

How can we move toward more spark and less trigger? (intentionally putting myself with people/activities that spark my imagination; break out of bad habits that hold me back; try on new ideas and different ways of being)

Rev. Edward Viljoen from CSL Santa Rosa has strong views on this, and I have to say I agree:

I must make room for the things that expand me... I must! I must make room for art, for poetry, for music, for dancing, for community, for volunteering... I must learn and I must grow because I'm not done becoming who I Am, and neither are you.

I can manage whether I'm being triggered or sparked by surrounding myself with what sparks me. I'm not trying to avoid what triggers me, but rather, giving conscious attention to what lights me up.

Rev. Edward also quotes a colleague who once said to him:

My concern is that our lives will become like soap operas...that we can go for months without tuning in. And when we do, we find that the same stuff is still going on. Terrifying!




He goes on to say:

Note to future self. I cannot go where I want to go by remaining on the same treadmill I've been on. I cannot draw into my life new experiences by holding onto reasons for not showing up in the way that grows me. I cannot bring Peace into our world by holding on to harsh words, insecurity and resentment. I surely cannot expect the best by holding onto the worst expectations. Imagine if you wrote a note to your future self. What would

you say? You and I have a natural born gift...to think, to imagine, to feel, and to be curious. It's more about asking the question than it is about arriving at a solution.







What are some ways you can spark your curiosity, to get the imagination going in a positive direction?

I love 'What If' questions:

-  What if everything I need is really inside of me, what would that mean?
-  What if, with whatever is going on in my body, I had a sense of being Whole?
-  What if I could hear Nature speaking to me? What would she be saying, and how would that change the way I show up in the world?

What are some other What If Questions that would be helpful for you?

There is also a set of powerful questions/statements that come from Julia Cameron's work. Try these on for size:

-  If I let myself admit it, I think I have a secret gift for...
-  If I weren't so afraid, I would let myself...
-  The best person to cheer me on with my secret gift is...
-  The person I should carefully not tell my dream to is...Wow!
-  The tiniest realistic step in my dream's direction is...
-  The biggest step is...

The growth required to ask and hear the answers to such questions can be uncomfortable. We might be afraid of what our loved ones will think, how they will feel and treat us if we change. And sometimes our loved ones have gotten used to our ways and really don't want us to change. When you start to enlarge your life, it can be frightening.

Practice is comforting...Practice brings confidence and clarity.

So, how does this all tie together with this month's theme...*Here You Are?*

And how does it fit in with *There Are No Accidents?*

Closing Prayer It's time to close our Conversation for today. Let's close in prayer.

Let's relax and settle into the One Life, the One Source of All of Life, the One I call God, Great Spirit, Holy Mother, Creator...by whatever name we call It, there is nothing else. One Living, Loving Universal Presence, expressing and experiencing Themselves as All That Is...knowing what it is to be you, to be me, to be us...in Community. Let's give them the ride of Their lives...let's become and live as the most loving, compassionate, kind-hearted, generous, peaceful, joy-filled beings who have ever lived. We all benefit when each of us grows into our Highest Version of ourself... the world is a more beautiful place because we were here.

I give thanks for this beautiful and Grace-filled day. I give thanks for each one listening here today, and for each one in Service to make our Gathering possible. Thank you

Spirit, for your all-powerful, infinitely intelligent, and ever-present Light. May It shine on each of us as we move through our week and bring us safely back together.

I release my Word, accepting it as the Power of the One moving through me, and so I call it done...I let it go...I let it be...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.

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!


Here is a song we heard yesterday at the Pride Festival, from Lady Gaga, to remind us that each of us is perfect, just the way we are:


Video – Born This Way – Lady Gaga


https://youtu.be/4S_vcIBIGZo

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Invitations

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club, Functional Movement through Yoga, Fast Track to Wellness, and Metaphysical Bible Study** are all meeting at their normal times this week. Drop-ins are welcome.

 For Michael's final Book Club meeting, he's showing a really fun 'road trip' movie – **Michael**, with John Travolta. Join us in Suite I on Tuesday at 3:00 for popcorn, beverages, and a story about a most unlikely angel!

 Book Club will reconvene on July 11th with Rev. Diana for a 4-week romp through **The Essential Path** by Neale Donald Walsch (while Michael is on vacation).

- ♥ **Support your local farmers, and your own physical health, at the Saturday Farmer's Market every Saturday, 7:30 – noon.**
- ♥ **Saturday, June 10th from 1:00-3:00 pm, Praying in Color with Ellie Thompson.** We will be using decoupage to prayerfully create a beautiful, one-of-a-kind flowerpot. Suggested donation: \$20
- ♥ **Please consider lending a hand with our Junior Mystics. Traci has a sign-up sheet available.**

Looking Ahead...

- ♥ **Wednesday, June 28th from 6 – 8 pm, Common Threads of Truth with Rev. Helen Cummings.** The focus of this first presentation in a series will be Buddhism and the Common Threads of Truth it shares with other traditions. There will be Q & A and simple refreshments. Donations are gratefully accepted. Bring a friend!
- ♥ **Next year's retreat at Coram Ranch is booked. Dates: Thursday, April 25th – Sunday April 28th, 2024.** Please talk to Rev. Diana for more information, and to begin monthly installments this month.

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

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

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

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