

No Complaints Whatsoever

Sunday, November 26th, 2023

Rev. Diana Johnson, IM, RScM, with Chris Johnson, RScP



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Chris – 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). Even more, I welcome you home to the answers that lie within your own Mystic Heart.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 **Thank You God, written by Eddie Watkins, Jr.**

Rev. Diana – Settling into this sacred moment, we breathe in the Presence of Spirit, allowing it to fill our being...and then breathe out...sharing the deep Peace that dwells forever within. In the Silence, breathing in Presence, breathing out Peace...(Pause)

We share in sacred Communion this morning...we share in Sacred Community...as we come together in reflection...slowing the pace of life for just a little while, opening ourselves to the Voice of Spirit...giving ourselves this most precious gift of time...

Together, we feel and express our gratitude for our connection with all of Life. We envision a web of consciousness...an Infinite Intelligence...a Holy Presence...that surrounds us, contains, and infuses the planet and all that share Life here. Presence is all that is...Divine Light, expressing as all of Creation. And so we know ourselves to be sparks of Divinity...perfect expressions of the One Source. Every human...every creature...the plants and the soil that give them Life...all shining with the Light of Spirit...the rocks and minerals...water and wind...all that lies below and the forever nature of what we know as above... All of Life is aglow with One Radiant Light.

There is no separation between us...we sense and know our inherent Connection with All That Is. As a human family, we acknowledge our role as caretakers...in Sacred Service to one another...to all life forms...and to the planet that sustains us all.

As we share this time, we set a prayerful intention...we are leaving an imprint of Peace on the world...a ripple of Compassion that Comforts all who are in need...we consciously offer our time together to the Well-being of the Whole.

This month we are considering what it means to **Take More Time, Cover Less Ground**, and this morning, we'll be spend time in contemplation of how we might create a life where we have **No Complaints Whatsoever**.

As always, we come back to Mindfulness...to Awareness...to paying attention to what we are paying attention *to*. In the mythologies of Judaism and Christianity, the Lord God is looking for Adam and Eve after their eating of the forbidden fruit. He calls out, "Adam, where are you?"

Buddhism and Hinduism also elude to this question in their invitation to come back to the present moment... *Where are you?* This is one of those persistent questions that comes to us repeatedly in our lives, and a question we might be wise to use for our own growth...a question that can help guide us to a state of Mindfulness and a life free of complaint.

When we are fully present, we see more clearly. So often our minds are focused on the past or the future, and we completely miss the beauty and wonder that is right in front of us. Everything we are looking for is right in front of us, if only we have eyes to see.

Buddhist Teacher Thich Nhat Hanh shares his wisdom: "Mindfulness is the energy that allows us to stop and be present right here and right now. It allows us to notice what is going on in us and around us.

Stopping brings your body and mind together, back to the here and now. When you stop and sit quietly and become silent within, you become more solid, more concentrated, and clear. We must learn to stop from time to time in order to see clearly. This...is a way of life. Humankind's survival depends on our ability to stop rushing." It is only when we can see what is really there before us that we can respond in ways that promote Unity and Wholeness. (Pause)

And it is only when we are fully present that we can truly listen. Generous and compassionate listening is an art form...and one that few people in our culture have mastered, or even given attention to. Many of us have lost our capacity for deep listening. We do not listen to our bodies crying out for nutritional food and regular cycles of activity and rest. We do not listen to our hearts longing for meaningful connection and contribution. So often we fail to hear the Still, Small Voice of Spirit...the Guidance of our Inner Wisdom...for the ramble of our own thoughts and opinions. And the voices inside our heads can be so loud that we fail to hear what others are saying. Instead, we are formulating replies before a Beloved's words have come to an end.

Without clear sight and generous listening, real communication is impossible. And without real communication, we have no path to understanding. Understanding is the foundation of love. If we cannot understand ourselves, how can we love ourselves? And

if we cannot understand and love ourselves, how can we ever hope to understand one another?

Chris – Guided Meditation

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines complaint as *an expression of grief, pain, or dissatisfaction...* We express our displeasure with what is happening in the moment... we don't want to be where we are, and we can't wait until the situation has passed... It can feel like Joy is simply not available to us until *this* is over...

We feel like victims of circumstance... Why is this happening to me?... What have I done to deserve *this*?... Our happiness is contingent on the situation changing... Often we look for someone to blame for our unhappiness...

but that never helps change things... Ultimately it's up to us to work our way through difficult times...

We know that our words have creative power... they affect our emotions and our expectations... and then we project that out, creating our future... So, when we complain, exactly what are we projecting before us?... More of what we *don't* want... more dissatisfaction... more grief or pain... more reasons to avoid being fully present...

The Universal Creative Power always says yes... It doesn't know what we want or don't want... It only knows what we are *focused on*... and it creates more of *that*... If we don't like our current situation, we must first *accept what is*... this is not resignation... We simply accept that *it is what it is*... then we release it and shift our focus...

When we resist what is unfolding here and now, we hold it in place... Unpleasant moments – like *all* moments – come and go, unless we attach ourselves to them... Acceptance allows them to continue flowing into the past... I invite you now to consider a situation that you may be resisting... or even complaining about... In our three minutes of Silent Meditation, I invite you to contemplate how your resistance may be keeping it before you... and how you might accept it and release it into the past...

Silence – 3:00

Gently bringing our attention back to *this* time and *this* place, we give thanks for this Holy Moment... Grateful that in this here and now moment, all things are made new... The past is past... and the future is ours to envision... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

don Miguel Ruiz invites us to be impeccable with our words... to speak only that which we wish to experience... to share our vision, not our fears... Complaining is a choice that we make... and it is a cause, not an effect... We cannot complain our way into a life with no complaints...

As we return to Rev. Diana's teaching this morning, we let go of everything that does not belong to this moment... and allow ourselves to be inspired to create a life in which we do indeed have *No Complaints Whatsoever*...

Rev. Diana – The prophet Jeremiah in the Hebrew Old Testament, spoke to the Jews who were exiled in Babylon: “Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.” The physical senses were working, but there was a disconnect between the words and their meaning. The people were having trouble making a connection between their actions and the resulting consequences, and Jeremiah was trying to wake them up. Does this sound familiar?

700 years later, in the Christian New Testament, an apparently frustrated Jesus asks, “Having eyes *do you not* see, and having ears *do you not* hear? And *do you not* remember?” What is it that they are not hearing or seeing? The message of his two great commandments – that it is really much more simple than they were making it. “Love the Lord God with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself,” ...and the equally simple, but even more challenging call to compassion: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:43–44).

Like the Buddha 500 years before him, the Rabbi seems to be calling his people (and us) to awareness, to mindfulness, to compassion and love. He is calling us to understanding so that healing in our lives, and in our world, can begin. This was just as true for the ancients as it is for us now.

Closing Prayer –

Sinking into the Presence of the One Great Mystery, I go within...present to what is here and now...mindful of the many blessings of this life...and in this moment, grateful to have **No Complaints Whatsoever**. Grateful for the tools that help to keep my mind from complaint, I settle into this experience of Peace...Contentment...Gratefulness...

...allowing it to become familiar, so that I might come back to it in the week to come. I give thanks for this time of remembrance. It serves as a touchstone...a reminder of Who and Whose I Am...an invitation to ask, “Where am I?” and to receive an answer... “You are here, in this present moment. Wake up...pay attention...savor the moment.”

Musical Meditation – Savor the Moment, by Sara Renner

<https://youtu.be/2ESaZzHeBhA>

Savor the moment...you are blessed...all is well. In the name of All that is Good, I release this prayer, thankful for its graceful unfolding.

So be it...Amen!

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 – Love 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. And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

Offertory Video– *Things I'm Thankful For* by JJ Heller

<https://youtu.be/o48yAl82PHo>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Closing Song (Soul's Blessing)

Conscious Conversation

Chris – 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. Welcome home to our Gathering Place, to our Spiritual Family, and to the answers that lie within your own Mystic Heart. I invite you to get on your feet and join the music.

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***

 ***Spirit, Run My Life written by Ricki Byars Beckwith***

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.

By the power of our faith, this prayer is acted upon, answered even before it is spoken. In preparation for its Graceful unfolding in the world...we feel a deep sense of gratitude...releasing to the One and giving thanks that it is done...And so it is...Amen!

Let's take a moment to bask in that creative and powerful energy...look around to say good morning to your Spiritual Family...some of the people who care about you...people you can reach out to.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that our topic of Conversation this month is **Take More Time, Cover Less Ground**. At this morning's Gathering, we contemplated the how's and why's of having **No Complaints Whatsoever**. We used Mindfulness...Presence...or Awareness as a tool for staying out of a complaining pattern of thought. And we used the question "Where am I?" as a focusing question for coming back to the now.

Like the Practice of Gratitude that we talked about last week, it is really helpful to attach this question to other familiar activities...for example, walking into the kitchen...moving from indoors to outdoors or vice versa...or getting into or out of the car. Or when a text message comes in. These are all great times to stop for a moment and ask "Where am I" mentally, emotionally, physically.

I would like to turn a corner for our Conversation this morning and look at the Seven Pillars of a Spiritual Life...what they are and how they help to keep us living a life with **No Complaints Whatsoever**.

Does anyone here ever have a complaining mind?

What are some of your habitual complaints? Be honest, now.

At Mystic Heart, we talk about the Seven Pillars of a Spiritual Life. Can anyone name one of the Pillars? (Meditation, Prayer, Sacred Study, Sacred Service, Circulation, Self-Inquiry, and Celebration.)

Let's break this down a little bit. **What is Meditation? How does a regular Practice of Meditation lead to a less-complaining mind?** (There are many forms of meditation, but each form leads us to either witness what is happening in our minds, or to control the direction of our thoughts, as in mantra meditation, or following the breath. It builds the habit of attending to what's going on in there, rather than letting it run amok.)

How about Prayer? What is it, and how is it helpful in keeping the complaining mind in check? (Again, there are many forms. But in whatever way we choose, Prayer is about communicating with a Higher Power, a Deeper Wisdom...inviting Guidance or Divine Assistance. It helps us to open to a greater way of seeing and being...to greater possibilities...it grounds and reassures us. This brings peace of mind.)

What is Sacred Study? How is this beneficial in training the mind and keeping us in the present moment? (Sacred Study opens our minds to new ideas, new ways of experiencing Presence. A closed mind...one that thinks it has all the answers...has no expectations for growth placed upon it. It is stuck in its habitual patterns, unable to be truly Present. Sacred Study exposes us to the Wisdom of our ancestors, so that we might carry it forward for the benefit of all.)

How about Sacred Service? How can this possibly be helpful in the Practice of Presence? (In Sacred Service, we are fully present with the task at hand, aware that by our Service to another, we are actually serving God. Our attention is completely on this act of giving. It encourages us to be completely Mindful of our actions, of our motivations and intentions.)

What is the Practice of Circulation and what part does it play? (Circulation is the Sacred Practice of giving with no expectation of return. Once again, like Sacred Study and Service, it is a mindful Practice...an intentional Practice...done with no thought of reward. Again, it encourages us to be completely Mindful of our actions, of our motivations and intentions.)

What do we mean by Self-Inquiry and how might this lead to Mindfulness? (Self-Inquiry is the intentional questioning of oneSelf, about oneSelf. The Self that we are questioning is the Deeper Wisdom, the God Self. We are asking for Guidance and Understanding. Self-Inquiry is a mindful Practice that further trains the mind to slow down, to pay attention, and to be open to new experience.)

And what about Celebration? (This is the Practice of consciously appreciating one another...our lives...what we have...how far we have come. It is a way to support and uplift ourselves and one another, and to purposely express Joy and Gratitude as the overflowing of a Grateful heart. /When we are engaged in true Celebration, we are completely present.)

It is interesting to look at how a blending of these Seven Pillars creates an inward/outward balance. Meditation, Prayer, and Self-Inquiry point us inward, so that we might learn more about and experience our connection with the Divine. The Practice of Sacred Study points us in the direction of a Wisdom outside of ourselves, but invites us to bring in in, to consider it, and to embody it, once again sending it outward. It brings the spiritual knowledge and experience of another into our sphere...from the outer to the inner and back out again. And the Practices of Circulation, Sacred Service, and Celebration help us to take what lies within us...our unique gifts and experiences...into the world...from the inner to the outer.

And each of these Practices helps in the training of the mind...and by mind, I'm not just talking about the brain. I am referring to what modern day Sufi Master Kabir Helminski calls the *total mind*. He says: "We have subtle subconscious faculties we are not using. Beyond the limited analytic intellect is a vast realm of mind that includes psychic and extrasensory abilities; intuition; wisdom; a sense of unity; aesthetic, qualitative and creative faculties; and image-forming and symbolic capacities. Though these faculties are many, we give them a single name with some justification for they are working best when they are in concert. They comprise a mind, moreover, in spontaneous connection to the cosmic mind. This total mind we call "heart."

Each of these Practices offers yet another way to focus our hearts and minds on God...to Practice the Presence. Everything we do in the course of a day can be placed in one of these categories. And when we identify each of our daily activities as Spiritual Practices, our minds can find nothing to complain about. We live a life of **No Complaints Whatsoever!**

Does anyone remember the No Complaints bracelets that moved through spiritual circles in the 90's? Tell us how they worked. Did anyone here have one? How did that work out for you?

Closing Prayer – Let's close our time together in prayer.

Welcome back! So good to have you here this morning...such a blessing to have time with Spiritual Family. Time is our greatest gift, and it does not go unnoticed that you are sharing your greatest gift with me...with us.

Love 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.

This video is a little longer than usual, but I encourage you to follow along with the lyrics. It reflects that kind of Grace we've been talking about...Enjoy!

Offertory Video – *Talking About the Journey*, by Eddie Watkins, Jr.

<https://youtu.be/0GX8caJocwM>

Chris – Blessing for the Offering

Chris – Invitations

-  ***This Tuesday is Giving Tuesday. Mystic Heart is taking part, and our page is on northstategives.org if you are interested in offering an End-of-Year Gift!***
-  ***Our normal weekly groups are meeting this week: Tuesday, The Mystic Heart Book Club with Michael Bordeaux on Tuesday, 3-5 pm; and on Thursday, Fast Track to Wellness from 12 – 2 pm and Metaphysical Bible Study with Chris Johnson from 3 – 5 pm, Thursday. Drop-ins are welcome.***
-  ***12 Days of Kindness is underway for 2023! Please bring hats, instant coffee packets, toothbrushes and tiny toothpaste for the month of November and into the beginning of December. We'll set a date to put together care packages soon.***

Looking Ahead...

-  ***Our next Mystic Heart Fun-raiser, Saturday, December 2nd, 11:00 am – 1:30/2:00 pm, Dr. Sharon Brisolaro will be leading Playing with Words, a poetry workshop. She is funded by a grant and will be donating all of the proceeds to Mystic Heart. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20, all offerings gratefully accepted.***
-  ***Saturday, December 9th, 1:30 - 4:00 pm, Ellie Thompson will be leading a Holiday Whimsy Wreathmaking Play Shop. 10 seats available. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20 – RSVP required to attend.***
-  ***Plan to join us on Sunday, December 10th, for the welcoming of new Prayer Practitioner Chris Netto, and the Re-Commitment Ceremony for our other Prayer Practitioners. Celebration to follow!***
-  ***Saturday, December 16th, 1-4 pm - April Jiménez WinterSky will be leading a Medicine Wheel Workshop. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20 – RSVP required to attend.***
-  ***Wednesday, December 20th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Mystic Heart Holy Day Service, a Taizé-Style Journey of Music, Meditation, and Prayer, shining our Light on the world...more information to come soon!***

January activities will be announced in next week's Bulletin.

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

I am available after service for prayer consultation, or you may fill out a prayer request card and we will forward it to all the practitioners to pray for you.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

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



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