

# Seeing the Way, Taking the Path

July 14, 2024

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



An Independent Interfaith Community  
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

## Taizé

**Rev. Diana** – We follow the sound of the bell inward...


**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. We begin our Taizé with Musical Prayer.

**Rev. Diana & Chris** – Taizé Chants

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

 **Dropping Down**, written by Karen Drucker, Amy Bishop, & Gary Lynn Floyd

**Rev. Diana** – Settling into this one, perfect moment, we take a moment to breathe...to allow the breath to bring us fully present...following it in, and feeling the life flowing into every cell, every atom...and following it out, letting go of any tension...with every breath in, feeling the body come to life, and with every breath out, letting everything go. In this sacred moment, there is only the breath...there is only Life unfolding...there is only Now..

As we settle into the present moment, we give thanks for our deep Connection with all of life, and for our awareness that we are connected to all that is. This is what is meant by *Global Community*...not only our human family that is spread across the earth, but also the more-than-human creatures...the plant beings and rock beings...the sand that covers the beaches, and the waves that rise and fall on the shores...all that is seen and that which is not...that which is known and that which will never be known...all connected at the deepest level...all teeming with the life of God, shining with the Light of Spirit. Take a moment to sense the Light shining in and radiating from everything that exists...notice how there is no border between us, one Light melding into the next...we are One Light, expressing as Infinite Diversity.

As we take the time to feel and know our Oneness, we grow in compassion, empathy, and understanding. We come to understand that every thought, word, and action matters. And we take care...we become more mindful with each passing day.

This month, our contemplations are centered in *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, and this morning we reflect on *Seeing the Way, Taking the Path*.

We have grown accustomed to constant distractions. Our world has grown ever-more complex...we are offered more choices in a day than ever before. We are exposed to media from every direction...addicted to the constant input, and quietly fearful of what the future may hold, we hesitate to turn off our technology for any length of time. And because our minds and bodies are so busy, we often forget how important it is to just slow down...to be still... to be present.

Living in such a state, how can we hope to *See the Way*...the path that is ours to walk? And certainly if we're blinded to such a degree that our vision is clouded, we will likely miss the cues and clues that might otherwise be leading us to a more authentic and fulfilling life. In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is spread upon the Earth, but men do not see it." It is literally in our midst.

Both the Buddhist and Christian traditions warn that if we cannot touch the phenomenal world deeply, we will never know the noumenal. In other words, if we cannot recognize the sacred in everything and everyone...in the material world...we will have no way to experience God, or the Ground of Being, directly.

Once again, we are asked...even required by this Spiritual Journey called Life...to be mindful, to bring our full attention, into every moment. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests, "If you are aware that the fresh air is there, and if you can deeply touch and enjoy the fresh air, you have a chance to touch the ground of the fresh air"...the Spirit present in the fresh air...to experience the Mystery that is God.

Mindfulness exists as a concept within all major world religions. While Buddhism calls us to touch and drink deeply of all we encounter, but without attachment, the Bible consistently urges us to exercise disciplined attentiveness to our minds and hearts, to set aside our self-serving attitudes, and to live in the awareness of God's moment-to-moment provision.

### **Chris – Guided Meditation**

*Seeing the Way* is the one essential factor in *Taking the Path* that is truly ours... but *the Way* is rarely immediately obvious... Even when we can transcend the distractions of daily life, we still don't know where this path might lead... and as humans, we tend to want to know the outcome *before* we begin...

But the future is invisible until we create it... our path is crafted one step at a time... one choice at a time... *Seeing the Way*, then, consists of allowing the next step to be revealed to us... of mindfully choosing each footstep... each decision... asking, "Does this action bring more Peace, Love, and Joy into the world?..."

In faith we trust that Spirit will guide us... and then we pay attention... Does this path have a heart?<sup>1</sup>... if not, it is time to make a course correction... to stop... to release our

attachment to what has been... and pray for Divine Guidance... we then must *act* on our intuition... We *stop*... *look* within... then *go* where we are being led...

Like all Spiritual Gifts, *the Way* is invisible to our ordinary habits of perception... Heaven is visible only with the *inner eye*... Love is only evident to the heart... the voice of God speaks only in the Sacred Silence of contemplative prayer... As we pay greater attention to our inner guidance, we are shown *our Path*...

Each of us is a unique expression of the Divine Infinite... Although our paths may be similar, and though we may travel part of the way together, none of us can walk another's path... In our three minutes of shared Silent Contemplation this morning, I invite you to look at your Spiritual Journey so far... Does your path have a heart?... does it bring more Joy and Peace to you and the others in your life?... And then ask the Spirit of Wisdom that dwells within you, "what is my next step?..."

### **Silence – 3:00**

Thank you, Great Spirit, for this time of Blessed Communion with you and with these living saints that surround me now – this loving and supportive Spiritual Family, who are sharing my path now... May our path always have heart... and may we never forget who and whose we are ...

*Seeing the Way* involves attuning our attention to what Spirit is calling forth from us in every moment... What is seeking to be birthed through me into the world?... *Taking the Path* requires our total commitment to do anything and everything that is necessary to bring that forth...

With our hearts and minds fully open and receptive, we return our attention to Rev. Diana's inspired Taizé contemplation... knowing that it encourages and empowers us to deepen our commitment to *Seeing the Way, and Taking the Path*...

### **Rev. Diana**

What are some of the Truths we must come to terms with as we journey towards Home? Impermanence is the first. Everything changes...is forever changing. A brief story from *Going Home...Buddha and Jesus As Brothers*:

A gentleman in England while studying Buddhism kept repeating that everything is impermanent. He would always complain to his daughter about the impermanence of things. One day his daughter said, "Daddy, if things are not impermanent, how can I grow up?"

In order for any child to grow up, things have to be impermanent. Otherwise, a five-year-old would forever be five. In fact, a child would never have developed in the first place. Impermanence is the basic condition for life...it makes everything possible.

Buddhism teaches that attachment to what *is* causes suffering; and the graceful acceptance of changes as they occur relieves suffering... brings Peace... Joy... contentment.

The Master, Jesus, taught a similar lesson. In the book of Luke, he says, “*As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.*” He called people instead to look to the one thing that never changes...the Great Mystery...the Ground of Being...the Father.

In this moment of silence, allow the Wisdom within you to bring forth something that you are attached to...a circumstance, idea, belief, or attitude. What would it look like...feel like...to release the grasp...to allow the Graceful flow of change to move through this area of your life?

**Silence – 1 minute**

**Join me in Prayer...**

There is ever and always *One Life*, forever giving of Itself as all of Creation.

I Am a perfect and intentional expression of that One Life.

Like Source, I Am Eternal...unchanging in my Divine Nature...

And in my human form, I am Impermanent...forever changing...as is the world around me.

In this Holy Moment, I look past all appearances to what I know to be True.

I know for myself, as I know for each one who reaches out for prayer, that the nature of Life is Goodness...Wholeness.

All life forms have the inherent capacity for healing. Setting aside my human perceptions, I sense the Presence of God at work.

I call forth the Power, Intelligence, and Grace of God and allow it to move freely through the lives of each one of us.

Bodies are Healed...minds and hearts are Peaceful...relationships are Graceful and Loving. Wholeness prevails.

Every being finds right livelihood and is supported abundantly...Thriving prevails.

Each one knows Balance between activity and rest and is blessed with activities that nurture the soul and feed the spirit. Harmony prevails.

I bring myself back again and again, mindfully attending to what is before me.

I trust the process, letting go of attachment to outcomes.

In deep faith that all are Guided and Guarded by the Divine Hand, I trust in Divine Order, Timing, and Wisdom. I release any and all doubt, knowing that by whatever apparent outcome, all is unfolding Perfectly for the Good of All. Everything that unfolds from this moment forward *IS* answered prayer. I take a moment now to feel the Power and Presence.

Deeply grateful, I release...I let it be. So be it. Amen!

## **Musical Meditation – *I Am Letting Go*, by Sky Nelson**

**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](http://mysticheart.org). We thank you in advance for your gifts. We acknowledge and give thanks for the infinite abundance of Spirit. We are Living in the Overflow!

## **Offertory Video – *Only Here For a Little While*, by Billy Dean**

<https://youtu.be/VGmLkuaBZhq>

## **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*

## **Sherri – Opening Prayer**

**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.

## **Opening Music**

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

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

 ***Metta Prayer***, written by Tienne Beaulieu

Join me in our weekly ritual. Ritual, especially a prayer and visioning ritual, is so powerful. We don't see the immediate impact we are having, but we know absolutely that we're making a difference in the imaginal, setting a new Cause in motion. So let's take a creative journey...calling upon the full power of both mind and heart...engaging the body...and joining with one another in the imaginal realm, in service to 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... And so it is!... 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 ***Living Buddha, Living Christ***, and the topic of Conversation today is ***Seeing the Way, Taking the Path***.

This morning during Taizé, we spent time reflecting on the importance of being mindful in our day-to-day activities. Nothing new, right? Doesn't it seem like we hear the same thing week after week, over and over again? And not just here, right?

### **Why do we seem to need so much repetition with such a simple concept?**

(we have been programmed since birth by our society to chase distraction, to be fascinated by anything new, anything that is not what we already have...*this* person, *this* house, *this* neighborhood park, *this* life; our brains are wired to pay attention to anything new)

And there's nothing wrong with that. **Don't we tend to get stuck when we only give out attention to what we already think we know, what we already do or have?**

Paying attention to the new is how we learn. We need new experiences and new information to keep the neurons firing in new ways. This is where the Buddhist Path of finding the Middle Way can be helpful.

### **What is the Middle Way?**

(in this case, avoiding extremes by attending to what is before us AND spending time each day exploring and expanding our knowledge and experience to include new things; also, looking at what is before us with new eyes)

This was another piece to our contemplations during Taizé. Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh calls it touching things deeply...as an example, if you are aware of the fresh air as you're breathing it, you can touch the ground of the fresh air, and fully experience it...experience the Divinity in it. He suggests, and I agree, that it is only in deeply touching the physical that we can really experience the spiritual. It is only in really experiencing the world around us that we begin to feel and know its sacredness. This is how we touch the noumenal...this is how we can most directly come to know God's Presence in our lives.

### **What are your thoughts about that?**

Okay, let's do a pivot here. Our theme for the month of July is ***Living Buddha, Living Christ***. So let's look at one of the most powerful teachings of Jesus. Love your enemies. What??? How do I do that? By definition, my enemy is an opponent, someone who is creating difficulty in my life, or in the world.

### **How do I love that?**

(I cannot love an enemy; I must change my perspective through gaining understanding; the enemy becomes the Sacred Friend, one who has suffering just like I do, just like we all do)

So love your enemy becomes a multi-step process. Here we are, back to mindfulness...back to self-reflection and willingness...back to seeking to truly understand another's perspective and experience and put mine aside to make a space for us to come together. There's nothing new under the sun. It's all so simple.

Okay, my last pivot. Thich Nhat Hanh talks about finding our True Home. Christianity in its many forms might call heaven our True Home, and the Master Yeshua taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is within and at hand, that it is all around us and we do not see it. Buddhism and Christianity have great similarities, and this is one of them. Listen to this quote from Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers.

What is the meaning of "true home"?... When we are mindful, fully living each moment of our daily lives, we may realize that everyone and everything around us is our home. Isn't it true that the air that we breathe is our home, that the blue sky, the rivers, the mountains, the people around us, the trees, and the animals are our home?

### **What are your thoughts about this?**

He goes on to say,

Sometimes we have a feeling of alienation. We feel lonely and as if we are cut off from everything. We have been a wanderer and have tried hard but have never been able to reach our true home. However, we all have a home, and this is our practice, the practice of going home...You only need to stop being a wanderer in order to be at home.

What a powerful thought. You only need to stop being a wanderer in order to be at home.

### **What are some of the ways that we wander?**

(jumping from one thing to another...homes, friendships, spiritual practices or traditions or communities; in this way we never give ourselves the time to go deep, to touch the depths of a place, a person, a practice or tradition, or a community; we don't give ourselves the time and permission to really know another, and to allow ourselves to be known by others)

### **Ooh...ouch. What's coming up for you right now?**

(vulnerability...I make myself vulnerable when I allow myself to be truly known. That is scary.)

As a culture, we seem to have trouble with true commitment.

### **Why is that?**

(Commitment means responsibility. Sometimes it means putting our preferences aside in the interest of another, or of the Whole. And let's face it, we want what we want when we want it. Right? How's that working for us right now? How's it working for the planet?)

We are a Spiritual Family, a Spiritual Community. It's not about me, it's not about you. It's about us, and how we can support one another...how we can be there for one another. This week I heard something beautiful from one of our members. She said, "We



show up on Sundays because we want to be in service to one another. It's not about me, but it ends up serving me." This might seem obvious, but so often people look at what they feel like doing...instead of whether or not they show up to be a support for others, in prayer , fellowship and simple presence. That's why I'm here, for sure.

### **Why is commitment to Community important?**

This is an invitation to look at where we are in commitment to Community, where we are in commitment to making the world a better place. Every tiny step we make is important. This is what spiritual teachers and mystics have been teaching all along...New Thought, Buddhist, Christian and otherwise...if we are to bring heaven to earth, it will be through our hands, feet, hearts, and voices...through our self-reflective capacities...through our mindful and loving actions, through our commitment.

### **Anything else that wants to be shared before we close in prayer?**

#### **Let's pray...**

Let's move into the heart space...deeper and deeper inward...

Allow yourself to return to the Truth about you...

To your Divine Center, your True Nature...

At the heart of all that is...One Source...One Life...One...

Forever Loving, forever giving of Their Infinite Nature

Becoming all of creation, experiencing Life as me, as you, as all that has ever existed and all that will ever be.

I Am, You Are, created in the image and likeness of Source...

Pure, unblemished, Whole and Complete...

Take a moment to feel and know your own Divinity.

The physical world is fleeting, and we are privileged and grateful to be a part of it.

It is ours to make this experience as beautiful and joyous as possible for ourselves and all who cross our paths.

We accept this Call today.

We give thanks for this beautiful day, and all of the blessings that are constantly showered down upon us, and around us.

We give thanks for the opportunity to gather with our chosen family in celebration and communion with God.

We give thanks for this amazing life, with all that it brings...those things that are graceful, easy, and beautiful...and those circumstances that grow us in patience, resilience, character, and Love.

From this place of gratitude, and in faith that my prayer is answered even before it is spoken, I release it now to the Loving and Lawful Presence that I call God. It is done...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.**

### **Diana – 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.


**Offertory Music Video – *Look for the Good*, Jason Mraz**


<https://youtu.be/rPq2Vo3yWIk>


**Sherri – Blessing for the Offering**

**Sherri –Invitations**

 **The Mystic Heart Book Club is meeting on Tuesdays from 3-5 pm.** We are enjoying great discussions as we read *Conversations With God, Book 1*. And we'll be voting on the next book this week. Contact Chris Netto or Michael for more information.

 **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. We have jobs for everyone. Wear your grubbies!

 **Fast Track to Wellness will gather this week on Thursday from 12 – 2 pm.** We'll be splitting out time between Dr. Joe Dispenza's *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* and reviewing the benefits of timed eating and other nutrition concepts. Walk-ins are welcome. Donations are appreciated.

 **Please join April Jimenez-WinterSky, this Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 1:30pm for part 2 of the Dancing the Wheel Workshop.** Suggested donation: \$20; Snacks will be provided.

**Mark Your Calendars...**

 **Metaphysical Bible Study will return on Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.** Join Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson for a metaphysical romp through the book of Revelation!

**There is more information available in the July Bulletin and online.**

## Information Cards if new people

**Prayer Requests:** I am available after service for prayer, or fill out a prayer card and I 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 & Gary Lynn Floyd



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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*