

# *Slow Down, You Move Too Fast*

*November 5, 2023*



Rev. Diana Johnson, with Sherri Dotter, RScP, & Chris Johnson, RScP

*Taizé*

A Beloved Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

## **Call to Awareness – 3 Bells**

### **Sherri – 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** – Letting go of all that has come before this moment, we begin by taking a slow, deep, cleansing breath, bringing our awareness to the Presence of the One...remembering that we are filled to overflowing, and completely enveloped in Spirit, now and in every moment...there is nothing else. So we can relax and simply be. (Pause)

You have chosen this time to be here, in Communion...in Community...slowing down the pace of life...giving yourself the gift of time...time to breathe...time to reflect...time to listen...time to feel.

Together, we honor our connection with all of Life as we envision a web of consciousness...a Universal, Living Energy...a Holy Presence...that surrounds and infuses the planet, living Its life as all of creation. Each one of us is an irreplaceable and perfectly created part of the Whole...a shining Light...a Spark of the Divine. We take a moment to recognize the Light in every human...and now expanding our vision to include every other-than-human creature, radiating, adding its Light to the Whole...every plant...the network of life that lives beneath the soil's surface, invisible to the naked eye...

...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars, and planets...all alive, in relationship...forever connected by our co-existence at this time, in this place...forever one in Spirit.

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. (Pause)

This month we are using our shared time to consider what it means to ***Take More Time, Cover Less Ground.***

Our world has become so fast-paced. We have become accustomed to high-speed Internet...fast cars...instant results. In our kitchens, we have moved from Slow Cookers to Instant Pots. We have become impatient, wanting what we want, when we want it. We are no longer used to the slow cycles of nature...cycles of light and dark. We leave our lamps shining late into the night, our computers and other devices working away, distracting us from the slow and natural rhythms of life. We have become unwilling to allow time for being quiet...for being still. We are convinced that there is always more to do...and there is...if we say there is.

When is it time to say, “Enough...enough busyness, enough distraction, , enough stuff, enough work...even enough play?”

This morning’s Taizé is a reminder that each of us has a deep need for solitude, stillness, and reflection. In this culture of *doing*, our soul is well-served by taking time each day for *being*. Editor Lorraine Anderson, in *Sisters of the Earth*, talks about “making a conscious choice to slow down to seed time or rock time, to still the clamoring ego, to set aside plans and busyness, and simply to be present in my body, to offer myself up.” And I know that this is something that takes conscious attention on my part. I am a doer...have always been a doer...and will likely always be a doer.

An important part of my spiritual journey at this time is to learn how to decrease my doing, weaving *being* into my *doing* with those activities I choose to keep...and creating time and space every day to *simply be*.

Looking at some of the world’s ancient traditions, we find invitations to slow down. Buddhist Teacher Thich Nhat Hanh writes: “Drink your tea slowly and reverently, as if it is the axis on which the world earth revolves – slowly, evenly, without rushing toward the future. Live the actual moment.” One of the primary practices in Buddhism is mindfulness. In Buddhist tradition, one is encouraged to be mindful of the physical body, of the feelings, of the state of mind, and of dharma, or life’s purpose. This requires slowing down...bringing focused attention to what we’re doing...single-tasking rather than multi-tasking.

In the gospels, Jesus offers another invitation to slow and mindful living. During his ministry on earth, Rabbi Yeshua was known for a lot of things – being in a hurry wasn’t one of them. He wasn’t in a hurry to start his ministry. He wasn’t in a hurry to wake up from his nap, even when his boat encountered a storm that scared his disciples. He didn’t rush to reach Lazarus, even when he knew that his dear friend was dying. Jesus did not hurry from one town to the next, even though people needed him there. He made a habit of slowing down to rest, to spend time with his God. And he invited his disciples to rest with him.

Throughout the stories of Jesus, there is not one example of his feeling guilty about living life mindfully...taking things slowly...giving his full attention to whatever or whomever was before him.

Even further back in the Hebrew book of Jeremiah, we are told to, “Slow down. Take a deep breath. What’s the hurry? Why wear yourself out? Just what are you after anyway?”

In my reflections this week, I was given an insight, a paradox: “You have to slow down to move forward.” I need to make the deliberate choice to slow down...to thin down my schedule...and to give more focused attention to whatever I am doing...in order to move out of the stuck place that busyness has created. And I think that the global events of recent years are calling us, as a human family, to do the same.

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

We are all members of a group called the *human race*... Is that why we are in such a hurry?... It turns out that the root word for this use of *race* is different from that of the speed competition... from the Italian *razza*, it refers to our lineage... the biology we have in common... our shared genetic heritage... our collective origin...

A race to see who is the fastest is very different... Rather than focusing on what we have in common, it seeks to differentiate... faster from slower... winner from loser... Individual achievement is valued above the common good... One race is rooted in cooperation... the other is firmly established in competition...

The Hebrew Torah taught that the salvation of the individual was inextricably linked to the salvation of all people... no one makes it back to Eden until we *all* do... Spiritual Liberation is a group project... none of us can make it on our own... In the *Human Race*, we must all hold hands and cross the finish line together...

When we hurry, we become imperceptive... we don’t see the beauty that surrounds us... we grow insensitive to the needs of other people... we are not present to what *is* in *this* moment... It is only when we slow down... stop and smell the roses... that we can give our full attention to who and what is before us...

As we move toward our three minutes of silent meditation, I invite you to recall a time when you were in such a hurry that you hurt a loved one’s feelings... so hyper-focused on your goal that you became insensitive to those around you... Now contemplate how that scene might have played out differently... How much time would it have taken to slow down and connect for a moment?... Just how important *was* your objective?... Use your imagination to rehearse how you might handle it differently next time...

### **Silence – 3:00**

In profound gratitude for this time of Blessed Communion with our Creator and with our Beloved Community, we allow the music to usher our attention back to this time and this place... We are grateful for Divine Guidance that reminds us to *make time* for what is really important... Thank you, God, for everyone and for everything...

Slowing down heightens our awareness of *all* that is going on around us... we overlook fewer things... we are more sensitive to the needs of others... And we actually make fewer mistakes... and that means faster progress toward our goals...

As Rev. Diana continues her Taizé message this morning, we open our hearts and minds to Divine Wisdom and Inspiration... and as we go through our week, we listen for the Still Small Voice to remind us: "*Slow Down, You Move Too Fast...*"

**Rev. Diana** – Many of us here have been around for a while...maybe we have already made the conscious choice to slow down, and life is flowing beautifully as a result. But for many of us, there is still a sense of urgency that shows up in some areas of our lives. What is it that, despite our years of experience, drives us to *do* more, to *be* more? (Pause)

What in your life feels so urgent that you believe you can't take the time to slow down and rest?

Does your sense of value as a human being rest in your accomplishments? (Pause)

Does your busyness serve to distract you from making difficult decisions or facing challenging relationships?

Does the distraction keep you from hearing Spirit's Guidance, from answering a Higher Calling?

### **Closing Prayer**

In this sacred moment, we close our time in prayer and musical meditation. Knowing that there is one Source, one Life, forever expressing as all of creation, I can rest. The one Intelligence that I call God is unfolding Itself as me, as you, as our lives. There is a Divine Order and Timing about how creation is coming to be. Each of us, as expressions of Divinity, has the ability to co-create...to make choices...to offer ourselves as vessels through which Spirit's Loving Energy can flow. But we are not in control.

In this moment of Communion, I commit to slowing down...to resting in God...to listening for Guidance as I move through my days...to letting go of my insistence that I know what to do and how to do it.

I commit to bringing greater mindfulness to my activities and relationships...to listening more closely to my body's needs, whether that be more sleep, more nourishing food, or more exercise...listening more carefully to my heart's desires – more time with friends and family, or more time alone.

In every moment, the Voice of Spirit is moving through me. I give my attention first to that Guidance, and all else falls into place.

I am so grateful for...

In faith that all is well, I release this prayer...

And so it is...Amen!

## **Musical Meditation – *Breathe* by Karen Drucker**

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](http://mysticheart.org). And we thank you in advance for your gifts.


Please enjoy Ricki Byars Beckwith's Musical Devotion:

**Offertory Video – *Take More Time, Cover Less Ground*, by Carrie Newcomer**

<https://youtu.be/0kzo Ntd-vM>

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

## **Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song**

 ***A Soul's Blessing***, written by Chris Johnson

## *Conscious Conversation*

## **Sherri – 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.

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!

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 count on when you need a hand.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that our topic of Conversation this month is *Take More Time, Cover More Ground*...a phrase attributed to Thomas Merton. And this morning's Gathering, ***Slow Down, You Move Too Fast***, obviously came about because it's something I need to hear. I am so grateful to have you here each week to help me work through my stuff. Okay, it's not all about me...I think it may speak to you, as well.

During Taizé, we were looking at the invitations to slow down that are offered by the Buddhist focus on mindfulness in body, mind, heart, and purpose or dharma. And we observed that in the Christian Gospels, Rabbi Yeshua was known for a lot of things – being in a hurry wasn't one of them.

The stories of his life and ministry are filled with examples of slowing down, spending time in prayer and meditation, and being fully present with whomever was before him.

I'd like to share one of my favorite verses from the Tao to Ching: "Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?"

**How many people in this room would call themselves patient?**

**Does anyone here ever find themselves overcommitted?**

**What do you think causes us to do that?** (wanting distractions from dealing with the important things; seeking approval of others; finding our value in our doing)

Our society sends a constant directive...keep going at all costs.

**Why? What is the underlying message?** (fear)

**What are we afraid of?** (all kinds of not-enoughness; what we'll find when we take time to listen/look inside of ourselves)

There may be some of us that have been around for a while and have already made the conscious choice to slow down.

**Is that true for anyone here?**

**Have you found balance, or have you swung too far the other way?**

There is a verse in the book of Matthew that says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

**Who is speaking these words?** (Jesus to his followers)

**What does it mean?** ("Come to me"...do as I do...follow my example. Take time to rest in God, to pray, to commune in nature, or whatever resting in God looks like for you. You will find peace, you will receive Guidance)

**So when I take time to rest, I am regaining my strength. What else is happening?** (I am demonstrating trust that all is well...that the world will continue to turn without my constant involvement...that I will be taken care of. I am practicing my faith and allowing myself to be Guided. I am honoring myself as an act of gratitude for the gift of this body...this life.)

I'd like to close with one final question...it's a simple one.

**Anybody in this room think of themselves as a bit of a rebel?**

Listen to this quote from an author named Dave Ursillo: "...in a society that neurotically clamors for more doing, more action, and more pushing, these acts of slowing down, pausing, catching our breath, and reconnecting to ourselves are beautiful acts of defiance." He invites us to "Be a defiant one. Indulge in the rebellious pause. Rest because you are strong, and because you know how, and because you trust yourself...take care, enjoy the inhale, and remain unmoving. Let the mud settle, and the waters clear. The right action will arise by itself."

St. Augustine's famous phrase offers a deep Truth: "O, Lord, thou has made us, and our spirits are restless until we rest in thee."

In this state of rest there is no strife and no fighting, no fear, and no distrust. In this state of rest there is *shalom*, peace with God.

This state of rest is beautifully expressed in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. Let's close with that prayer this morning.

### **Rev. Diana – Closing Prayer**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; they rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.

Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen!

A possible translation for our time...

Spirit is guiding and protecting me always. My needs are met before they appear.

I Am created to rest in God's constant blessing and abundance.

The peace of God is always available, within me and all around me.

When I **Rest in the Lord**, body, mind, and spirit, I am reminded of my inherent Wholeness.

I Am guided to that which is Life-Affirming when I remember Who and Whose I Am.

Although life brings periods of darkness, I walk step by step through the shadows, faithful that Peace, Joy, Love and Goodness prevail; for I Am an expression of the Divine One. I Am empowered and comforted by my Internal Guidance and deep Faith.

I Am always provided for, no matter the appearance of lack or limitation.

My life is blessed beyond measure; I Am given the capacity for self-mastery.

As I express my inherent Goodness, my experience becomes graceful.

As I live from my Divine Nature, God's loving and lawful Presence is forever with me.

And so it is! Amen!



Feel free to return awareness to the space...and say good morning to the beautiful people celebrating with you here this morning.

## 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.


You'll recognize this song...


**Music Video – 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Song**, by Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel

<https://youtu.be/NogJp7hqTdU>


**Sherri – Blessing for the Offering**


**Sherri – Invitations**

 **The normal weekly groups are meeting this week: The Mystic Heart Book Club** with Michael Bordeaux on Tuesday, 3-5 pm and **Metaphysical Bible Study** with Chris Johnson, Thursday from 3 – 5 pm. Drop-ins are welcome.


 **12 Days of Kindness** is underway for 2023! Please bring socks, instant coffee packets, and toothbrushes for the month of November. We'll add new items when we reach 150 of each.


## Looking Ahead...

 Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-8:30 pm, *Shasta Interfaith Thanksgiving Service* at St. Joseph's...Rev. Diana will be presenting for the first time on behalf of Mystic Heart. Please consider joining us for this beautiful Interfaith Experience of Gratitude in the Season of Thanksgiving.

 **Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00 am – 1:30/2:00 pm, Dr. Sharon Brisolara** will be leading a poetry workshop. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20, all offerings gratefully accepted.

 **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 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.

 **Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, time TBA - April Jiménez WinterSky** will be leading a *Medicine Wheel Workshop*. Snacks will be provided. Suggested Donation: \$20 – RSVP required to attend.

 Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 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!

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

**Prayer Requests, Sherri available after service, Information Cards if new people**

**Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song**

 ***Love Be With You***, written by Lainey Bernstein, RScP



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