

Falling Into Freedom

Sunday, July 23, 2023



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP,
& 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.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 **We Are One, written by Linda Webb-Khakaba**

Rev. Diana – We are One in this and every moment, connected by the breath moving into and out of our bodies...by the earth and water that give us nourishment...by the Presence of the Divine that lives, moves, and has its being by means of creation...all nations on the earth, all life upon the planet...nothing can separate us. We are One...

We take a moment to experience our Oneness with all of Life...to honor the connection with our global family...Envisioning a web of consciousness that surrounds and infuses the planet...each of us, a Radiant Spark shining within the web...every human, every creature, every plant, shining the One Light, from the One Source...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars, and planets...enlivened by the Light of Spirit.

As we acknowledge our connection with all that is, we are empowered...there is strength in connection...there is freedom in knowing we are not alone.

As we come together in prayer and meditation, we leave a positive imprint on human evolution and on the world, for all time. In this moment, we set an intention that this imprint be one of Love, Peace, Joy, Beauty, and Contentment.

The flow of Taizé this morning invites us to consider **Falling Into Freedom**. But what is true *freedom*? We might believe that it is the ability to consciously choose our responses, rather than being triggered and reacting, in any situation...we may define *freedom* as having the support behind us to openly share our gifts in the world...to give our time and attention to whatever brings us joy...or maybe it is so much more.

What if freedom is actually a Quality of Spirit, given to each of us at birth, or even prior to being born into this lifetime? Like Peace and Power, Love, Joy and Beauty, Freedom is part of our nature. We do not have to attain it...it is our Divine Birthright...always available in any moment that we believe it...acknowledge it...accept and receive it...and give it direction in our lives.

Right now, in this moment, who you are is eternal freedom. Everything that you imagine yourself to be arises in that freedom, exists in that freedom, and disappears back into that freedom. Freedom doesn't go anywhere. It didn't suddenly appear when you were born, and it doesn't disappear when you die. Freedom is the truth of life. Freedom is who you are. Not who you have named yourself; your name appears and disappears. Not who you have imagined yourself to be; that changes with time. Not who you feel yourself to be; that feeling comes and goes. Freedom is always here, and there is no end to it. Freedom is the essential nature of consciousness, and consciousness is the source of individual awareness. (The Diamond in Your Pocket, by Gangaji).

Falling Into Freedom...what does this mean? (Pause) In the physical world, falling is not a pleasant experience. It means we have lost our balance, lost control of our bodies...and in the process of falling, there is a period of time when we're not sure where, or how, we will land.

Freedom from a person, condition, or situation might come unbidden, as when we lose a job, a relationship, or a home. At first, it may feel as though we have lost our balance...are not in control...and we might not know which way to turn. And yet, if we can grieve our losses, hospicing what has been...putting it to rest...and at the same time, stay open to possibilities, we are presented with a new selection of choices...the freedom to become someone we've never been before.

At other times, **Falling Into Freedom** comes through our *choice* to simply let go...to acknowledge our inherent freedom, and to surrender to its Power in our lives. *Surrender*...from the Latin, *sur* means *above*, or *over*...and *render*...to *give back*... to give back, over and above what is expected...

Could it be that surrender implies a relationship? Not simply an action on our part, but a complete cycle...a cause *and* an effect? What if, when we consciously *surrender* into the Freedom that is part of our nature, God...Great Spirit...the Universe...automatically offers us a range of possibilities that are generated *by our act of letting go*...and were not available until we surrendered control?

What if *Freedom* is a Spiritual Principle, available to all equally, but offering its full benefit *only* as we learn to recognize it...to believe that it is part of our nature...and to actively engage with it? What if, like the other Laws of Nature or Spirit, we can actually use this Principle constructively to stretch the range of the possible in our lives?

As we begin to use these questions as the focus of our contemplation, we will begin to notice how and where the Principle of Freedom is working in our lives. Where do I feel

free to practice conscious choice? Where do I believe I have no choice? Is there somewhere that I feel a lack of freedom? And is this lack actually true, or am I simply afraid of the changes that would occur if I chose Freedom? (Pause)

Once I can be radically honest with myself, listening and receiving Guidance, then I can ask for the courage and strength to surrender...to invite the full range of possibility that is the natural response to my letting go.

Chris – Guided Meditation

For many of us, the idea of falling has a negative connotation... losing our balance and hitting the ground... perhaps landing hard... maybe causing injury to our Body Temple... Or possibly we've just embarrassed ourself... momentarily lost control... We pick ourself up and look around... nothing hurt but our pride...

But falling is a word used to describe beautiful states of being as well... such as falling in Love... Or the splendor of a waterfall cascading down a cliff... splashing into azure pools far below... If we don't surrender and fall, we miss out on a loving relationship... If the water refuses to fall, there is less magnificence in the world...

Actually, we don't *fall* in love... we jump... We don't lose control; we surrender to a greater potential... we willingly give up one state of being so that we may experience a more fulfilling one... And maybe the water jumps, too... somehow knowing that as it careens over the edge, it is bringing more beauty into the world...

When skydivers jump out of the plane, they go into free fall... completely surrendered to the Law of Gravity... They maneuver their bodies in the airstream to experience a few moments of flight... Flying has always been a symbol of freedom... The human longing for flight is the desire to be free... free as a bird...

I invite us to imagine, What would Absolute Freedom look like in my Perfect Life?... What would my health look like?... my finances?... my relationships?... my contribution to the world?... In these moments of shared Silent Contemplation, let us ask our Divine Intuition, "What outworn beliefs or habitual thought patterns might I need to release to be truly free?..." Letting go of our bedrock assumptions is a kind of free fall... jumping into the unknown... Together we are taking a leap of faith...

Silence – 3:00

With profound gratitude, we accept the gifts of this meditation... the Divine Guidance that leads us into greater freedom... the love and support of Beloved Community as we take risks and grow... and the courage to let go of what no longer serves us... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

Marianne Williamson reminds us, "As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others..."

Open and receptive to Rev. Diana's heartfelt words this morning, we allow ourselves to be inspired, encouraged, and empowered with the audacity required for *Falling into Freedom*...

Rev. Diana

When we are young, we are taught that surrender means to *give up*, not that it actually means to *give back, over and above*. How might the lives of future generations be different...more courageous, more fulfilling, more peaceful...if we can get this message across?

The younger generations are feeling this sense of Freedom as part of their nature. It is showing up in ways that are hard to understand for some of the elders...it is showing up as young people who refuse to take jobs that are meaningless...that serve unhealthy food to their brothers and sisters... that take part in practices that are detrimental to the planet.

I have heard some say that 'nobody wants to work anymore'. Is this true, or has there been an evolution of human nature? Are we moving into a time when people actually believe that they have the right to find joy, contribution, and beauty in the work they do in the world? Does this mean that it is not work? Work is simply an act of accomplishment...getting something done. It is not meant to be a four-letter word.

What if, instead of judging our young people for refusing to do the unfulfilling tasks that many of their elders did, we *praised* their courage and their unwillingness to conform, giving them our permission to offer their true gifts, to find ways to truly serve, in ways that brings passion alive in their hearts, and beauty alive in the world? What if we allow them to stand on our shoulders, and *support* their efforts to create a new way of being in the world? And what if, we made similar choices, even in the later stages of our lives? What if we chose to offer our unique gifts that brought joy, passion, and a sense of contribution into our lives? By following *their* lead, and *supporting* them in following their hearts, would we then become a more conscious and influential part of the transformation we see happening?

All that has been spoken is part of *Falling Into Freedom*...allowing the Principle of Freedom to reveal greater possibilities, not only in our individual lives, but in the world.

Taizé Closing Prayer – Holding these words as Truth, we close in prayer:

There is only One Universal Living Presence, expressing as all of creation. I call that One God, Spirit, Universe, Life. Since all of life is part of this One, each bit expressing uniquely on purpose, then all Life is Sacred. As one way that Source expresses, every human being is on what appears to be an individual journey...but we know that there are Common Threads of Truth that run through all of it. Spirit is constancy in action, and so each of us is using Spiritual Principle to help co-create our experience of life. As we begin, day by day, to more closely align our thoughts, words and actions with the integrity and authenticity of the Divine, our lives become more Peaceful and Joy-filled. As we

accept this Spiritual Journey that we call life as a fully integrated body, mind, and spirit experience, and tend to each aspect of our humanity with great care, we blossom into thriving. As moment by moment, we learn to surrender to the Order and Timing of Spirit, we fall into the greatest Freedom we have ever known.

Thank you, Holy One, for my growing awareness...may it continue to be fed and nourished.

Thank you for this Spiritual Community and the many ways its members support one another. I am so grateful for the Presence of the One in my life...for my willingness to spend time growing my awareness *of* It, and my communion *with* It. I am so blessed by the Guidance that is always available when I ask and listen.

May I always remember the Truth about You...that Your Power, Your Presence, and Your Love are Infinite...without limits of any kind...and that I have been gifted with the Divine Quality of Freedom, that I might discover True Liberation within myself and use it for the Good of all.

Thank you, God, for the many blessings of this and every day...they are too many to name, but ever-present just the same.

Knowing that as I speak and feel the Power of this Prayer, it is acted upon by the Unseen Hand, so I can release it in full faith that it is moving into form and experience here and now. And so I do...and so it is...Aho.

Coming back into the awareness of our bodies...our senses...the atmosphere in the room, we open our eyes and allow our gaze to take in whatever is before you. Feel free to look around and say good morning to everyone 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, and are there for you if you need anything.

Rev. Diana – 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.

Offertory Video

 ***Too Blessed to Be Stressed, by Sam Garrett***

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la3z_j7ff2o&list=RDEMkmH_igriE3Ou_ccEP3_7PA&index=25

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

 ***A Soul's Blessing, by Diana & Chris Johnson***

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Re-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 Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Independent 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.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Re-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 in the body...join me in the embodiment of living in a ***Love-Soaked World...***

...where all humans embody and live from Kindness, Compassion, Peace, Joy, Abundance and Generosity, Justice and Freedom as the Living Principles that guide our every thought, word, and action...where all humans honor and care for one another, for the earth that sustains us, and for every life form that shares this beautiful planet with us.

We are creating a world where all needs are met...where all beings are well-fed, and have the safety and comfort 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 whatever feeds their souls and are well supported for their time and talent...and by 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.

With our growing Awareness, and by the Power of our collective intention, we are writing a new story; it is a story where there is no greed, where abundance means having enough to thrive.

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 being 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 accept its Graceful unfolding, calling it done, and in Sweet Gratitude, we 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 to say good morning to your Spiritual Family...some of the people who care about you...people you can count on when you need a hand.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that we have been considering the concept of ***Falling Into Freedom***. We reflected on the idea of surrender by its literal meaning, growing from its Latin roots: to give back, above and beyond what is expected.

We questioned...how might our lives be different if we learned to see surrender in this light? And how might the lives of future generations be different...more courageous, more fulfilling, more peaceful...if we can begin to plant this seed of Truth...

...that to surrender to the flow of Life has nothing to do with giving up; rather, it points toward the Universal tendency to give back, over and above what seems possible, as we let go of the need to control, and our attachment to outcomes. We set this as our loose definition of what it means to ***Fall Into Freedom***.

Toward the end of our contemplations, I set a line of thought in motion. And this is where I'd like to begin our conversation this morning. Here is the context.

Have you noticed that there are a lot of entry-level jobs available? Do you notice *Now Hiring* signs wherever you go? What's happening? Why aren't people taking these jobs?

(Lots of reasons...minimum pay, can't make a living, meaningless work)

Do you think that it has anything to do with a shift in perspective around the idea of work?

(They may be a sign that humanity is evolving.) **How?**

Is it possible that younger generations are feeling the Spiritual Quality of Freedom as part of their nature? Are they simply carrying their right to Liberty to the next level?

It is showing up in ways that are hard to understand for some of the elders...it is being labeled as 'entitlement'...it's showing up as young people who refuse to take jobs that are meaningless, or for companies that are engaging in unethical or unhealthy practices...they may question the rightness of serving unhealthy food to their brothers and sisters...they may choose not to take part in practices that are detrimental to the planet in exchange for a paycheck.

10:49 I have heard some say that 'nobody wants to work anymore'. **Is this true, or has there been an evolution of human nature? Are we moving into a time when people actually believe that they have the right to find joy, contribution, and beauty in the work they do in the world?**

What do you think and feel about that?

Does this mean that it is not work? (Work is simply an act of accomplishment...getting something done. It is not meant to be a four-letter word.)

Why do we associate such negative connotations to work, and then judge those who wish to make their work a soul-nourishing experience?

Is it sometimes necessary that we do work we do not prefer in order to eventually work our way up to doing what feeds our souls?

That is definitely the old story...**is it True, or simply a story?**

What if it's not true? What if the Truer story ran similar to the first book of Genesis?

“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may have dominion (not domination) over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” *Dominion implies caretaking*. So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Both of them, each with male and female attributes...on purpose, because both are necessary) “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.’” (Subdue...Support/giving of oneself from below.)

Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (A ruler in those days had implied responsibility to and for their subjects.)

And then God gave them all of the plants for food, all of the animals to care for, and called it all Good. Period. No toil...no sweat of the brow...no suffering as part of our work...no exile, alienation, or separation.

What if *that* is how our lives are meant to be? Why can't we believe this story?

What if there is a right and perfect livelihood available for all of us, and that it all fits together perfectly like a giant cosmic puzzle?

Why do we have so much trouble believing this could be true?

During Taizé, I asked these questions, only this time, let's talk about them. **What if, instead of judging our young people for refusing to do the menial and mindless tasks that many of their elders did, we *praised* their courage and their unwillingness to conform, giving them our permission to offer their true gifts, to find ways to truly serve, in ways that brings passion alive in their hearts, and beauty alive in the world?**

10:58 What if we allow them to stand on our shoulders, and *support* their efforts to create a new way of being in the world?

And what if, we made similar choices, even in the later stages of our lives? What if we chose to offer our unique gifts that brought joy, passion, and a sense of contribution into our lives?

By following *their* lead, and *supporting* them in following their hearts, would we then become a part of the transformation we see happening?

All of this is part of ***Falling Into Freedom***...allowing the Principle of Freedom to reveal greater possibilities, not only in our individual lives, but in the world.

I have a favorite quote from the book of Nehemiah, in which he is high atop a ladder or scaffolding, working on the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem, and he is summonsed by two local officials. They realize that the protective wall is almost finished, and they want to stop the process.

Nehemiah replies: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." They approach him four separate times, and each time his reply is the same. He believes in the work he is doing...feels it is definitely his to do.

Looking at this story through the lens of metaphor, what might Nehemiah's reply be pointing to?

And how does this fit into our conversation about the younger generations and their approach to work?

I'm not saying that all young people fit into this category, or that all elders are lacking in understanding. I think we're in transition between an old paradigm and a new one...an old story and the one that is becoming.

From the Buddhist tradition: "Everything worth doing takes work, takes effort." But the ideal is to find work according to one's Dharma. What does this mean?

How might other traditions look at this idea of work? Anyone want to share from your preferred tradition?

Closing Prayer – know with me now the Truth of this simple prayer: There is only One...one Presence...one Source...one Life...we cease any attempt to name It, but simply feel Its presence within and all around us now...

This One is Life Itself, expressing as all of creation...

It is the Intelligence of the Universe, the Divine Order in all that is...

It is the Love that gives tirelessly of Itself...It is the possibility of Peace, Joy, and Beauty that dwell within us all...

...And the Freedom to express and experience life in whatever way we choose.

And It lives in, through and as me now...this is the deepest Truth.

And so, I simply accept these gifts of Spirit, give thanks for them; and to show my gratitude, I make best use of them.

I walk consciously in the world, determined to be the authentic expression of Love, Peace, Joy, Beauty, and Freedom that our world so desperately needs...

Thank you, Spirit, for my growing awareness...for the courage and willingness to accept and follow Inner Guidance...and for the many gifts that are showered down upon me. I am so grateful...

Centered in this gratitude, and in the deep faith that all of Life is working for the growth and evolution of all, I release this prayer, trusting in its heartfelt intention...feeling its Truth and calling it done. And so it is. Amen.

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!


Offertory Video


A Little Bit of Love, by Jack Johnson, John Cruz, & Friends

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfERoDwU42g>


Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering & Invitations


 ***The Mystic Heart Book Club is reading *The Essential Path* by Neale Donald Walsch, Tuesdays from 3-5 pm. Drop-ins welcome.***

 ***Metaphysical Bible Study is meeting with Chris Johnson on Thursdays from 3 – 5 pm. Drop-ins welcome.***


 ***Common Threads of Truth, this Tuesday, July 25th, 6:00-8:00 pm – Kathy Rutan-Sprague of the Baha'i Tradition will be presenting. Bring a friend. Donations gratefully accepted.***

Looking Ahead...

 ***Please join Mystic Heart on Friday, August 4th for a joyous time of drumming and spiritual togetherness. All are welcome! Drumming will begin at 6:30pm. Please arrive early for parking and set up. Bring your drum or favorite instrument, a chair for outdoor use and your open heart. Drumming led by April Jimenez; hosted by Laurie Buckman and James Massengale. Please RSVP for address. Contact April @ 562-440-3785 or Laurie @ 530-440-2924 for more info.***

 ***The Rainmaker, a romantic comedy. Wednesday, August 9th, 7:00 pm, curtain at 7:30. Early bird tickets are \$20 today and \$25 after. We are being invited to bring appetizers to share, and beverages will be for sale at the theater.***

 ***Praying in Color – Kindness Rocks! Join Rev. Diana on Saturday, August 12th, 1:30–4:00 pm at the Mystic Heart Gathering Place, Suite H.***

 ***Saturday, August 19th, 10 am – noon, Laurie Buckman will present a Culinary Herbs Workshop, including how to mindfully grow and use a variety of herbs to create a varied and healthy range of recipes. More details to come. Suggested donation: \$20. All materials provided.***

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**

©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.