

Stillness Within Action

July 2, 2023

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



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Welcome...if you're new with us here this morning, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I 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 dive deep into the flow of Taizé Meditation as we join our voices in song.

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 Presence of the Divine that lives, moves, and has its being by means of each and every one of us...all nations on the earth, all life upon the planet...nothing can separate us. We are One. Together we breathe (Pause) ...and now allowing awareness to move away from the breath and into the Stillness that is forever present and always available...deep within, no matter what our bodies are doing...no matter what is happening in the world around us.

We take a moment to experience our Oneness with all of Life...to honor our connection with our global family...

Envision with me a web of consciousness that surrounds and infuses the planets...some call It the Field, some call It Presence, some call It God...and each of us is a Radiant Spark within that One Light...every human, every creature, every plant, without exception...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars and planets...enlivened by the Light of Spirit...all Life breathes together.

We empower our human expression of Good in the world as we acknowledge our connection with all that is...we grow in compassion and understanding as we acknowledge that we are all of One Essence, One Substance, One Source, and that what we offer into the world affects us all. With hearts and minds stayed on Spirit, our

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

The flow of Taizé this morning invites us to look for the ***Stillness Within Action***. What is stillness? Is it the absence of sound? No, that would be silence. Is it the absence of movement? No, that would be motionlessness. Stillness is the absence of turbulence.

Stillness is a calm, trusting, unperturbed composure of the heart. Thus a heart that has acquired stillness can choose to speak out or to remain silent, depending on what life demands at the moment. The right word, at the right time, will be a word that does not break the silence, but lets the inner stillness come to word.

(You Are Here, Br. David Steindl-Rast)

Like anything we seek to attain, inner stillness can be learned through practice. At the start, we might just stop what we are doing long enough to take a few slow and conscious breaths. This alone will go a long way toward calming the inner turbulence. And the less inner turbulence we experience, the less outer commotion can disturb us.

One who is grounded in inner stillness radiates a sense of calm, even when engaging in intense activity. Think of an Olympic Gymnast...keeping their balance in the midst of tumbling and twirling...never losing center. There is a deep sense of poise in their movement, an air of equanimity...the Spiritual Qualities of Peace and Power are present and perfectly balanced.

I feel the ***Stillness Within Action*** when I am in the garden more than at any other time. My body is moving...watering, weeding, clipping, even digging and lifting...but my mind is free of turbulence. In these moments, I Am ***Free to Be***. Take a moment in the silence to ask, "When am I the most free of inner turbulence...when am I the most free to be?"

Silence – 1 minute

Musical Meditation – *In the Stillness*, by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana – We might compare ***Stillness Within Action*** to being in a state of flow...the experience of being so absorbed by an engaging, enjoyable task that your attention is completely held by it. In a state of flow, there is only present moment...one loses all sense of time, all awareness of self, all need to control. In a state of flow, one is not interrupted by extraneous thoughts. Although Flow is an active state, the work is effortless. Being in the state of flow is one way to find ***Stillness Within Action***.

Chris – Guided Meditation

As children, many of us were drawn to the merry-go-round on the playground... We would run to get it spinning quickly, then hop on... Standing at the edge of the circle, we were exhilarated by the speed... but when we moved in, toward the center of the circle, we found a stillness...

The fast pace of our lives can feel like being at the edge of the merry-go-round... People, experiences, and sensations come at us continually... and it *can* be exhilarating... for a while... But if we are not careful to schedule some down time into our days, we can get emotionally exhausted...

Just like on the playground, we can find the stillness by moving in toward the center... taking moments to withdraw our attention from the frenetic activity *out there*, and turning it inward... to the center of our Being... to the place where the Divine dwells within us, in Perfect Stillness...

Tibetan and Zen Buddhists practice meditating with the eyes open... We live most of our waking hours with our eyes open... This kind of meditation helps us learn how to focus our attention inward... even if there are visual distractions... We participate in Life from that point of Stillness within us...

As we move into these moments of Sacred Silence... of shared Stillness... let us find that Still Point within us... With eyes open *or* closed, bring to mind an experience of Stillness... It may have been a state of flow... a time of communion with Nature... or simply a cessation of inner turbulence... Bring that memory into the present moment... rehearse that feeling... Where does that feeling reside in your body? ... Focus on that sensation, and give yourSelf fully to it...

Silence – 3:00

As our hearts remain centered in our Still Point, we expand our awareness to include the space we are in... the people with us... and the love and support of our Beloved Community... We are profoundly grateful for this time of communion with our spiritual family... Thank you, God, for everything and for everyone...

We can access the Stillness within at any time... It is available to guide us throughout our life... and as we live Life from that consciousness, we bring more Peace, Love, and Grace into our world...

As Rev. Diana resumes her talk this morning, we allow her ideas to flow into our hearts and minds, inspiring us to find our own Stillness Within Action...

Rev. Diana

How do I find the ***Stillness Within Action***? First, I must trust that it is there...always available...I must be willing to let go of internal turbulence...willing to allow what is to simply be, without labels or judgment. I must stop making problems out of whatever is happening...let go of my need to have things be a certain way.

This does not mean refraining from action when it is called for...it means acting from a calm and balanced state of being...with mind clear and heart open...it means willingly doing what is mine to do, and not getting involved when it is not.

I invite you to Practice this week. Whenever you notice yourself experiencing any kind of turbulence...irritation, anger, frustration, drama...mental or physical discomfort or

upset of any kind...stop, take ten slow, deep breaths, then ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" "What is causing these feelings?" "Do I have expectations, of myself or another, that are not being met?" "Am I judging or criticizing myself or another?" "Am I feeling a need to control?" "Am I afraid of something?" "Am I taking on something that is not mine?" And finally, "What is True in this moment?" "What would lovingkindness and compassion do now?"

Closing Prayer - Please join me as we close in prayer.

Ending with...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.

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— Dear Younger Me by Mercy Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoO0kyPRu3M>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Closing Song

A Soul's Blessing, written by Chris Johnson

Conscious Conversations

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.

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 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 what it means to experience ***Stillness Within Action***.

For the month of July, our theme is ***Free to Be***. And building our capacity to experience ***Stillness Within Action*** brings a great sense of Freedom.

What does that phrase mean...*Stillness Within Action*?

(Stillness is the absence of turbulence. "Stillness is a calm, trusting, unperturbed composure of the heart. Thus a heart that has acquired stillness can choose to speak out or to remain silent, depending on what life demands at the moment. The right word,

at the right time, will be a word that does not break the silence, but lets the inner stillness come to word.”) (*You Are Here*, Br. David Steindl-Rast)

We talked about how, like anything we seek to attain, inner stillness can be learned through Practice; and how one who has attained it radiates a sense of calm, even when engaging in intense activity.

Finally, I offered a Practice for you to use whenever you find yourself experiencing inner turbulence. There are copies in your Bulletins this morning, or by the front door if someone already got yours.

Moving into our Conscious Conversation, I'd like to explore some additional ways to encourage bringing **Stillness** into our active daily lives. I'm going to start by asking you to share...**do you have any practices for finding Stillness Within Action?**

I was looking through a book called *Stillness is the Key* by Ryan Holiday. He is a modern Stoic who has studied many of the world's traditions. He makes the point that everyone from the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Jews to the Greeks, Epicureans, and Christians have a word that means Stillness.

And not only that, they all agree that “the one thing all these schools (of thought) share is a pursuit of this inner peace—this stillness—and a belief that it's the key to a happy and meaningful life.”

He defines stillness as our ability to remain, “steady while the world spins around you. To act without frenzy. To hear only what needs to be heard. To possess quietude—exterior and interior—on command.”

He says that “Stillness is that quiet moment when inspiration hits you. It's that ability to step back and reflect. It's what makes room for gratitude and happiness. It's one of the most powerful forces on earth.”

Not only that, in his book he lists “28 proven exercises from across *all* the wisdom of the ancient world that will help you keep steady, disciplined, focused, at peace, and able to access your full capabilities at any time, in any place, despite any distraction and every difficulty.”

Here's the catch – he says: “These steps will work... *if you work them.*”

We might have covered some of these things already in your personal practices. But let's talk about a few more that might be helpful.

(Not from his book) Prayer: Talking and listening to your personal version of God, Higher Power, Inner Wisdom...Communion. How can prayer bring Stillness or equanimity into your daily life? (It reminds me Who and Whose I Am, and grounds me in what is True)

Journaling: Does anyone have a journaling practice? How can journaling bring Stillness or equanimity into your daily life? (You can start the day by clearing out all that is turbulent, writing it in your journal, and acknowledging that it is there.)

Manage your inputs: What do you suppose that means? What are some ways we can manage our inputs? Limit screen time, monitor the level/amount of drama you expose yourself to, hang out with positive, supportive people, etc.) includes others - **Put your phone away; Stop Watching the News: What effect will this have? Does it mean being uninformed? What are more effective ways to become informed?**

Take walks: Did you know you can walk yourself into a state of well-being? Why do you think this works? (reduces stress, manages, manages depression, manages social anxiety, boosts self-esteem, walking together increases intimacy and connection, sharpens memory, and bolsters gratitude)

Detach from outcomes: What does this mean? (Let go of our illusion of control; One way to practice detachment is the No Problem, No Preference meditation)

Do Good: How would this increase Stillness? (If I'm doing what is mine to do, I feel a sense of accomplishment and contribution)

Build a routine – how does this lead to greater freedom?

Zoom out...global perspective

Realize you have plenty...practice gratitude

Cultivate Relationships

Seek wisdom

Slow down...Enjoy the small pleasures

Seek solitude – quiet reflection time

Get rid of stuff

It is so important to include the body, mind, emotional body, and spirit in our reflections and conversations. Because there is no separation between them. Each one has an effect on all the others. And if there is only one thing going on here, and that One Thing is God expressing and experiencing Themselves as all of creation, then *all* of what we are is God in form...even if we are not all of what God is. Don't we owe it to the Creator of the Universe, or to Life Itself, to take care of every aspect of our humanity? It's a big responsibility...

Should we go ahead and close with prayer? Please hold these words as your prayer, as well.

Closing Prayer

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!


Offertory Video – *Happy*, written by Pharrell Williams, performed by **BikosManna**.


<https://www.tiktok.com/@bikosmanna/video/7240174326912142598?>


Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering


Rev. Diana - Brief Invitations

 **Seed Packet Party, Thursday, July 6th from 2:00 – 4:00 pm**

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club will begin *The Essential Path* by Neale Donald Walsch on Tuesday, July 11th from 3-5 pm.**

 **Metaphysical Bible Study will start up again on Thursday, July 13th from 3 – 5 pm**

 **Cultivating the Soil and the Spirit: Saturday, July 15, 1:30-4:30 pm.** Part prayer support circle, part Garden Club...We will be starting the seeds for your Fall Salad Garden and learning how to tend them. In the process, you will be invited to reflect on what will nourish your body, mind, and spirit and restore your energy. And if you've never grown a garden before, no worries...we'll be starting at the very beginning. **Suggested donation: \$20. All materials provided.**

 **Mystic OAKS (*Outdoor Adventures for Kindred Spirits*) has a new adventure scheduled for Friday, July 21, 2023.** Join us for a guided tour of the **Shasta Abbey**, a picnic lunch at the Mt. Shasta City Park, and a visit to the **Sisson Museum**. 9am to 4pm. Please contact Chris Netto at nettowoman@gmail.com by July 8th if you are planning to visit the Shasta Abbey's group tour.

♥ Mark your calendars for the ***Common Threads of Truth***, **Tuesday, July 25th**, **6:00-8:00 pm** – presenter and faith tradition TBA in the next week.

♥ For our next Celebrating Community Fun-Raiser, we have joined Unity of Redding in buying out the **Riverfront Playhouse on Wednesday, August 9th**, **7:00 pm, curtain at 7:30**. The play is a romantic comedy called ***The Rainmaker***. **Early bird tickets are \$20 until Sunday, July 23rd**, 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 – 4:30 pm** at the Mystic Heart Gathering Place, Suite H.

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

Closing Song

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



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