

# So Help Me, God

August 27, 2023



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Lucinda Alton, RScP,  
Chris Johnson, RScP, & musician Dalton Fitzgerald

## 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.

#### Dalton – Taizé Chants

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

 **Dropping Down**, written by Amy Bishop, Karen Drucker, & Gary Lynn Floyd

#### Rev. Diana –

Take a moment to drop down, into the depths of your being...bringing your awareness to the breath...allowing it to find its own pace and flow...and then slowing it down just a bit more...the breath becomes silent...there is a great stillness.

Holy Father, Mother, Sister, Brother, Friend...Great Spirit...Beloved Creator of all that is...saints and sages, spirits and angels of all religions...we bring our awareness to you now...calling you to join as we honor our connection with all beings...together, as one living organism, we envision a web of consciousness that surrounds and infuses the planet...each of us, a radiant point of Light, shining within the web, reflecting the Light back to the many beings that share this space and time with us...every human, every other-than-human creature, every plant...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars and planets...each one a perfect and intentional creation...a shining expression of the One Light, emanating from the One Source...

We are not only connected to one another, we are One Life.

As we come together this morning, we set an intention...that each of us is a beneficial presence on the planet...that each leaves a positive imprint on human evolution...and that as a community, we use this time to move the world toward a more Loving, Compassionate, and Peaceful expression...together, we stand for Truth...we walk in Truth.

The flow of Taizé this morning invites us to reflect on our personal relationship with God, Spirit, the Universe. It is easy to get caught up in the idea of God as Principle, as Law. Our scientific and analytical minds can make sense of that. We may not always like the effects that Principle brings into our lives, but at least we can understand the workings of Spiritual Law.

We have gotten away from the idea of God as person...the old-man-in-the sky-God...so what do we mean when we talk about our personal relationship with the Divine? Until we can accept that we do, indeed, have such a relationship, it is difficult to ask for Guidance. Who are we directing our prayer towards when we say, "**So Help Me, God?**"

Having a personal relationship with Something Bigger than ourselves does not require that *Something Bigger* to be a person...or to look or act like a human being. But that is what we do...instead of knowing ourselves as made in the image and likeness of the Creator...of Life Itself...our minds cannot seem to help making God in our own image.

Looking at Sacred Scripture, from whatever tradition you choose, you will find a Loving God or a vengeful God. You will read of a Spirit that is ruled by jealousy or playing the trickster. In one story, there is a Loving Presence, guiding and guarding creation, and in the next, an angry, frustrated and punishing Being.

These stories are not true reflections of the One Source...they are reflections of the people who told the stories, who eventually wrote them down. How else could they make sense of their world?

As human beings, we are relational creatures...social beings. We are born into families, that are arranged into communities. Our life's journey is the process of slowly coming to recognize that we are separate from our mother, from the other people in our family, and from our surroundings. Step by step, we learn how to get our needs met. We discover what makes the others happy or mad. In other words, we are learning how to relate to others, how to be in relationship with other people. There is nothing wrong with this process...it is part of being human.

And so, human beings, by their nature, seek to have a personal relationship with the Creator...with the Infinite Intelligence of the Universe. This does not have to mean assigning human attributes to the One we call God...although it might. It can also mean that each of us, in our individual expressions, have a unique way of understanding and relating to the Great Mystery. No two of us are exactly alike, so why wouldn't we each see God differently...relate to Higher Wisdom in distinct and personal ways?

Again, there is nothing wrong with having a personal relationship with Spirit...it is natural. The problem comes when we become attached to our way of perceiving God as the *only* way, the *right* way...and make others wrong in the process...when we try to force others to believe as we do.

The Masters and Mystics of every tradition taught that it is by our example that others might come to respect our way of seeing and understanding Life. In the book of Matthew

in the Christian Bible, Jesus tells his followers, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

And nearly two millennia later, Paramahansa Yogananda advised that, “Every soul’s relationship with God is unique, and each one needs to find and follow the path best suited to his or her temperament and spiritual needs. If you yourself seek to love and serve God, and to reflect divine qualities in all your activities and relationships, then your own example of spiritual living will encourage others also to seek Him...”

And so, according to our human nature, we seek a personal relationship with the Divine...a way to be in relationship with the Universe...to seek Guidance from a Deeper Wisdom, a Higher Intelligence than our own. As we mature spiritually, we come to see that the Sky God of our childhood was simply our young mind trying to make sense of the world. We might be exposed to more complex ways of viewing life...we might come to understand our interconnection with other beings, with our world, and ultimately with the Life Force that moves through everything. We might study the Ancient Wisdom Traditions, the Mystics, or the Spiritual Evolutionaries and come to the conclusion that we are part of the One Life...the veil is raised as we come to see ourselves as individualized expressions of God.

### **Dalton – Musical Meditation: (Live) *Raising the Veil* by Daniel Nahmod**

We are prompted by the Divine Urge...the Evolutionary Impulse...by Spirit’s longing to know Itself by means of us...and we begin the search. But rather than looking outside of ourselves this time, we go within.

I want to know you...I want to see you...I want to hear you...I want to feel you...I want to praise you...I want to love you, oh, God, I’m raising the veil.

God is right here in my heart, I’m raising the veil.

I am coming to know and accept my own Divinity, my deep connection with Power and Presence...I am coming to see that everything I think, say, and do matters in the Grand Scheme of things...creates a ripple that goes on, no one knows how far. I am an irreplaceable, absolutely necessary strand in the Tapestry of Life.

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

“Oh my God...” We hear that phrase often, but rarely as a prayer... It is, literally, using God’s name in vain... not swearing, but in the dictionary definition of vain: *useless; producing no result*... But what if it *were* a prayer... and what if we changed the emphasis... Oh... *my* God...

Most of us were taught our earliest concepts of the Creator from others... Our first attempts at prayer were awkward... confused... We weren’t sure who or what we were praying to... but God seemed distant... separate... unresponsive... The whole thing felt more than a little superstitious...

For our prayers to be effective, we must know what or who we are praying to... I must pray to *my* God... you must pray to *yours*... We begin our prayer contemplating our most profound understanding of Spirit... our deepest feelings about the Divine Nature... *my* God... Then we pray to **that**...

If we are made in the image of God, then Spirit must contain the quality of personality... Divine Law never operates at the personal level... but intuition and inspiration are quite intimate and personal... And, like our relationships with everyone else, our relationship to Spirit has very unique qualities...

I invite us now into a deep contemplation of our individualized concept of God... Source... The Ground of Being... Our understanding of the Divine evolves as we progress on our spiritual path... Through our meditation, prayer, and sacred study, we embody more and more attributes of the Divine... So, as we share these three minutes of Silent Communion, let us ask, "Who is *my* God in this moment?... What is my highest conception of the Creative Source of the Universe?..." then *listen*...

### **Silence – 3:00**

With profound gratitude for this time of communion with our Beloved Community and with *my* God – and with yours, we allow the music to guide our attention back to this room and to this moment... All of our life experiences have brought us to this time and to this place... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

There is much we'll never know about The Divine... But as our faith and understanding continues to grow and expand, our prayers become more and more effective... our hearts more and more open to receive the Gifts of the Spirit...

As this morning's Taizé continues, we receive Rev. Diana's message as a Divine Gift... a Sacred Reminder that we can reach out in Love and Faith to the One Creative Source at any time... and say, "*So... Help Me, God...*"

### **Rev. Diana**

An important aspect of our personal relationship with God, Great Spirit, the Universe, is our ability and willingness to ask for Guidance when we need it. When we say, "Help Me, God," we are not waiting for the Sky God to solve our problem, heal our illness, or fill our bank account. We are really saying, "There is a Wisdom that dwells within me...the Still, Small Voice of Spirit...or a Higher Knowing...that is available to me now. My human self is confused and is getting nowhere. Help me to put aside all I think I know and listen for another way. I Am one with all Knowledge, all Wisdom...it is available now."

### **Closing Prayer**

Right here, in this Holy Moment, I sense the Presence of One Life, living in, through and AS me. It beats my heart, pumps the blood through my veins...it is the Intelligence behind the workings of this body, behind the workings of my mind, my emotions, and my soul...that place where my Divinity expresses as my humanity. There is nothing I need

to do to invite the Presence of Life...it simply moves through me, according to its own process...its own order and timing. My part is to realize that there is more to me than my body, mind, and emotions...that there is an aspect of me that is eternal...timeless...ageless... call it my God Self, call it Consciousness, Awareness, Infinite Intelligence, or Great Mystery. By whatever name, it is the Power and Presence that gives rise to this human life. And I give thanks that this is so...and that I know it is so. I feel it to the depths of my being. There is nothing and no one that could sway me from what I sense as Truth.

I give thanks for this life...for every experience that has brought me to this place...the joys and sorrows alike. For each one has contributed to my understanding...each one has bolstered my faith.

I am so grateful for this Spiritual Community...for each one who gives their time, talent, attention, and devotion to making this a safe and sacred place to find love, support, and human connection. May I never forget what a gift it is to have Spiritual Family.

Steeped in gratitude, and with faith in the Power of my Word, I release this prayer to an Intelligence far greater than my own, knowing that it is coming into form and experience, even now. I trust all that unfolds from this moment forward to be evidence of my answered prayer. I turn it over to the Loving and Lawful Presence of the One...And so I let it go...I let it be. And so it is! Amen! Sathu...Ashay...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](http://mysticheart.org). And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

### **Dalton – Offertory Music**

 ***Christ in Me, Christ In You***, written by Gary Lynn Floyd

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

### **Dalton – 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 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.

### **Dalton – Opening Music**

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

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

 **Woke Up This Morning**, Traditional Gospel

### **Rev. Diana – A Love-Soaked World**

Calling Awareness to 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, Freedom and Justice 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...a story in which greed is a thing of the past, and there is abundance in having enough.

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. With deep faith in the Great Mystery that acts upon this prayer, we accept its Graceful unfolding into form and experience, 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 our topic this week is **So Help Me, God**. We talked about how as human beings, it is natural for us to have a personal relationship with our own version of God...that we are relational beings...social beings...and that it is by personalizing Divinity, we are better able to communicate with a Higher Wisdom.

I suggested that having a personal relationship with Something Bigger than ourselves does not require that *Something Bigger* to be a person...or to look or act like a human being...but rather, that it might simply mean that each of us, in our individual expressions, has a unique way of understanding and relating to the Great Mystery.

**What does having a personal relationship to Spirit, or God, mean to you?**

**Okay, as human beings, what are some of the ways we relate to one another?** (we speak...we have language...this is a unique human gift)

**What are some of the ways we speak to one another?** (conversation, offering information, expressing feelings, asking questions)

**So, as humans, would you say that it is natural for us to relate to our version of God...a Higher Power, or whatever we call that Great Mystery that is bigger than all of us...in the same ways? Speaking, offering information, expressing feelings, asking questions?**

I've been delving into Kriya Yoga lately, exploring the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda. In the Introduction to his Lessons, he said that "God is never afraid of questions. It is only the dogma of religion that is afraid of questions. God answers all such cries of the heart..." when contacted through heartfelt prayer and meditation.

**First of all, what do you think of that quote...that it is the dogma of religion that is afraid of questions?**

**And what do you think of the idea that God answers all such cries of the heart? What does that mean to you?**

To me, what that means is that within every question that I ask, there lives one right and perfect response...one that is perfectly suited to the Highest Version of what I am becoming. I believe there is an Intelligence, a Life Force, that lives within me, that responds to my sincere desire to know. When, in my heart of hearts, I am ready for an answer to be revealed, and willing to act upon that answer, it will be given.

So let's throw another twist into the mix. What if it's not about the answers? Gangaji suggests that "The purpose of the Spiritual Journey is not to find all the answers. Rather, it is to ask more meaningful questions."

**What do you think she means?**

**Do you agree?**

**How might asking more meaningful questions be helpful in your life?**

**Closing Prayer**

I begin in gratitude...for my deep connection with the Great Mystery...for my open heart, my open mind...for my willingness to consider ideas that might be different than my own. No one can know for sure how this Great Mystery works...I don't think we're meant to. What I do know for sure is that when I let go of all I think I know, and open myself to clarity and greater awareness, it always comes. There is something within me that knows...I call this something God. I can count on this knowing...this Higher Wisdom...to be there always. And by my deep faith, it becomes so in my experience.

There is One Life, forever unfolding, and each one of us is a perfectly formed expression of that One...here on purpose...irreplaceable. Of this I am sure. And so I say thank you for my life...for the lives of each one listening...for this beautiful day...for this community and the support and connection it brings.

I am grateful for my personal relationship with Spirit...for the Love it brings...and for the ways I experience Its Power and Presence in my life.

Thank you for the endless shower of blessings that each new day brings...I am so blessed.

I release this prayer in deep faith that it is already answered, and that all that happens in every moment is part of my prayer fulfilled. In curiosity and wonder, I welcome each new moment, open to new ways of being and seeing...I let it be what it will be, 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.

**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!**


### **Dalton - Offertory Music**


**Gratitude**, written by Jason Mraz

### **Lucinda Blessing for the Offering**

### **Lucinda – Invitations**

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club** is hosting a movie this week: *Indigo*, Tuesday, August 29, 3-5 pm...Starring Neale Donald Walsch.

 **Common Threads of Truth**, Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-8:00 pm – Amarjit Singh of the Sikh Tradition, and leader of the Anderson Sikh Centre, will be presenting.

 **Thursdays, 12:30-2:30 pm, Fast Track to Wellness**. We're focusing on the importance of building the immune system and other topics.

 **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson, Thursday from 3 – 5 pm.

### **Looking Ahead...**

 **Rev. Diana will be teaching *The Universe is Calling* on Tuesday evenings from 6-9 pm beginning September 5<sup>th</sup>.**

 **Chris will be teaching *Living the Four Agreements* on Wednesdays from 2-5 pm beginning September 6<sup>th</sup>.**

 **Please join Mystic Heart on Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm for a joyous time of drumming and spiritual togetherness.**

 **Join Rev. Diana for *Mandala Meditation: a Journey into God*, a prayerful time of creativity and sharing. Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-4:00 pm.**

**There is more information about all of our events and activities in your Bulletin and on our website.**

**Prayer Requests, Practitioner available after service.**

**Information Cards if new people.**

**11:27 Closing Song – Love Be With You**



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