I Don't Need a Faster Horse

Sunday, August 23, 2026

Sherri Dotter, RScP, with Lucinda Alton, RScP
& musician Daton Fitzgerald

An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Sherri – Good morning, and welcome. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Sherri Dotter, Prayer Practitioner in service to Mystic Heart. I invite you to settle in, bringing awareness to the breath, allowing it to ground in this space and this time, as we begin our Taizé Experience this morning by joining our voices in musical prayer.

Dalton – Taizé Chants

- ***Welcome Home to Your Mystic Heart***, written by Diana & Chris Johnson
- ***O Great Spirit***, written by Gary Lynn Floyd

Sherri – There is no greater blessing than to live a life grounded in Love…trusting and knowing that Love is given freely in any and every moment that we remember…soften…open…and receive. Love *is* the Eternal Goodness of Spirit, forever flowing. We are connected by Love…in Love, we are One.

We take a moment now to bring conscious awareness to our Oneness with, our Global Community…to sense and know our Connection…all humans everywhere are our brothers and sisters…the two-legged and four-legged creatures…the swimmers, creepers, and flyers, as well…the plants…that give us sustenance and purify our air…the lifeforms below the soil, and the soil itself…the water that flows freely, giving us our very lives…family…our family…beings of Radiant Light, inextricable connected by the Great Mystery…by the Spirit of Love.

Let's take a few moments of silence to sense the Presence of the One Life…of the Light that connects us. There is strength in connection…there is freedom in knowing we are not alone. As we come together in prayer and meditation, we are leaving an imprint of Love, of Peace, of Beauty on human evolution and on the world, for all time. Together, we serve as a conduit for Grace in the world.

Each of us, in our own lives, seeks ***Freedom from Discord***…freedom from internal and external conflict…and a greater sense of harmony both within, and in our lives. What is it that robs us of our peace? The first Sunday of the month, Reverend Diana invited us to consider fear as one of the great sources of discord in our lives and reminded us that when fear arises, we are still at choice. We can pause, breathe,

become aware, and ask, “What would Love have me do right now?” Today I want to continue that exploration from another wisdom tradition and look at something else that can rob us of our peace: our attachment to the idea that something needs to be different before we can be okay.

I have been rereading a wonderful book called Buddhism from Within by Reverend Daizui MacPhillamy. The book was given to me by Gary Solberg, and its first chapter begins with a country-western song called “Faster Horses.” In the song, an idealistic young man meets an old cowboy in a bar and assumes this older man must have discovered the meaning of life. He asks him deep philosophical questions, but no matter what he asks, the cowboy keeps giving him essentially the same answer: faster horses, younger women, older whiskey, more money!

It's funny, but MacPhillamy points out that it actually describes the human predicament pretty well. If we don't have something, we want it. If we have some, we want more. If we finally have plenty, we're afraid of losing it. And our own version of the faster horse can be almost anything: money, recognition, success, a relationship, possessions, excitement, security, even having another person behave the way we think they should.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting things or enjoying the beautiful experiences of being human. The discord begins when wanting becomes attachment—when somewhere inside ourselves we decide, “I cannot be at peace until this changes.”

I can't be peaceful until my finances improve. I can't be peaceful until my health improves. I can't be peaceful until my partner understands me. I can't be peaceful until my child is okay. I can't be peaceful until that person apologizes. I can't be peaceful until the world settles down.

And without realizing it, we have made our peace conditional.

Buddhism offers us another possibility. It teaches us that thoughts are thoughts and desires are desires. They arise within the mind, but we do not have to believe every thought simply because we think it, and we do not have to act upon every desire simply because we feel it.

MacPhillamy makes a fascinating observation. When we begin simply watching our thoughts rather than automatically following them, something remarkable happens. We begin recognizing thoughts for what they are—products of the activity of the mind—and gradually we become less controlled by them. The very human consciousness capable of generating endless longing also possesses the extraordinary capacity to step back and observe itself.

Dalton – Musical Meditation

- ***Let It Be***, written by Paul McCartney & John Lennon

I think there is tremendous freedom in that.

A thought says, “I need this.” We can notice it. A thought says, “This shouldn't be happening.” We can notice that too. A thought says, “I won't be okay unless this changes.” And instead of automatically believing it, we can become still enough to ask, “Is that actually true?”

This is where Buddhist wisdom and Spiritual Principle meet so beautifully for me. Spiritual authority doesn't mean controlling our circumstances or controlling other people. It means becoming conscious enough to recognize that we have a choice about what we give our attention, our belief, and ultimately our power.

Peace does not require everything around me to become peaceful first.

Peace is the Presence of God within me, even when discord is present.

And perhaps freedom begins when I stop demanding a faster horse and become fully present to the life I am already riding.

Lucinda – Guided Meditation

I invite you now to gently close your eyes, if that is comfortable for you, and allow your attention to come to your breath. There is nothing you need to accomplish in these next few moments. Nothing you need to fix. Nothing you need to figure out. Simply notice the breath entering your body and leaving again. Life breathing itself as you.

Allow your shoulders to soften. Relax your hands. Let the muscles around your eyes become gentle. Feel yourself supported exactly where you are.

And now simply notice your mind. You don't need to make it quiet. You don't need to stop thinking. Just notice.

Perhaps a thought appears about something you need to do later today. Let it come. Let it go. Perhaps another thought appears about something that happened yesterday. Notice that one too. Perhaps there is a worry, a judgment, a desire, a memory, or a plan. Simply watch.

Imagine each thought as a cloud moving across an enormous blue sky. You do not need to chase the cloud. You do not need to push it away. You don't even need to decide whether it is a good cloud or a bad cloud. Just watch it pass.

And begin to notice something. There is the thought... and there is the awareness noticing the thought. There is the worry... and there is something within you quietly aware that worrying is happening. There is the desire... and there is something deeper simply observing the desire. Rest for a moment as that awareness.

Perhaps there is something in your life right now that you have unconsciously decided must change before you can be at peace. Allow it to gently come into your awareness. Maybe it is a relationship. A circumstance. Your health. Your finances. Something

happening in the world. Something you wish another person would do differently. Without judging yourself, simply notice.

And quietly ask: “What am I believing has to change before I can be at peace?” Pause. Then gently ask: “Is that actually true?”

Silence – 3:00 Let’s sit with this for a few moments of silence

Take a slow breath. You are not saying the circumstance doesn't matter. You are not pretending that pain isn't painful or that change isn't sometimes necessary. You are simply remembering that your peace does not have to wait.

Feel the Presence of Beloved Holy One here now. Not someday. Not when everything is resolved. Here. Now. Breathing as you. Living as you. Loving as you.

And if another thought arises saying, “Yes, but...,” simply smile inwardly. There is another thought. Let it pass. Return to the breath. Return to Presence. Return to this moment.

And silently say within yourself: I do not have to believe everything I think. I do not have to follow every desire. I do not have to wait for life to change before I choose peace. The Presence within me is my peace. Presence is Peace Itself.

Rest here. Nothing missing. Nothing to chase. Nothing to grasp. Simply this breath. This moment. This Life. This Presence. (Pause)

And when you are ready, gently return your awareness to this room, bringing this quiet freedom with you.

With our hearts and minds open and receptive to Sherri’s continued inspiration this morning, we allow ourselves to be transformed… renewed… liberated… With deep gratitude for this mutual support, as together we discover *We Don’t Need a Faster Horse*…

Sherri – As we return, perhaps we can begin to see that **Freedom from Discord** doesn't necessarily mean eliminating every difficult circumstance from our lives. If that were the requirement for peace, none of us would experience very much of it.

Life changes. People change. Bodies change. Relationships change. Circumstances change. Buddhism calls our attention to impermanence—not as something frightening, but simply as the nature of life.

Our suffering increases when we demand that what changes remain unchanged, or when we insist that the present moment must be different before we can be okay.

But there is another possibility. We can notice the thought without becoming the thought. We can experience desire without being ruled by desire. We can encounter disagreement without surrendering our peace. We can work to change something without resenting what currently is.

Acceptance does not mean approval. Acceptance means I stop fighting reality long enough to consciously choose what I will do next.

And sometimes Love will ask me to forgive. Sometimes Love will ask me to speak. Sometimes Love will ask me to establish a boundary. Sometimes Love will ask me to act courageously for change. And sometimes Love will simply whisper, “Let It Be.”

Perhaps that is spiritual freedom: not getting everything we want but discovering that our peace was never dependent upon getting it.

So the next time your mind insists that happiness is somewhere down the road, perhaps you can smile gently at your inner cowboy and say: “No, actually, I don't need a faster horse. Thank you.” And then become fully present to the sacred life that is already here.

Let’s pray…

I recognize the One Infinite Presence, the One Life that is expressing everywhere and as everything. This Presence is perfect Peace. It is Love without condition, Wisdom without limit, and the eternal stillness beneath all the movement and change of life. There is nowhere that Spirit is not. Within every circumstance, every experience, and every moment, the Divine Presence is here.

And I know that this same Presence lives as me and as every person gathered here. There is no separation between the peace of Spirit and the deepest truth of who we are. Beneath every thought, every fear, every desire, and every story, there is an awareness that is whole, still, free, and forever connected. This is our Divine inheritance. This is our spiritual authority.

And so I declare that we awaken to this freedom now. We release the belief that something outside of us must change before we can experience peace. We lovingly observe the thoughts that arise without automatically giving them our belief or our power. We release our grasping, our need to control, and our insistence that life conform to our expectations. We meet what is before us with clarity, compassion, courage, and Love.

When action is called for, we act from wisdom rather than fear. When a boundary is needed, we establish it with Love. When forgiveness is ours to give, we give it freely. When something is ours to release, we. And through every changing circumstance, we remember that the Presence within us remains unchanged.

I am deeply grateful for this awareness. Grateful for the breath that returns us to this moment. Grateful for the wisdom found within the world's spiritual traditions. Grateful for this beloved community in which we awaken together. And grateful for the freedom that comes when we remember that peace is not something we must chase; it is something we uncover within.

I release my word into the Creative Law of Life, knowing it is already received, already active, and already fulfilled.

And so it is.…Amen!

Let's bask just a little bit longer in this prayerful space…(pause)…

And now returning our awareness to this moment, to our bodies…our senses…the atmosphere in the room…gently opening our eyes and taking in whatever is before us. Look around at who is sharing in celebration this morning…your Spiritual Community…your Sangha…and honoring each one for sharing space with you this morning.

Love Offering

As we prepare to close our Taizé Meditation, we offer the opportunity for you to share of your financial good in support of the work we do. Circulation is a Sacred Practice that supports your Mystic Heart.

It is by your generous gifts that we can continue the Good Work of supporting you and engaging in the greater Community.

If you're joining us online, at mysticheart.org you can use a Donate Button, a Venmo qr code, or our mailing address to make your contribution. We thank you in advance for your heartfelt generosity.

Dalton – Offertory Song

- ***God Is A River***, written by Peter Mayer

Sherri – Blessing for the Offering

Dalton – Closing Song

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

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Sherri – Welcome or welcome back. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Sherri Dotter, Prayer Practitioner in service to Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Independent Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality, tracing the common threads of Truth that run through all the world's great spiritual traditions. Our job is to point you inward, to the Wisdom that lives within your own Mystic Heart.

Are you ready to get this Conversation going with a little bit of music? Here we go.

Dalton – Opening Music

- ***Welcome to the Mystic Heart***, written by Diana & Chris Johnson
- ***One Big Family***, written by Robin Hackett & Gary Lynn Floyd

We Stand Strong by Mitchell Miller and Alyssa Narum

Sherri – Each one of us has all that is required to stand strong on our own, but how much more powerful we are when we stand together…shine our Light as one, spread our Love as Community. And so we're going to take a few moments to collectively direct our Creative Energies toward a Powerful Vision…a Vision of the world we wish to live in. Visioning is a Powerful form of prayer that gives the Creative Power of the Universe a blueprint…it sets an intention for the creation of what Charles Eisenstein would call *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*, or what I refer to as a ***Love-Soaked World***. It's not that I am delusional, that I don't see the world as it currently is. It's that if it's ever going to change, it needs to start somewhere. Someone needs to *create* the Vision, needs to *speak to* the Vision, needs to *live into* the Vision. Why not us? So I invite you now to settle in…take a couple of deep breaths and consciously engage every bit of creative power at your command. Are you ready?

We envision ourselves now in a world of our creation…where all humans recognize, and are living from, their inherent Freedom…their deepest Wisdom and Generosity, and their most Loving nature…thoughtful of the impact their thoughts, words, and actions have on one another, the community, and the planet…a world without greed, where there is abundance in having enough…where nutritious food, clean water and air are readily available to all beings…where warm, comfortable, and affordable housing is a given…where all beings feel a sense of safety, belonging, and contribution…To these blessings, we say Yes!

Ours is a world where leaders practice integrity and ethical behavior, leading by example and inspiring trust and engagement among the people…a world where policies and social systems support mental and physical health, education, and healthy relationships, and encourage ecological responsibility and sustainability.

Ours is a world where all beings work and play at whatever feeds their soul and are well compensated for their Service…where authenticity and vulnerability are not only welcomed but celebrated…where the Peace we cultivate within ourselves shows up as a world free of violence, hatred, or indifference…where freedom of thought and open, respectful conversation is modeled, supported and promoted.

Ours is a world where there is respect among people of all nations, and for the fundamental dignity of every human…where the Love that we are here to share is given freely to whomever our hearts are called to love…where we have moved beyond all lines of separation, and live as one human family, caring for one beautiful planet with the reverence she deserves. To these blessings, we say Yes!

We recognize that transformation is an on-going process, and especially in times of great change, people benefit from working, playing, and simply being together.

And so this Community stands as an open and welcoming place for all who seek support, belonging, and a sense of Family. …it redefines *Church* as a place of Self-Discovery,

Authenticity, Kindness, Radical Inclusion, and Unconditional Love. To these blessings, we say Yes!

It is by the Power and Intelligence of the Great Mystery moving through each one of us that this prayer is acted upon, answered even as it is spoken. As one by one, we commit to living *into* and *from* this Vision, it cannot be otherwise…we live in a Responsive Universe! Our Word carries Power. And so it is with deep faith, profound gratitude and great Joy that I release my Word to the One Who 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…

There has been a shift in energy… We have just set a Powerful intention…created a ripple of Grace that has made a lasting imprint. And you were a part of it. Doesn't that feel good?

This morning in our Taizé service, we explored a Buddhist perspective on our monthly theme, **Freedom from Discord**. We talked about that cowboy sitting at the bar of life wanting faster horses, younger women, older whiskey, and more money. And we discovered that the faster horse isn't really the problem. The problem begins when I believe, "I cannot be at peace until I get the faster horse." The faster horse can be anything: more money, better health, recognition, a different relationship, someone else's approval, even wanting another person to behave differently. We make our peace conditional upon something outside ourselves changing.

And Buddhism from Within takes this idea one step further. Reverend Daizui MacPhillamy says most of us don't recognize attachment as the source of our dissatisfaction. Instead, society teaches us that the solution to dissatisfaction is to get more of whatever we think we're missing. So, ironically, we try to solve the problems created by attachment by becoming more attached. And for a while, it works. We get the promotion. We buy the car. We fall in love. We take the trip. We achieve the goal. And for a little while the underlying discontent disappears into the background. But eventually it returns. This reminds me of The Rolling Stones lyrics (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction. "Cause I try and I try and I try and I try"

Buddhism identifies three patterns that keep this cycle operating: greed, anger, and delusion. Sometimes they're called poisons, sometimes intoxicants, sometimes hindrances. Whatever we call them, they keep us looking outside ourselves for something that ultimately must be discovered within.

So what wakes us up? Sometimes pain does. A relationship ends. We become ill. Someone dies. We reach the bottom of an addiction. Our career collapses. Or maybe nothing dramatic happens at all. One day we simply realize, "I don't want to live like this anymore." But suffering isn't the only thing that wakes us up. Sometimes Love wakes us up. Maybe we're standing beside the ocean and suddenly experience something much larger than ourselves. Maybe we're holding a newborn baby. Maybe music opens something within us. Maybe we're sitting in meditation, and, for just a

moment, everything becomes incredibly still. Maybe we're deeply in love, or walking through the mountains, or sitting right here in spiritual community, and suddenly we know: There is something more.

Some people begin the spiritual journey because pain pushes them toward it. Others begin because Love pulls them toward it. Michael Beckwith says we are pushed by pain until we are pulled by vison. But eventually both are asking the same questions: What is true? And how do I live in harmony with it?

There is a beautiful teaching often associated with Zen Buddhism: the finger pointing at the moon is NOT the moon. The finger is useful because it shows us where to look. But imagine becoming so fascinated with the finger that we never look up and see the moon! I think religion or any spirituality can sometimes become the finger. Our scriptures can become the finger. Our theology can become the finger. Our teachers can become the finger. Our beliefs can become the finger. Even our spiritual practices can become the finger.

Ernest Holmes used another wonderful phrase. He called Ultimate Reality “The Thing Itself.” Behind all our words, concepts, traditions, and practices is the Reality we're actually trying to experience—God, Spirit, Beloved Holy One, the Divine, Ultimate Reality, whatever name opens your heart. Different fingers. Same moon. And this is where spiritual practice becomes so important.

MacPhillamy writes that thoughts are simply thoughts and desires are simply desires. We can believe them. We can act upon them. Or we can watch them rise and fall. And when we learn to watch, something remarkable happens. We discover they change. That desire that felt absolutely overwhelming eventually passes. That anger rises and falls. That frightening thought changes. Like waves in the ocean, they arise and eventually return to the sea. And MacPhillamy says there is a reliable way of learning to observe this process. It is called meditation.

But I would broaden that from our interfaith perspective. We have been given an entire toolbox of spiritual practices. Reverend Diana teaches the Seven Pillars of Spirituality. Prayer teaches me to align. Meditation teaches me to observe. Sacred Study teaches me to understand. Selfless Service teaches me to move beyond myself and put Love into action. Circulation teaches me conscious giving and trust—to participate in the Law of Circulation and practice abundance instead of simply talking about it. Self-Inquiry teaches me to listen. Celebration teaches me to appreciate my blessings and accomplishments, and to celebrate my relationship with God, Life Itself and with my community.

And celebration is woven through every one of these pillars in the form of gratitude. Gratitude changes the direction of our attention. The mind that is always searching for the faster horse asks, “What am I missing?” Gratitude asks, “What is already here?” What if that is one of the simplest ways we begin loosening attachment? Instead of

waiting for life to become different before we appreciate it, we practice appreciating the life that is already here.

In prayer, I give thanks for the Good that is already present. In meditation, I become grateful for this breath. In sacred study, I am grateful for wisdom. In self-inquiry, I become grateful for what is being revealed. In sacred service, gratitude becomes something I give away. And through tithing and conscious giving, I physically participate in circulation. I loosen my grip. I move from “I have to hold onto this because there might not be enough” toward “I trust the abundance of Life enough to allow some of what I have received to flow through me.” In celebration express my love and appreciation for boundless Life and Love.

That doesn't mean we never want another horse. Maybe someday we get the faster horse! The difference is that I no longer require the horse to make me whole. I can enjoy it without believing it is the source of my joy. I can have it without allowing it to have me.

And none of these practices is the destination. They are the finger pointing toward the moon. They continually turn our awareness toward what Ernest Holmes called the Thing Itself—the Divine Reality that was here before the thought arose, remains while the thought is present, and will still be here after the thought has passed. We aren't practicing so that someday God will show up. We practice so that we become present enough to notice that God is already here. In the midst of us. Expressing Its infinite love AS each of us.

Conscious Conversation Questions

1. What is your “faster horse” right now? What is something you find yourself believing needs to happen, change, or arrive before you can finally feel peaceful, satisfied, or okay?

2. Have you ever had the experience of simply observing a thought, fear, anger, or desire rather than immediately reacting to it? What happened when you gave it some space? Did it eventually change or lose some of its power?

3. Which spiritual practice most reliably brings you back to your center? Is it meditation, prayer, study, Soul Writing, selfless service, tithing or conscious giving—and why do you think that particular practice works for you?

4. How does gratitude change your experience when you find yourself focused on what is missing or what you wish were different? Can you think of a specific time when gratitude shifted you from dissatisfaction toward peace or contentment?

5. What is one spiritual practice you are willing to deepen this week—not because you need to fix yourself, but because you want to become more aware of the Divine Presence you already are?

Let's pray… I recognize the One Infinite Presence, the sacred Reality expressing through all of life. This Presence is Peace, Love, Wisdom, Abundance, and perfect Wholeness. It is the Source and Substance of all that is, forever giving of Itself, forever circulating, forever present.

I know this same Divine Life expresses as me and as every person here. There is nothing missing from the truth of who we are. We are already rooted in the peace we seek, already held within Divine Love, already participating in an abundant and responsive Universe.

And so I declare that we awaken more fully to this Truth. We notice our thoughts without being controlled by them. We loosen our grasp on the faster horses of our lives. We release the belief that something outside ourselves must change before we can be at peace. Through the Seven Pillars of Spirituality, we turn again and again toward the Presence within.

And gratitude fills our awareness. We recognize what is already here. We receive it. We appreciate it. We allow it to circulate through our words, our resources, our relationships, and our service.

I am grateful for every spiritual practice that points us toward the Thing Itself. Grateful for this beloved community. Grateful that peace is available here and now.

I release My Word into the Creative Law of Life, knowing that as I speak with feeling and faith, it is already fulfilled. The activity of my prayer is already moving into form. 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

Thank you so much for joining me here today. We're going to bring this part of the morning to a close, but before we do, we'd like to invite you to join in the celebration of the work we are doing in the world by sharing of your financial Good. 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 Venmo QR code.

We are an independent, self-supporting organization, and your financial gifts are what make it possible for us to do our work and provide this beautiful and safe space to gather. We thank you in advance for your generous hearts and gifts. We acknowledge and give thanks for the Infinite Abundance of Spirit moving through you.

Dalton – Offertory Music

- ***(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction***, written by Mick Jagger & Keith Richards

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Lucinda – Invitations: all regularly scheduled classes and groups are taking place this week. You can see them on the slide and find out more in the summer bulletin or online.

- **Tuesday Book Club is presenting a movie, The Shack during its regularly scheduled time. You're all invited.**
- **Wednesday Shining Light on Scripture, Chris J. began a study of Joseph Campbell and Mythology. This is each week 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Drop-ins welcome.**
- **Mystic Heart Soul Writers are meeting this Thursday August 27th from 1 pm to 5 pm to create a Soul Vision Board. Our Soul Writing class begins the following week and will engage with the book Soul Vows by Janet Conner. It guides readers to discover their life's purpose and personal values.**
- **Namaste Café is coming up on Friday, August 28th from 6:00-8:30 pm. Tickets are $25 and include a spread of appetizers, beverages, and desserts. Ask Rev. Diana for more information.**

Watch your email or get on the WhatsApp Group Chat for more information on new events coming up this month and in the months ahead.

Information Cards

Prayer Requests: I am available after service for prayer, in our beautiful Prayer Room or fill out a prayer card and I will get your request to our Prayer Team for daily prayer.

Closing Song

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

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