

# Peaceful Relations

Sunday, September 17, 2023



A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Rev. Diana Johnson, with

*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

🌸 **Let Love Be the Guide**, written by Dennis Bryan, Kalyani, Diana, & Chris Johnson

### Rev. Diana –

We begin by taking a long, slow, deep breath in...sensing a brief pause, and then letting it go...allowing the breath to carry us inward to the deep Peace and Wholeness that is always available...bringing awareness to the Presence, right here...right now...(Pause) grounding even more deeply into the silence, and sensing an opening, of the heart, of the mind, of the Spirit within...preparing the soul for deep listening...for receiving the gift of this time together.

We take a moment to honor our connection with all that is. Together, we envision a web of consciousness...an energetic field...a Holy Presence... that surrounds and infuses the planet...each of us, a point of Light, reflecting our Radiance 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...and all the space between us...alive...in relationship...forever connected by our co-existence at this time, in this place...forever one in Spirit.

As we share time in prayer and meditation, we leave an imprint of Peace on the world...the Love that we feel and express brings a showering of Grace to the cosmos. Take a moment to feel into the atmosphere we are creating...

As we come together, 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 Generous, Compassionate, Harmonious expression...we walk as Love in action.

This morning we center our reflections and contemplations on what it means to have ***Peaceful Relations***.

We are relational beings...living in relationship with one another as humans. We live in relationship with our homes, our communities, our country, and this amazing planet that sustains us. And we live in relationship with every other being that inhabits the planet, as well.

Being in relationship implies an exchange between two entities that belong with one another...that depend on one another. In relationship, there is an agreement...I support, tend, or care for you in whatever way is called for, and you support, tend, or care for me.

What does it mean to have ***Peaceful Relations***? The word Peaceful points to something that is free from anxiety, stress, violence, anger, or abuse of any kind. It means that all is in balance...harmonious...working smoothly for the good of the Whole. And so, ***Peaceful Relations*** are those relationships that are free from any kind of discord.

The Taoists remind us that,

If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

(Taoist philosopher, Lao-Tse, sixth century BCE)

There is a beautiful prayer that comes to us from the Franciscan Order of Catholicism...The Prayer of St. Francis. This Christian prayer points us to numerous ways that we can create ***Peaceful Relations*** in our lives. It asks nothing of us that we cannot do, if only we are willing. We began our reflections on the prayer last week with these lines:

***Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace...***let me submit myself to a Deeper Wisdom, inviting God's Peace to flow through me as I draw upon the Guidance, Courage, and Power of Spirit...let me offer a clean slate, an open mind, a willing heart. May my physical body serve as a vessel through which God's Peace may flow.

***Where there is hatred, let me sow love...***Walking in either hatred or love is a choice in every moment...In the face of hatred, may I sow a seed of love...because I know that if I plant and tend a seed of love, it will grow, and will soon become strong enough to stand on its own. Hatred has no Power of its own...Love is the only True Power.

***Where there is injury, let me sow pardon...***May I sow seeds of healing and reconciliation, so that ultimately I can accept and forgive, and be freed from the pain and suffering of past hurts. May Wholeness be restored in me, in my life, in my spirit, by my sowing seeds of pardon.

This week, we continue...

***Where there is doubt, faith...***Doubt is part of the human condition, as is faith. We sometimes think that faith should be displayed in ways that are dramatic, but human faith is not usually that way. "It is sometimes a quiet shaping – an edifice built, stone by stone, from the hard labors of our heart." It is expressed as day by day, we awaken and tend to what is ours to do, in faith that we will awaken again tomorrow to one more opportunity, to live, to serve, to make a difference. As we awaken spiritually, we take our faith one step further. We might find a steadfastness of purpose...a sense of prayerful watchfulness...a deep sense of compassion for other beings, or a deep awareness and experience of the existence of God. As we embody and express these qualities in the world, others are called to witness, and by our example some are changed.

***Where there is despair, hope...***"Despair is a sickness of the soul. If the despairing soul is to heal, it will do so on its own." Despair goes far beyond sadness to a place of hopelessness. One who is in despair cannot be consoled by words, only by our peaceful presence...by our willingness to bear witness to the suffering and not recoil. "If we are able to stay with someone at their time of darkness and doubt and simply bear witness, we are performing a holy act, and the wounded heart will know. By the mute testimony of our presence, we are saying, 'You are a child of God, and you matter.' And that is sometimes enough to make a wounded heart turn back, if only for a moment, and feel the presence of the light."

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

Relations... the interaction between beings... is essential to Peace... If beings were not interfacing with one another, there would be no friction... no conflict... and there could be no true Peace... for there would be no need to choose to cooperate... no one else to accommodate... It takes at least two to create harmony...

Within our Beloved Community, we enjoy Peaceful Relations most of the time... we get to practice living in an atmosphere of goodwill... But how do we maintain our serenity

when we go out into the world? ... when we are no longer relating to those who share our values? ... *That's* the true test of our spiritual evolution...

What would it take for me to be an instrument of Divine Peace in this world?... What would it require of me?... What might I need to release?... What might I need to embrace?... Is my faith strong enough and sufficiently resilient to manifest Peace?... no matter who or what is before me?...

Mystic philosopher Ken Wilbur reminds us that

There's an urgency now, no excuses. As the wisdom holders, we need to help people find what's important—to Grow Up by moving through the early stages of emotional maturing, Clean Up by doing shadow work, Wake Up by doing spiritual practice, and Show Up by serving humanity in the world....

Growing up, cleaning up, waking up, and showing up are all ongoing processes... We can't wait until we are fully enlightened to begin bringing Peace into our world... We are who the world has been waiting for... In our three minutes of shared silent communion, let us call to mind a relationship or situation in our life that would benefit from greater Peace... How have we dealt with it in the past?... How could I change *my* behavior in a way that would bring greater harmony... regardless of others involved?...

### **Silence – 3:00**

Remaining deeply permeated in Divine Peace, we allow our awareness to return to this time and place... Grateful for the love and support of Spiritual Family... and for the faith and inspiration to become instruments of Peace... to *be* the change our world needs... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

Our own Peace of heart and mind will almost certainly be challenged at times... not everyone will appreciate our efforts at Peace... At those times, it is always helpful to inquire, "Who did you think needed your love most?"...

As Rev. Diana continues her Taizé inspiration this morning, we receive her message with our open hearts, minds, and spirits... knowing that as we commit to being the change for good, Spirit empowers us to ever more *Peaceful Relations*...

### **Rev. Diana**

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

**Where there is darkness, light...** This line does not mean that we have to *be* the Light, only that we *give* the Light...we *shine* the Light. We can do this whether or not we are temporarily walking in our own darkness. We are asked to simply move our attention from our own life's circumstances, whatever they may be, and make ourselves an available presence to another as a way to illuminate their darkness. In offering ourselves in this way, we find our own darkness lifting...as we see another move step by step into the Light, we recognize the Light returning to our own lives, as well.

I close with the words of Kent Nerburn:

“It is not given to us to know who is lost in the darkness that surrounds us or even if our light is seen. We can only know that against even the smallest of lights, darkness cannot stand...

This prayer reminds us that we all have light, no matter how faint and fragile, and it calls us to proceed as if it is our light that matters. Perhaps, it tells us, it is our light that will make a difference. Perhaps it will...even help to lead a stranger home.”

**Musical Meditation – *I Am Light***, by India Arie

<https://youtu.be/Lzm4RBICCQo>

By *living* this prayer, and *shining* my Light in the world, I Am creating **Peaceful Relations** with all beings, and with Mother Earth.

**Rev. Diana – Closing Prayer**

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.

**Offering**

As we close our Taizé Meditation, we offer the opportunity for you to share 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.

Please enjoy nother beautiful rendition of The Prayer of Saint Francis.

**Offertory Video – *Let Me Be a Channel of Your Peace***, by Angelina

<https://youtu.be/ZI1Gst7pEqc>

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

**Rev. Diana & Chris – 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.

**Rev. Diana & Chris – Opening Music**

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

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

 ***Opening Up*** written by Rainbow Spirit, Oregon

**Rev. Diana** – Calling Awareness to the Presence of Spirit in the body...join me in the co-creation of a ***Love-Soaked World...***

...where all humans embody Compassion, Generosity, Love, Peace, and Justice...where all people everywhere 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 gracefully...easily...where all beings are well-fed, and have the safety and comfort of home...where mental/physical health, education, and healthy relationships are promoted and supported by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness...

...a world where every being Serves the greater community doing whatever feeds their souls and are well supported for their time and talent...and by their Service, each one finds meaning...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 there is no greed, and abundance means having all that is required for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual thriving.

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

Our hearts, minds, arms, and doors are open in Radical Welcome. All lines and feelings of separation have been erased. In keeping with the Vision, our community is open and loving...all people who seek belonging find it here.

With deep faith in the Great Mystery that I call God, we trust that our prayer is acted upon...we prepare for its Graceful unfolding in the world...we feel a deep sense of gratitude...we release it to the Holy Presence and give thanks that it is done...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 month is Connections, and our Conversation this week revolves around ***Peaceful Relations***.

We are relational beings by nature.

### **What does that mean to you?**

Here are the first few lines of The Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your Peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, let me sow pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light

### **Why would I choose this prayer as a lens for looking at Peaceful Relations?**

(the prayer is Universal, speaks to all people everywhere; it does not ask us to do anything outside our reach; it offers a number of keys, or tools, for creating Peaceful Relationships in our lives)

I'm going to continue with the next line. Does anyone know what it is?

### **And where there is sadness, joy. What is Francis suggesting?**

(Remember that throughout the prayer, he is asking us to sow seeds)

I'd like to share a brief story with you from a book from Kent Nerburn. It is a true story that happened to him 20 years before the writing of the book, while he was working as a cab driver.

### **Read pages 58-61.2**

#### **Thoughts?**

We never know how our actions will affect another being. I'd like to read just a couple more paragraphs.

### **Read pages 61.3-62.1**

When we remain present to what is before us and listen for what is called for...and *act* on that call...we become a ray of sunlight breaking through the darkness...a moment of joy, peaking through the sadness. We affirm the connection that reunites a person to the human family.

Again, Kent Nerburn says: "How will we know what act will bring this reconnection? Will it be a kind word? A bouquet of flowers? A short walk or conversation? Or maybe a crosstown ride in a cab? Almost always, it is something small...If we would follow in the footsteps of Francis, we must look beyond consolation to joy and seek the small and unexpected gesture that can create joy. We don't always get it right; often we will miss the mark entirely. But when we find the exact touch that brings light into the lonely room of another's sadness, we are being true artists of the spirit. We are creating joy where there is sadness and helping another's spirit burst forth into song."

I invite you to continue chewing on the lines of this prayer in the week ahead. Maybe ask for Guidance...which of these lines am I called to this week? Am I to be an instrument of God's Peace? Respond to thoughts and feelings of hatred by sowing seeds of Love? Meet injury by sowing seeds of pardon? Which of these lines speaks to me most clearly? How can I bring my faith to the doubt and uncertainty of our changing world? Where might I sow seeds of hope, or shine a light into someone's darkness? In the midst of someone's sadness, can my presence offer a crack where the Light may shine through?



## Join me as we close this Gathering in prayer.

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.

## 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 budget and plan for our growth. Those who engage in committed giving are helping to create stability to our community, and we are most grateful. You can find more information on our website...please consider pledging your support.

As we move into this time of giving, I offer my heartfelt gratitude...thankful in advance for all that is offered...blessing these gifts so that they might serve the world well by means of Mystic Heart. Thank you, Spirit...thank you to each one who offers a gift this morning, or at any time. Thank you for planting seeds of faith in our future. **And so it is! Amen!**

**Offertory Music Video – *Planting Seeds***, by Nimo Patel and Daniel Nahmod

<https://youtu.be/5AmqYcWjBmc?list=RDnomxXk6Q1rk>

## Lucinda – Brief Invitations

-  **The Mystic Heart Book Club** is reading *Soul Boom* by Rainn Wilson. Tuesdays, 3-5 pm. Drop-ins are welcome.
-  **We're back this Thursday, 12:30-2:30 pm, *Fast Track to Wellness***. If you're looking for support in your journey to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness, we'd love to see you.
-  **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson, Thursday from 3 – 5 pm.
-  **Join Rev. Diana for *Mandala Meditation: a Journey into God***. This is a meditation process that will lead you through the creation of a beautiful Mandala while offering a prayerful time of reflection. No artistic skill required. **Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30-4:00 pm.**
-  ***Common Threads of Truth*, Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-8:00 pm:** Please join us in opening our doors to **April Jimenez-WinterSky** as she shares the

spiritual tradition of **Shamanism** with our community. This is a unique opportunity for Shasta County...feel free to invite friends and family. *All donations are gratefully accepted.*

### Looking Ahead...

💜 **Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, *Music is Medicine Circle* led by April Jimenez- WinterSky** and hosted by Laurie and James Massengale. **April, would you like to tell us how this is different than a drum circle?**

💜 **Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, another Mystic OAKS Adventure to the Abbey at New Clairvaux.** Check the website for details. Please RSVP to Chris Netto at [nettowoman@gmail.com](mailto:nettowoman@gmail.com).

**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**

**Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song**

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

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