

Joy Comes Quietly

January 7, 2024



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

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

Taizé


Rev. Diana – we allow the sounding of the bell to carry us inward...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 and I welcome you home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart. We begin our Taizé Meditation by joining our voices in song.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 *In My Awakening*, written by Karl Anthony

Rev. Diana – We take a moment now to feel and know our connection with all that is. We use the breath...breathing in and feeling the coolness at the tip of the nostrils...following the breath as it moves through the mind, down the throat, towards the chest and into the heart...then allowing it to move through the heart and back into the world...

Remembering that the breath connects us to our fellow humans, and to all other creatures...we share the same life-giving air...

The breath connects us to the plants...we inhale what they have given, and we exhale what they need to create oxygen and food in return...and the cycle continues. Breath is Life.

There are no barriers...there is nothing to separate us from Life. Each of us is a Life in process...every creature, plant, rock, and grain of sand...every drop of water...all that exists, no matter how large or small is an intricate and irreplaceable part of the One Life, all dancing together in this cosmic mystery. Take a moment to breathe in that sense of connection...breathing in, I receive the Life that connects all beings, all things, all of Creation. Breathing out, I give back to Life.

As human expressions, we are given self-reflective consciousness, the ability to make choices, and so our responsibility is to make them wisely...to care for our brothers and

sisters, human and otherwise...to care for the Sacred Mother as she gives of her nourishment...to make an honorable and noble contribution to Life Itself, doing no harm, and aiding in the transformation happening in our world. We are experiencing a **Silent Awakening**, and by our conscious participation, we are moving *with* the Flow of Life.

We begin the New Year with reflections about Joy, and how **Joy Comes Quietly** in our lives. We are told that Joy and happiness are not the same. Happiness is an emotional state that wells up when the events in our lives are as we would wish them to be...and leaves or turns to another less desirable emotion when they are not. Happiness is changeable.

But Joy is not an emotional state...it is a Spiritual Quality, inherent in our being...a gift of Spirit, given at birth. Joy is the faith in Goodness always unfolding...the experience of all that happens in life being turned to, or used for, Good.

“The Joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10) In other words, the trust in, and experience of Goodness being revealed...your expectancy of Good...is your strength. Faith and Expectancy are attractive forces...like attracts like.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin spoke these words: “Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.” And so, the opposite must also be true...when I place my faith in the infallible Presence and Goodness of God, I find the deep Joy that lives within me.

We somehow expect that Joy should be obvious...visible. But Rev. Theresa Burton of Unity shared a different perspective: “Sometimes Joy arrives quietly, a whisper in the heart and a deep serenity, in body and soul...”

The Joy that is quiet, the Joy that fills our hearts with Love and our eyes with tears, is a Joy that brings us home to ourselves. *That* Joy is ours when we touch the peace and perfection of the Divine and know deep in our hearts that God is not separate from us and never was.”

That Joy is mine when I open my eyes to the Goodness of Life, when I make a Practice of seeing clearly that Life is a gift...when I willingly receive Life as a blessing...when I hold this life of mine with reverence...when I say *Yes, I live this Life with care...Yes, I accept and receive Joy as an inherent Quality of my Life, of my being...and Yes, I am most grateful...thank you.* As I begin to say *Yes* to the gift of Life, to the gift of Joy, my relationship with it begins to change. My life becomes the unfolding of one miracle after another...and Joy becomes the rock, the foundation, on which my Life is built.

Chris – Guided Meditation

Joy Comes Quietly... it unfolds to reveal itself like a flower... slowly... gently... opening up to share its beauty... its fragrance... its sweet nectar...its gift of life-giving pollen... Joy is a Divine Gift... nestled deep inside us... a soft, warm, subtle glow that we only notice when we look for it within...

Joy may seem to arise suddenly... unexpectedly meeting a treasured friend... a beautiful rainbow emerging... Some experiences *appear* to generate Joy... but they are an *effect* of Joy... not its *cause*... They are inconspicuous ways that Joy quietly reveals itself...

As we share our three minutes of Silent Meditation this morning, I invite you to recall an experience of deep Joy... How did it *feel*?... Where in your body was the feeling most tangible?... Welcome that feeling back into your body *now*...

Silence – 3:00

End of Meditation – 1:00

Thank you, Creator, for the Divine Gift of Joy... for the precious ability to *feel* your Spirit within our very Being... for inhabiting us in such an intimate way that our hearts, minds, and bodies are exhilarated by your Presence...

With open and receptive hearts, we allow Rev. Diana's continued Taizé message to inspire and guide us into a deeper and more profound awareness of Joy... and with gratitude and expectant faith we find that, indeed, our *Joy Comes Quietly*...

Rev. Diana –

Each of us in a place like this is working to learn how to say *Yes* to Life more and more often, *Yes* to Goodness, *Yes* to Faith, *Yes* to Joy. We are learning to fully recognize and receive our Life as the mysterious gift that it is. We are coming to accept the messy and profane, as well as the miraculous and beautiful...coming to see the gift in all of it. Finding our sincere *Yes* requires courage and effort...it asks that we rediscover our childlike curiosity and willingness. It asks that we begin again...go back to where we started...Joyful, trusting, curious.

Saying *Yes* to Life, saying *Yes* to Joy, is a day-by-day, moment-by-moment process. It means feeling the fear or resistance that may come up...being willing to find the smile behind even the most difficult places...and working through the *no* to get to the *Yes*. This can only work for Good. Because when one person finds their *Yes* for Life, their *Yes* for Joy, a higher vibration begins to move through our bodies and our experiences. The walls of friction and fear begin to soften and shrink...the organism of Life begins to flow differently. Every single and seemingly small or insignificant effort is actually contributing to the greater Good of the world.

The more we can find our own personal *Yes*, the more we discover hope, faith, and resilience. Every *Yes* brings a greater strength and determination, a deeper Love, and a more profound sense of Joy to the voice of humanity as it moves past the noise of resistance and into the Harmony of True Connection.

In the name of all that is Holy, we close together in prayer.

There is One Life, forever giving of Itself as all of Creation...

I trust and give thanks for my own perfection as an expression of the One, even as I seek to align more closely with the Creator...

I feel and know my Connection with All That Is...

I trust in the Eternal Nature of Life, the Eternal Nature of Spirit...

I trust in the Joy that is inherently mine when I say Yes to Life...

I give thanks for the Beauty and Blessings that shower my Life...and for the challenges that build my character, resilience, and faith...

God's Grace takes many forms, and I receive it all with reverence and gratitude.

By my conscious attention and choice, I make Faith in the Goodness of Life my firm foundation...I make Joy my state of being.

My faith need not be loud, only strong, filled with the Power of Spirit.

My Joy is the quiet assurance of Goodness unfolding, in this and every moment...

All that passes before me is made more Joyful by my Presence.

Joy Comes Quietly as I breathe in Joy, allowing it to move through my body and out through my heart.

Giving thanks for this time of Communion and the depth of my Connection, I release my prayer, knowing that it guides my thoughts, my words, and my steps as I move into the coming week. I Joyfully and gratefully receive Grace in every form, releasing my word, calling all that unfolds from this moment on *answered prayer*...calling it *all Good* in faith that it is *done*...And So It Is! Amen!

Musical Meditation – Amen, by Porter Singer (Sirgun Kaur)

<https://youtu.be/tMPbN3rfBmY>

Rev. Diana – I invite you to Come back into the awareness of your body...notice the atmosphere in the room, and when you feel ready, gently opening your eyes and allowing your 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.

Rev. Diana – Rev. Diana

As we close our Taizé Meditation, we offer the opportunity for you to share your financial good in support of the work we do in the world. 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

Offertory Video – This Year, by JJ Heller

<https://youtu.be/zK4DycDO70M>

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Please consider grabbing a cup of something warm next door and come back to join in the Conscious Conversation. We'll close the Taizé portion of our morning with **A Soul's Blessing**.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Closing Song

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

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

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

 **The Silent Awakening**, written by Tina Malia

Rev. Diana – As we begin a new year together, I invite you to renew your commitment to the creation of a **Love-Soaked World**. Engaging the body, allowing Spirit's Presence to be felt, let's breathe in Peace...allowing it to move down into the heart...and release it as Love...Self-Givingness.

Know with me now that we are creating a world where all humans embody and live from the Qualities of Spirit...Love, Kindness, Generosity, and Compassion...from this way of being, there is a deep sense of Joy, Contentment, Sufficiency. All people honor and care for one another, for all of the life forms that share this beautiful earth, and for the earth Herself.

We realize that we are connected to all of Life...that we are dependent on the planet to sustain us, and on one another. Being generous by our nature, and living a life true to our nature, we give of ourselves freely, offering the gifts we came here to give. With all needs met for every person, each one is free to share time and talent in ways that feed the soul.

Life on earth is a story...a story that we are helping to write by our every thought, word, and action. Together, we envision a story where all beings are well-fed, and have the safety and comfort of home...where health, education, and healthy relationships are supported by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness...where all find Purpose.

We welcome this new way of being, valuing every being for its uniqueness...we practice living Authentic lives...Integrity comes naturally as there is no need to protect. With Love, Generosity and Kindness guiding every human heart, our world is free of hatred and violence. We recognize the abundance that surrounds us, and gratefully receive all that is needed to live physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually fulfilling lives.

All beings experience thriving like never before as we learn to see the sacred in everything and everyone...we walk in reverence and gratitude for all that we have been given.

We maintain this Vision day by day, moment by moment; we are not swayed by appearances. Each of us works to align our actions with our Vision, living these changes first in our own lives, with our families, friends, and neighbors...and a new world is being born. In this process of profound change, this Community stands as an open and welcoming place for all who seek support, belonging, Family.

By the power of our deep faith, this prayer is acted upon, answered even before it is spoken, as Spirit knows our heart's desire and intent. In full expectation of its Graceful unfolding...we release it to the Creative Power and Intelligence that I call God...to the One that gets it done...And so it is...Amen! Sathu...Selah...Ashay...Aho!

Bringing awareness back to the body, to the room, to the amazing beings who share this space with us this morning...look around to say good morning to your Spiritual Family if you haven't already.

Happy New Year! **Is anyone setting intentions for the coming year? Care to share?**

I have some of my own. I'll share a bit as we move into our Conversation this morning if the opportunity arises. Our theme this month is ***Silent Awakening***, topic of Conversation this morning is ***Joy Comes Quietly***.

How do you define Joy?

During the Taizé, we gave Joy a particular definition. **Does anyone remember how we defined it?**

Let me share a bit about how I came to that definition. I started by recalling that one of my foundational teachers, Ernest Holmes, called Love a Quality of Spirit...a Truth...a Principle...and defined it as God's Self-Givingness. He said that as we are made in the image and likeness of our Creator, human Love is our own impulse to give of ourselves...it's our self-less generosity.

I recalled that he names Joy as another Quality of Spirit, so I looked it up in my trusty Science of Mind Textbook and found this definition: "The emotion excited by the expectancy of Good."

I was confused...are emotions human experiences or Spiritual Truths?

Humans are Spiritual Beings. If Joy is a Quality of Spirit, then it is part of our nature, available at all times. Finally, what felt True as I reflected was the idea that e-motion is

energy in motion, the human experience that comes when we place our faith in God's Goodness.

Let's pivot just a bit and turn toward one of the ways that we can encourage ***Joy to Come Quietly***.

What is the difference between priorities and values, or is there a difference?

(Values are the qualities that are important to us. Priorities are the activities or experiences that we make time and money for...the things we give energy and time to *prior to* other things)

What are some examples of values that are important to you?

Physical Health is something I value. I'm choosing this one because it's an area where my values are not in complete alignment with my priorities. I have heard it said that one look at your calendar and your check register will tell you what your priorities are, and I find this to be true. The calendar tells me where my precious time is going or has gone. And my checkbook tells me where I'm spending my money.

In my case, the checkbook points in the direction of making my health a priority. I spend a lot of money on healthy food. I make a priority of supporting local and buying from farmers who are using regenerative practices. And my calendar says that I spend time each week working to grow some of my own food by the same principles and practices. But it also says that I have not written in time to walk, stretch, or tone my body in quite some time. My priorities are not completely in alignment with my values.

I share this with you as an example...not so that I can beat myself up, but so that I can live from a greater awareness. I want to own those places that are out of alignment so that I can live a more fulfilling and Joy-filled life. When my priorities and values are in alignment, ***Joy Comes Quietly***. It becomes much easier to sense and live from the Goodness of Spirit, from all things working for Good in my life.

Am I the only one in the room who is out of alignment between values and priorities? Anyone else care to share?

I'd like to end our Conversation this morning with something I heard by Sarah Blondin. Listen to this: "Inside the body of each of us, against all weariness, we still come Joyfully toward one another as if to cry out in wonder at one another's Beauty. The Law underneath me and inside your aliveness is Love, a bounding Love that magnetically attracts and connects humanity. To remember, really remember this, is to diffuse the estrangement we sometimes suffer...(we) can avoid and suppress the impulse of your Joy in your life, but it will serve nothing of value. Soon enough, you'll be empty of wonder and awe, and my goodness! What an unfortunate calculation that would be. This new day is yours and you are made of a necessary elemental, fundamental urge to reach forward and into life. You desire nothing more but to wake and wonder into all the faces shining back at you...choose wisely the current you are abiding by. Every day, ask

yourself, “Am I living in the inclination of the urge to Love, or am I stuck in the static of disconnect and protection?”

Thoughts?

When I live from Love, from self-givingness, there is a natural tendency to expect Goodness in return. So I add another question to our contemplations this week.

“Am I living from my inherent urge to know that Good is always unfolding, or have I become jaded?”

This has been another great and Conscious Conversation. We can continue it over lunch if we wish, but for now, let’s close in prayer.

Join me in knowing this Truth for yourself as I speak it aloud:

Love Offering

I 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.


I want to help us get into the Holiday Spirit. Please enjoy...

Offertory Video – *Adventure in Paradise*, by Rev. Michael Beckwith

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Lucinda – Invitations

-  Michael’s Book Club begins again this Tuesday, January 9th with *The Delight in Being Ordinary* by Roland Merullo.
-  Fast Track to Wellness begins again with guest presenter Dr. Sharon Brisolara this Thursday, January 11th. She’ll be offering a set of tools to help us improve our health and wellness, Body, Mind, Spirit.
-  Metaphysical Bible begins again this Thursday, January 11th from 3-5 pm with Chris Johnson.
-  Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton will be offering *Relaxing into 2024* on this coming Saturday, January 13th.
-  Prayer Practitioner Lucinda Alton will be offering a new class, Neuro Dharma (book by Rick Hanson) beginning on Wednesday, January 17th
-  A presentation will be given on January 18th by Mary Davis to discuss the Mormon tradition and the Common Threads of Truth it shares with other faith paths.

 And you won't want to miss Ellie's Birthday Bash Dance Party on Friday, January 26th. We have many birthdays happening the last 10 days of this month...come help us celebrate in Community.

There is more information available in the new month's Bulletin...take one home with you. And check out our amazing website, compliments of Chris Johnson.

Prayer Requests: I am available after service – We invite everyone to help us make a private space for prayer here in the Sanctuary by joining us next door for lunch.

Information Cards for new people

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song

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