

Hearing, Feeling Heard

Sunday, February 11, 2024

Rev. Diana Johnson, with Chris Johnson, RScP and musicians
Dalton Fitzgerald & Gary French



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé


Rev. Diana—we follow the bell to the stillness within...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 and I welcome you home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart. We begin our Taizé Meditation with musical prayer.

Rev. Diana, Chris, Dalton, & Gary –Taizé Chants

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

 **We Are One**, written by Linda Webb-Khakaba

Rev. Diana – This month we are using the Practice of Grounding to sense our connection with all that is. I invite us to close your eyes or rest your gaze downward and relax, allowing the chair to take all of your weight, feet resting on the floor...notice how you feel today...how your body feels...what's happening in your mind...notice how your breath is flowing...and whatever the breath feels like, begin to slow it down...let it go silent...feel the belly rise, then pause at the top...and let a slow breath out. Again, inhale...pause...and release. Let your whole body relax. Let a wave of calm flow over and through you.

Take a moment now to feel where your body touches the chair...become aware of the sturdiness of the earth beneath you, and how it supports every aspect of you. From this grounded awareness, imagine roots, like the roots of a tree, flowing from you deep down into the ground beneath you...rooting down through the floor, into the earth beneath you, and spreading out far and wide. Allow these roots to connect all the way down into the center of the planet...feeling the energy that lives there, and drawing that energy up through the soles of your feet, travelling up through your legs and thighs, up into your heart space, continuing up the spine and out through the head...

...and now moving it back down, from the atmosphere above you, down through the head, the body, all the way back into the earth...allowing it to ground you...to connect you with the Sacred Mother.

This deep rooting connects you with the earth, and with everything that lives on Her, within Her, and beyond Her...with all humans, and all other creatures...with the plants...the rocks and grains of sand...and with every drop of water...with the heavenly bodies. 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...

As human expressions, we are given the powers of self-reflection and choice. In return for these precious gifts, we use them wisely, caring for our brothers and sisters, human and otherwise...caring for the Sacred Mother as she gives of her nourishment...doing no harm, and aiding in the transformation happening in our world.

We move into the contemplation of ***The Sacred Feminine***...and on what it means to truly ***Hear and Feel Heard***. We are each a unique combination of masculine and feminine qualities and traits. These are not specific to gender, but energies that co-exist within each of us. ***The Sacred Feminine*** is expressed when we are receptive, present, empathetic...listening and hearing in a way that is supportive and nurturing...from a place of poise, or peaceful strength. This is true whether we are listening inwardly to what our bodies, minds, or emotions have to offer, or listening to another.

Generous listening creates a sacred and safe space for another to be...to speak and to feel heard. It demands that we listen with our hearts and minds, as well as our ears. Before a single word is spoken, we can *hear* the body language or facial expressions of another if we are paying attention. We can sense the emotional state...the vulnerability or security, joy or sadness, enthusiasm, or apathy that one may be feeling.

Generous listening and feeling heard are both ways of building connection...something we are all yearning for. And this connection allows us to soften into the truth...not only our personal truth or experience, but that of another. It takes us outside of our own wants, needs, opinions, and preferences, and places us in an open-hearted place of witnessing. In this witnessing, we feel our shared humanity.

Many of us were not taught how to listen generously...how to show up for another in a way that feels safe and inviting. But I think it is something we all long for. How do we invoke the ***Sacred Feminine*** and her receptive listening?

We offer Presence...distractions and opinions are put aside. Our undivided, individual attention is the gift of the moment. There is freedom to express without criticism or judgement. And by our Presence, the one before us senses that we hold his thoughts and feelings as valid and worthy. This kind of listening builds a bridge from one heart to another.

Deep and generous listening is not only intended for the other beings in our lives. Like Seeing and Feeling Seen, ***Hearing and Feeling Heard*** begins within. Until we give ourselves the quiet space to hear what our bodies have to tell us...to listen for what our emotions have to share...to what our Inner Wisdom and Guidance have to offer...we are

not centered enough to hear another clearly. When we are not present to our own needs, our own lives, we lack the subtle strength to be truly receptive to another.

The subtle strength of the Sacred Feminine is alive in all of us, whatever our gender. She is both strong *and* supple, stable, *and* flexible...constant *and* fluid. Her open and loving heart provide a safe space for our authentic self to speak.

In listening to ourselves, we begin by asking...how is my body feeling today? Is there anything it needs me to know today? (Pause)

How am I feeling mentally? Have I been giving myself enough peace and quiet? Enough stillness? (Pause) How am I feeling emotionally? Is there anything on my heart that needs taking care of? (Pause) *This* is feeling and being heard...giving ourselves permission to listen for what we need to do in support of our own health and wellness.

Chris – Guided Meditation

How do we experience *Hearing and Feeling Heard* in meditation and prayer?... Do we actually hear a *still, small voice* as in the story of Elijah?... Do we *feel* like God hears and cares about our desires?... It's different for each of us... everyone's relationship with the Divine is unique...

We encounter Spirit deep within our Body Temple... within our own Mystic Heart... There, we make our desire known... to ourSelf... and to our God... And we listen for a response... not just mentally... but with our whole body... alert to every sensation... every intuition...

In our three minutes of shared, Silent Meditation this morning, let us identify a deep desire... Distill it down to a single word, such as *Health, Prosperity, Love, Peace, Joy*... and with all the emotion of your desire, hold it in your heart... let it radiate out from you into the Universe... then *listen*... with heart, mind, body, soul, and spirit...

Silence – 3:00

Returning our awareness to the here and now, we give thanks for this Blessed Communion... with our Creator... and with our Beloved Spiritual Family... Grateful for Spirit's response... and vigilant for further signs that our prayer has been heard and responded to... we rest in quiet expectation...

We continue listening with our entire Being as Rev. Diana continues her Taizé message this morning... in full faith that all that we need is revealed to us... and that we continually grow and expand our capacity for *Hearing and Feeling Heard*...

Rev. Diana – *Hearing, Feeling Heard*, takes a willingness to listen generously...to ourselves and others. Author, teacher, and mystic Mark Nepo reflects that

To *enter* deep listening, I've had to learn to keep emptying and opening, how to keep beginning. I've had to lean into all I don't understand, accepting that I am changed by what I hear.

Emptying and opening...this speaks to me of the Sacred Feminine qualities of *surrender* and *receptivity*. He continues:

...we must honor that listening is a personal pilgrimage that takes time. With each trouble that stalls us and each wonder that lifts us, we are asked to put down our conclusions and feel and think anew...

...listening is being present enough to hear the One in the many and the many in the One...listening stitches the world together...is the doorway to everything that matters. It enlivens the heart the way breathing enlivens the lungs. We listen to awaken our heart. We do this to stay vital and alive.

Deep and generous listening is nurturing...it is a gift we give to ourselves...a gift we give one another...and to Life Itself. As we listen deeply, there is a message meant for us alone...there is Guidance, Direction, Wisdom.

And we can trust that we are not alone in the listening, in the hearing. Again, like *seeing*, *hearing* is a reciprocal action. In our very existence, we are always heard...Great Spirit, Ultimate Reality, or whatever name we give to that which is beyond definition, *feels* the imprint of our every thought, word, and action...the Mystery of Life is everywhere present...all-knowing, all-hearing. Our needs and hearts' desires are sensed and known as they come into being.

I invite you to carry the art of Listening and Presence into your week...to remember that you are not alone, that you are always heard, always known. I invite you to listen to what your body, mind, and emotions have to share. And, if you are able, to offer generous listening to another.

In the name of All That Is, we close together in prayer.

Holy Presence...Great Mystery...All-in-All...With humility and surrender, I rest in You now.

You are all that is...there is nothing else.

I Am an aspect, an Expression of You...Divine Human.

In my humanity, I seek your Wisdom...I listen for Your Voice.

I hear and receive Your Guidance, acting as Your hands, feet, voice, and heart in this world.

And as I seek to hear, I know that I Am Heard, fully known, by your Infinite Presence.

I listen deeply in all directions, and I respond with mindful Awareness.

I listen for what my body, mind, and emotions have to say, and I respond with living kindness.

I attune my listening to those who seek it, offering safe space and an open heart to those who are feeling vulnerable.

In return, I find refuge in the deep listening of others.

I attune my hearing to the calls of our beloved planet, aligning my actions day by day to the practices that best serve Her.

And in my giving, so do I receive her abundance.

Thank You, Spirit, for the Blessings too numerous to name...whether perceived as beauty or challenge.

All are gifts of Spirit...all serve to build my character, resilience, and faith.

I walk in reverence, awe, and deep gratitude for Your Powerful Presence and Wisdom in my Life. Thankful for this time of Communion, I rest, knowing that my prayer is answered before it is spoken. And So It Is! Amen!

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 – 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 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 for your gifts.

Rev, Diana, Chris, Dalton, & Gary – Offertory Music

 **Boundless Skies**, written by Lacy J. Dalton, Gavin Greenaway & Aaron Anderson

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, Dalton, & Gary – Closing Song

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


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 Diana Johnson, and I am

the Pastor here at Mystic Heart. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We come together each week to be reminded of the Wisdom and Guidance that live in our own Mystic Hearts. You are hereby invited and welcomed to this Spiritual Family, to our Spiritual Home, should you choose it for yourself.

Rev. Diana, Chris, Dalton, & Gary – Opening Music

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

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

 **One God** by Linda Webb-Khakaba

Rev. Diana – You can stay standing if you wish, or whatever brings the Presence of Spirit into the Body as we join in the creation of a **Love-Soaked World**.

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...and from this way of being, I can feel the presence of a deep sense of Joy, Contentment, and Sufficiency. Can you feel it?

In this new world, 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 remember 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.

By our every thought, word, and action, we are writing a new story in which all beings are well-fed...have the safety and comfort of home and a deep sense of belonging and purpose. We are so grateful that once and for all, health, education, and healthy relationships are supported by social systems grounded in Integrity, Compassion and Wholeness.

We welcome this new way of living, valuing every being for its uniqueness...we practice living Authentic lives...there is no need to defend or 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...giving and receiving flow freely in every direction and all beings gratefully receive all that is needed to live physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually fulfilling lives.

The planet and its beings thrive like never before as we learn to see the sacred in everyone and everything...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 this beautiful life, and to the amazing beings who share this space with us this morning...look around to say good morning to your Spiritual Family.

Our theme this month is **Sacred Feminine**, and the topic of Conversation this morning is **Hearing, Feeling Heard**. If you were here for Taizé this morning, you will remember what was said...that every one of us is a unique combination of masculine and feminine qualities and traits. These are not specific to gender, but energies that co-exist within each of us...that **The Sacred Feminine** is expressed when we are feeling receptive, creative, nurturing...and when we are poised, a blending of peace and power.

And then we spent time in contemplation of these ideas: that generous listening creates a sacred and safe space, free from judgement, for another to speak and to feel heard...that it demands that we are fully present, listening with our hearts and minds, as well as our ears, sensing the body language, facial expressions, and emotional state of the one we are speaking to...that generous listening is a way of building connection, taking us outside of our own wants, needs, opinions, and preferences, and places us in an open-hearted place of witnessing...and that generous listening begins within, with listening to our own bodies, minds, and emotions.

That's where I'd like to begin our Conversation this morning. Last week we talked about Seeing and Feeling Seen. This week is Hearing and Feeling Heard.

How is feeling seen different than feeling heard, or are they? (for me, feeling seen means someone understanding who I am; feeling heard means someone understanding how I feel, what I believe, etc.)

Feeling seen is about people seeing and respecting my identity and way-of-being-in-the-world; *feeling heard* is about people respecting and listening to my perspectives and lived experience.)

What causes you to feel heard by another? (when someone listens intently to my words; when I'm understood; when I'm appreciated for my unique perspective; when someone makes a sincere effort to put themselves in my shoes)

Is there a time that you felt unheard? (when someone checks a message in the middle of a conversation; when there is no eye contact; when someone responds to something I said with an unrelated comment, as if they already knew what they were going to say before I spoke; when someone cuts me off mid-sentence, when someone is not tuned into my body and facial language)

How might we gracefully let another know that we are not feeling heard? (“I feel as though you are not understanding what I mean. Can we try it again?” Use I statements...own your own feelings without casting blame.)

Sometimes the messages we receive from another are not from the words they are saying. We talked about body and facial language. But sometimes the message comes from another’s silence.

Sometimes the silence we hear is louder than any words can speak. What do I mean by that? (sometimes a lack of response from another speaks volumes)

What qualities are involved in deep and generous listening? (patience, caring, peace, compassion, curiosity, willingness, attention, presence, empathy, non-judgement, understanding)

Can these qualities be cultivated? How?

(By engaging with people on a regular basis; by asking questions, then listening; by listening more than you speak; through self-reflection and self-honesty...do I have poor communication habits? How often do I say I, me, or my? Mindfulness Practice in all forms)

Do you have any specific tools or practices to share?

I’d like to close our time together with this prayer for deep listening, for Hearing and knowing I Am Heard.

In the name of All That Is, we close together in prayer.

Holy Presence...Great Mystery...All-in-All...With humility and surrender, I rest in You now.

You are all that is...there is nothing else.

I Am an aspect, an Expression of You...Divine Human.

In my humanity, I seek your Wisdom...I listen for Your Voice.

I hear and receive Your Guidance, acting as Your hands, feet, voice, and heart in this world.

And as I seek to hear, I know that I Am Heard, fully known, by your Infinite Presence.

I listen deeply in all directions, and I respond with mindful Awareness.

I listen for what my body, mind, and emotions have to say, and I respond with living kindness.

I attune my listening to those who seek it, offering safe space and an open heart to those who are feeling vulnerable.

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I attune my hearing to the calls of our beloved planet, aligning my actions day by day to the practices that best serve Her.

And in my giving, so do I receive her abundance.

Thank You, Spirit, for the Blessings too numerous to name...whether perceived as beauty or challenge.

All are gifts of Spirit...all serve to build my character, resilience, and faith.

I walk in reverence, awe, and deep gratitude for Your Powerful Presence and Wisdom in my Life. Thankful for this time of Communion, I rest, knowing that my prayer is answered before it is spoken. And So It Is! Amen!

Take a moment to allow your awareness to return to your body, to this space, to this beautiful gathering...welcome back.

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.

Tying in with our theme, please enjoy...

Rev. Diana, Chris, Dalton, & Gary – Offertory Music

 **My Lighthouse**, written by Chris Llewellyn & Gareth Gilkeson

Chris – Blessing for the Offering


Rev. Diana – Invitations

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club meets on Tuesdays** – book is *The Delight in Being Ordinary* by Roland Merullo.

 **Fast Track to Wellness meets on Thursdays from 12:00 – 2:00 pm.** Dr. Sharon Brisolara will be joining us this week for Mindfulness Practices.

 **Metaphysical Bible meets on Thursdays from 3-5 pm** with Chris Johnson.

Looking Ahead...

 **Rev. Diana will be offering a new course of study based on the book *Understanding World Religions*, beginning Wednesday February 28th from 10**

am – 1 pm. More information can be found in your new bulletins...be sure to take one with you.

♥ And reservations are coming in for our Spring Retreat at The Gathering Place at Shasta Lake. We are collecting your \$100 non-refundable deposit to hold your space. We have 15-20 spots left, depending on sleeping arrangements. The reservations are first come, first served. The total cost per adult is \$275. We are open to making it a family retreat that includes children, depending on age. Contact Rev. Diana with your questions and to reserve your spot.

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

Information Cards if new people

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

Rev. Diana, Chris, Dalton, & Gary – Closing Song

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



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