

The Power of Now

Sunday, June 2, 2024

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



An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Rev. Diana – Let us follow the sound of the bell into the Stillness Within... **3 Bells**

Sherri – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Good morning...if you're new with us here this morning, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director of Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We open our doors in welcome, trusting that you will be led to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Taizé Chants

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

 **One Breath at a Time**, written by Karen Drucker

Rev. Diana – Let us begin our Taizé this morning by centering ourselves in gratitude for the multitude of gifts we are given this day... taking a long, slow, deep breath in, filling your heart with love...and as you exhale, releasing that love into the world... Now slowly inhaling the Divine Presence... and exhaling, letting go of cares, concerns, and mental busyness... Abiding in the Peace of the Presence of the One...

Remember with me now that all of Creation is the expression of Spirit... the body of God... Each of us is a unique thread in the beautiful tapestry of Life... A strand of consciousness weaving in and out of one another to reveal the splendor of our Unity... This morning we connect in consciousness with each other as human family, and with our Global Community... with our plant and animal siblings... with our Mother Earth, her waters, her minerals, her mountains, her weather... with our Grandfather Sky, his clouds, his stars, his planets, his galaxies... All expressions of The Infinite Nature of Spirit... each absolutely necessary to the whole...

As we acknowledge that we are all of One Essence, One Substance, One Source, we grow in compassion, empathy, and understanding. Firmly grounded in this awareness, we recognize that all that we offer into the world in thought, word, or action, affects the Whole.

With our hearts and minds consciously centered in Spirit, our collective prayer and meditation leave an imprint of Peace and Love on human evolution, and on the world, for all time. Take a moment to experience the Grace we are radiating...

This month, our contemplations are centered in ***New Beginnings***, and this morning's reflections encourage us to consider ***The Power of Now***...the importance of the present moment, and living our lives grounded in Presence.

Let us begin with an assumption...that the past is behind us...it is no longer with us...and that there is nothing we can do about the past. Let us accept that if we have spoken or acted unskillfully, it was merely our ignorance...our lack of awareness, that allowed our lives to unfold as they did...we might feel regret for a period of time...and then put it behind us...it is done. "There comes a time when we bid it goodbye and start over with the word now and let now mark the beginning of our new birth." (*Seek Ye First*, Joel S. Goldsmith,)

And let us also recognize that the future is not yet here...that truly, it will never be here...and that we are creating our Next-Yet-To-Be right now...we are creating our tomorrows today, in this moment, and this one, and this one. What we are calling awareness to is that we are always engaging in the moment of *Now*...It is the only moment we ever have. *Now*.

I share this meditation from Mystic and Teacher, Joel S. Goldsmith:

Now, here where I am, God is. Now God is; now God is closer than breathing; now the Father is saying, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

In this moment of silent receptivity, the Father says, "Drop your burdens, let Me carry the load. Let Me give you forgiveness, let Me be the bread, the meat, the wine, and the water of life. Drop your burdens at My feet now.

I am to be fed now by the spirit of God within me. I am to be clothed and housed now by the spirit of God within me. My business is to be prospered, not by might or by power, but by the spirit of God that is within me.

It has long been recognized as Spiritual Truth...as above, so below...as within, so without. What takes place in our inner world directly affects the outer world, the world of effects. Our outer conduct is governed by what takes place in our minds, hearts, thoughts, and feelings.

As we move toward the experience of Peace, we sense the importance of letting go of all that has come before...in our own lives, and in our world. We can no longer see ourselves as separate from the beings we once called *others*. We must acknowledge that there is but one Creative Principle back of all of Creation. This makes us all siblings...brothers and sisters in the truest sense. As we accept and come to understand this Truth, our entire past of unlovingness is wiped out. "All the karma we may have

stored up by our hates, envies, jealousies, bigotries, and biases is wiped out in this moment of now. There is no longer a past; there is only now.” (Goldsmith)

Of course, Life sometimes calls us to plan...to dream, imagine, set goals and schedules. Let us remember that dreaming can be a purposeful and present-moment activity...that planning and goal setting is best done with intentionality...we can most effectively plan for our tomorrows when we do so consciously, in this moment of *now*.

Chris – Guided Meditation

We live our entire life at a threshold... an infinitesimally brief moment that lies between what has been and what shall be... Poised between the past and the future, the moment we refer to as *now* is ephemeral... as soon as it arrives, it vanishes... appearing only to disappear immediately...

We measure the past and the future with *time*... but how long does *now* last? We tend to think of *eternity* as an infinite stretch of time... and of *now* as an infinitely short time... But what if both *eternity* and *now* transcend time?... Might they not both describe an experience of timelessness?...

The bliss we experience when we feel the presence of Spirit within and around us is a glimpse of eternity... In those moments – perhaps taking in the majesty of Nature... listening to beautiful music... or deep in prayer or meditation... time seems to stand still... But the truth is that we have transcended time...

Author Dan Millman poses three questions and responses designed to maintain our awareness in the present moment... *Where are you? Here... What time is it? Now... What are you? This moment...* Right now, where we are is the *only place*... and this moment – this *now* is all that we have... and all that we *are*...

Practicing the presence of God is really bringing *ourselves* fully into this *now* moment... Spirit never went anywhere... our *awareness* did... As we turn our attention within during these three minutes of Silent Contemplation this morning, I invite us to fully surrender into this *now* moment... into this place... We can only court the Divine Presence *now*... If your mind wanders, ask... *Where are you? I am here... What time is it? It is now... What are you? I am this moment...*

Silence – 3:00

Thank you, Spirit for your Holy Presence in this place... in this moment... and within the heart of each soul here... Thank you for the mutual love and support of this Beloved Community as we share this sacred moment of deep communion... May we never forget who and Whose we are...

There is only one Power – the Power of Spirit... and the only time Spirit knows is *now*... The real *Power of Now* is that *now* is the only time that God’s Power is available to us... The more available we are to Spirit in this moment, the more Divine Creative Power is available to us...

As Taizé continues, we listen with focused awareness to Rev. Diana's inspired message, allowing ourselves to be fully present, completely open, and in full faith that we have all we will ever need to fully practice *The Power of Now*...

Rev. Diana

Living Master and Mystic Eckhart Tolle made popular *The Power of Now*. In his book, he writes: "...the past gives you an identity and the future holds the promise of salvation, of fulfillment in whatever form. Both are illusions." Both are illusions. Neither are Real, neither are True in this moment...memories, thought forms that distract us from living life as it is in this moment...that interrupt our peace.

He adds: "Your outer journey may contain a million steps; your inner journey only has one: the step you are taking right now..." Let that soak in. The step you are taking now...the breath you are taking now...is the only one that matters. The task you are performing, the Beloved that stands before you, is the only one that matters.

Eckhart invites us to

Watch any plant or animal and let it teach you acceptance of what is, surrender to the Now. Let it teach you integrity — which means to be one, to be yourself, to be real. Let it teach you how to live and how to die, and how not to make living and dying into a problem.

And finally:

If your mind carries a heavy burden of past, you will experience more of the same. The past perpetuates itself through lack of presence. The quality of your consciousness at this moment is what shapes the future.

The quality of your consciousness at this moment is what shapes the future.

Let's close in prayer...

I acknowledge the Power and Presence of the One...Here and now, knowing and experiencing the One Divine Presence, and fully accepting its movement through my life *now*. In me...through me...and AS me..., It brings Itself to Sacred Serve...It brings Itself to full expression and unfoldment...always for the Greater Good.

In this Sacred Moment, this moment of *now*, I acknowledge the Presence of God in every situation or condition, in every relationship, in every task...in every experience...

And I surrender to It, in deep gratitude for Its Presence, Guidance, and Wisdom in my life...allowing It to move through me, and through my life, in more Powerful, more Beautiful, more Joyful and Grace-filled ways than I have ever known before. I speak this prayer from a place of Spiritual Authority...the Authority granted me at birth...as a beloved child of God, created in Spirit's image and likeness.

In deep humility, I give thanks for the countless blessings that shower down upon and around me every day...those gifts that I would call beautiful and graceful, and those that

challenge me to grow in character, resilience, faith, and love. I give thanks for this spiritual community and the Joy and Beauty that it brings into my life.

I gratefully accept the Power of my Word as the Word of God, moving through me...for there is only One of us here. And I release it now, knowing that the Loving Presence and Infallible Action of the One is complete...that my prayer is answered, even before it is spoken. And so we call it done...As together we say, And so it is! Amen!

Musical Meditation

 ***Journey Back to Now***, by Steven Walters

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.

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. We thank you in advance for your gifts. And we call to mind the words of Helen Keller...life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.

Offertory Music Video

 ***Be Here Now***, by Narayan & Janet

https://youtu.be/A3f2Cj_wrss

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Feel free to grab a cup of something warm next door and meet us back at 10:30 for a Conscious Conversation. We'll bless you on your way with

Rev. Diana & Chris – Closing Song


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

Conscious Conversation

Rev. Diana – Good morning and welcome, or welcome back...and 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 here at Mystic Heart. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. We open our doors in

welcome, trusting that you will be led to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Rev. Diana & Chris – Opening Music

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

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

 **Wholly Holy Way**

Let's take a creative journey...calling upon the full power of both mind and heart...engaging the body...to join in the creation of a **Love-Soaked World**.

See and feel with me now, a world in which all inhabitants of this planet live from our Highest Potential... Kindness, Generosity, and Compassion...Peace...Cooperation.

In this new world, all people honor and care for one another, for all of the life forms that share this beautiful planet with us, and for Mother 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.

By aligning our every thought, word, and action with our vision, we are creating a world in which all people are well-fed... have the safety and comfort of home and a deep sense of purpose and belonging. A world in which health, education, and healthy relationships are supported by social systems grounded in Integrity, Compassion and Wholeness.

Valuing every being for its uniqueness... we practice living truly Authentic lives where vulnerability is celebrated... there is no need to defend or protect. The work we are doing within ourselves shows up as a world free of hatred and violence.

We recognize the abundance that surrounds us... greed is a thing of the past, as generosity flows 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 recognize the sacred in everyone and everything... and we walk in reverence and gratitude for all that we have been given.

We maintain this Vision day by day, moment by moment; we align our actions with our Vision, living these changes first in our own lives, with our families, friends, and neighbors... and one neighborhood, one community at a time, a new world is being born. In this process of profound change, this Beloved Community stands as an open and welcoming place for all who seek support, belonging, Family.

By the power of our deep faith and inspired action, this prayer is acted upon, answered even as it is spoken, for Spirit knows our heart's desire and intent. In full expectation of its Graceful unfolding...we release our prayer to the Creative Power and Intelligence that I call God... to the One that gets it done... Let It Be!... Amen!

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 ***New Beginnings***, and the topic of Conversation today is ***The Power of Now***.

This morning during Taizé, we considered the illusory nature of both past and present, acknowledging that they are only alive in our thoughts and memories, but that they can sure get in the way of our Joy and Presence when we let them take over our awareness. We looked at both the need to put down regrets and resentments and to move on...and the need to plan for the future, but in a way that is intentional, conscious, and present.

That's where we'll begin our Conversation this morning. I'd like to use those ideas as a place to acknowledge that whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, we are creating our tomorrows today...in every moment of *Now*.

Is that a comforting thought? (It may be the good news and the bad news.)

Why might it be bad news?

But how is it good news...in fact, the best news?

I'd like to invite you to join me for a brief journey...if you're comfortable doing so, close your eyes for just a moment.

I'd like you to think about your first job. See yourself doing that first job...who did you work with...can you see them in your mind's eye?

Now think about your last job...See yourself doing your last job...not one you might have now, but the last job you held...paid or volunteer, it doesn't matter. Who did you work with...can you see them in your mind's eye?

Know that these experiences are in your past, still alive in your mind, in living color...now go ahead and open your eyes.

Where are those people? Where did they go?

(Oh, that's right, they are in the past. We all know that they are not really here now. We never expected them to be.)

But, have you ever noticed that sometimes we act as if the past is real and happening now? Maybe I should just speak just speak for myself...

Why do we do that?

Here is what comes up for me when I'm living in the past...my reasons if you will...I might **regret past choices**. I have certainly made some poor choices in my past...made my share of mistakes...some of them BIG mistakes with BIG consequences. Regret is a very human experience...

Sometimes when I'm acting from the past, it is because I have had really difficult life experiences that have left me **feeling wounded**. **Resentment** is also a very human experience...so is anger, hurt, and indignation.

The problem is that this Law thing...this Creative Principle and Process that we are engaged in, whether we realize it or not, works on our regrets, our resentment, our anger, hurt, and indignation just as it does our more positive **thoughts** and emotions.

Ernest Holmes tells us that "ignorance of the Law excuses no one of Its effects." It doesn't care whether we have a clue or not...it is always at work.

It's easy to see that this is true when we're looking at a physical law like the Law of Gravity...babies don't know anything about gravity when they are learning to walk, but...

What happens to a baby when she loses her balance? (she fall down...not one falls up)

Laws of Mind are a little trickier to recognize. At first, we may not even know that our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are creative. Can I share a little bit about my early journey?

When I first discovered my spiritual path at 27, I had no clue that the hole I found myself in was my own creation. Of course I would never have created such a mess purposefully. I was pretty sure I was a victim. But then I heard the magic words of my first teacher...**anyone want to guess what they might have been?**

"I have good news and bad news. Which would you like first?"

Me being me, I chose the bad news first. Spoiler alert... the good news and the bad news were the same. I had unconsciously created my life experience. Now this is not to say that I was to blame for the early childhood experiences that shaped me, or for how other people acted in my life now.

But it *did* mean that I was responsible for not allowing those experiences to determine my present or future experience.

The really exciting part, and the good news, was that no matter what the past held, I could create my future. This was such an empowering moment in my life. Until...

What do you think started to happen on the drive home?

"Don't I have the right to be angry?" Of course, I did.

"Weren't all those things that happened to me wrong?" They certainly were anything but loving or kind...many of them were outright abuse.

But an even more potent and important question started forming.

What do you think it was?

(How is this anger that I am holding serving me now? Is it making my life any better?)

Looking at the condition my life was in at that time, I can tell you it was NOT making my life any better. So, I started on the path of forgiveness...first forgiving myself.

Here are some of the questions that I contemplated as I moved through this process:

What if I just accepted what I had done and what I hadn't done without judgment? Could I just let go of judgment? How would this feel?

What if I accepted that what happened, happened and what didn't happen, didn't happen, and left it behind me, moving forward? Again, no judgment. The word forgiveness means 'giving forward'...moving on...

Next, what if I stopped telling myself (and everyone else) the stories of the past as if they were still happening, and began writing new stories? How might this empower me to create a new experience?

New Thought teacher Ernest Holmes reminds us to 'cut loose the threads of previous experiences and deliberately make up our minds that we shall no longer create our future out of the old past.'

You mean I can just make up my mind? Just like that? Is it that simple?

I said simple...not always easy...but each one of us has the innate capacity to direct our own minds. We're built that way...

I'd like to share a quote from Living the SOM. I haven't shared anything from Uncle Ernie in a long time.

Read Living the SOM, page 190-191.

In order to hold these inspired words as Truth, what do I have to do first? What has to be in place?

(belief and willingness...believe that I have the innate capacity to monitor and direct my own thoughts; be **willing to do so**, for it to serve my life in a positive way)

It took me a while to figure out that while I was busy hanging on to the past, I was missing my present moment, and if I continued along this path, I would be creating more of the same in my future.

What I was coming to know about the Creative Principle is that it is impartial...it works the same way for all of us, all the time. It is Absolute...again, the good news and the bad news.

Creative Principle is always working for my Highest Good. I may not like how it looks sometimes, but the fact that I can count on these Principles absolutely means that I can consciously use them to change any condition.

So, here's where the rubber meets the road...

I can begin by getting real with myself and asking myself a few questions...You have a copy if you'd like to take it with you for later contemplation.

First, am I **willing to put down the past**? A very important question.

Then, am I **willing to accept** that I can begin again?

Am I **willing to do the work** involved in creating my tomorrows the way I'd like them to be?

Am I **willing to step out** a little bit, or in a big way, to practice faith in these Principles?

If I am feeling hurt by experiences of the past, am I **willing to believe** that my tomorrows can be joyful?

Am I **willing to find gratitude** for my soul's journey up to now?

Am I **willing to forgive** those who, in their unskillful ways, have created pain and hurt in my life?

Am I **willing to admit** that there is good in my life and to give time and attention to my blessings?

I find that no matter how far I travel along this journey, these continue to be good questions to take into contemplation. If this seems too difficult, start with one minute each day, then five, then ten, asking for Guidance, naming the Good in my life, and giving thanks for it. What we appreciate, appreciates.

Let's close in a Prayer of Blessing...

Closing Prayer

I invite you, if you're comfortable doing so, to close your eyes, take a couple of nice deep breaths, and relax into your chairs.

As you allow your breath to find its own pace and flow, remember that the heart has a mind of its own...some call it the Heart Mind...that consists of over 40,000 specialized sensory neurons...that can think, learn, and remember, independent of the brain...

Settle into that heart space right now...fully arriving...in the heart...

Slowing your breathing...gently touch one hand to your heart...allowing your heart to open...to be filled with the Light of Spirit...to settle into the Presence of the Divine...to be enfolded in Its warm glow...knowing that it is expressing Itself intentionally and perfectly as each one...and knowing that each of us is living our lives within Its fathomless Being...

We begin the process of blessing...

Bless your body, that it be lifted to a new and greater expression...

And bless your life, that it be an extension of Divine Mind...

Bless your future, that it never be your past...

And bless your past, that it turns to Wisdom...

Bless the adversity in your life, that it initiates you into greatness, and that you see the hidden meaning behind all things...

Bless your soul, that it wakes you up from this dream of the past and keeps you awake...

And bless the Divine in you, that it ***moves in*** you, that it ***moves through*** you, and that it ***moves all around*** you...creating a new Cause in your life...

And finally, I want you to give thanks for your new life before it is made manifest...feeling the Peace, the Joy, the Love, the Freedom... in its fullness...

So that your body begins to experience that future now...

Knowing that gratitude is the Divine Signature of that which already is...

Bringing Peace to our hearts and minds, to our lives and our world...

And now, anchoring this experience as together we release...let it be...So Be It! 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.

We're going to share a couple of songs this morning, just because we're here and we can...


Offertory Music Video


 ***If You Believe***, by Patch Crowe


<https://youtu.be/OEdNx0i7Q6I>


Sherri – Blessing for the Offering

Sherri – Invitations

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club is meeting on Tuesdays from 3-5 pm with Michael Bordeaux and Chris Netto. We are reading *Conversations With God, Book 1*.**

 **Please consider joining us on Wednesday for our weekly work session on the new building. Gather at 1:00pm in the new location to lend a hand. Wear your grubbies!**

 **Fast Track to Wellness meets with Rev. Diana on Thursdays from noon – 2:00 pm.** This week: Community Cooking – by popular request...we make the Bleu Cheese!

 **Please consider joining us after the Wellness Circle this Thursday to continue pricing items for our Parking Lot Sale.**

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

 **Thank you to all who joined us for Community Meditation each Thursday evening in May.** We ended our session last week with Sacred Dance!

Looking Ahead...

 **We're gearing up for a Fundraising Parking Lot Sale to help fund our remodel and move this summer.** Doreen announce.

 **Please join April Jimenez-WinterSky, Saturday, June 15th from 11am to 1:30pm for part 2 of the Dancing the Wheel Workshop.** (Note - This date has changed.) Suggested donation: \$20 Snacks will be provided.

There is more information available in the June Bulletin... take one home with you. And check out our amazing website.

Information Cards if new people

Prayer Requests: I am available after service for prayer, or fill out a prayer card and she will get your request to our Prayer Team for daily prayer – 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 – Closing Song

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