We Are the Ones

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Rev. Diana Johnson, IM, RScM, with Lucinda Alton, RScP
& musician Dalton Fitzgerald

An Independent Interfaith Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Good morning, and welcome. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, Pastor and Spiritual Director here at Mystic Heart. I invite you to settle in, bringing awareness to the breath, allowing it to ground you as we begin our Taizé Meditation…we experience the Power of joining our voices in musical prayer.

Dalton – Taizé Chants

- ***Welcome Home to Your Mystic Heart***, written by Diana & Chris Johnson
- ***The Greater Good of All*** **by David Roth**

Rev. Diana – Each of us is here for the Greater Good of All…to uplift those who cross our path…to leave the world just a little more Beautiful, a little more Peaceful than we found it. We are here to be Love in form…to give Spirit a vehicle for Its Infinite Compassion and Generosity. ***We Are the Ones*** we've been waiting for.

Allowing the breath to slow just a bit…to become silent…and settling more deeply into the Stillness, we take a moment to consciously connect with our Global Community, with our brothers and sisters of every form and expression. See with the mind's eye, a web of consciousness surrounding and infusing the planet…each of us, a radiant spark of Light…every human being, without exception…the two-legged and four-legged creatures…the swimmers, creepers, and flyers…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…all inextricably connected to and by the Great Mystery…beings of Radiant Light, the very Spirit of Love in form.

As we feel and know our oneness with All That Is, we are acknowledging our responsibility to one another as human family, and as caretakers of this beautiful and life-giving planet. With every breath, and in every moment, we are sensing our Oneness, allowing all lines of separation to dissolve…we are leaving an imprint of Grace on all of Creation.

This month, we are sharing time in contemplation of the idea that ***There is Nothing New Under the Sun***. And yet, in our own time, we are feeling a shift in consciousness…a

greater awareness…a felt sense of an old paradigm breaking down and a new one being born. ***We Are the Ones*** we've been waiting for...the ones who can write a new story for humanity and the world. The stories we tell, the stories we live from, determine our future.

The spiritual traditions of the world share in one particular story…that protecting and caring for those most in need is our work. Hindu Scripture commands compassion, protection, and community welfare for the downtrodden. Buddhism views caring for vulnerable groups, including widows, orphans, and the destitute a responsibility that we bear…not through almsgiving, but through universal compassion, loving-kindness, and generosity. It approaches care through relational interdependence, community resilience, and modern grassroots initiatives. Islamic Scripture mandates community protection, financial rights, and emotional care for widows and vulnerable individuals. And the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures do the same.

How is it that the world's spiritual teachings have been so clear, and yet we have missed the mark so completely? ***We Are the Ones*** who can make these changes. ***We Are the Ones*** to write a new story.

We are being called to action all around the world. Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Dominican Priest widely regarded as the Father of Latin American Liberation Theology, spoke these words…

"The poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order." Take a moment of reflection…what small actions can each of us take at the grass roots level to serve the building of a different social order? (Silence)

From Archbishop Oscar Romero of the Salvadorian Tradition… "It is a caricature of Love to try to cover over with alms what is lacking in justice, to patch over with an appearance of benevolence when social justice is missing." Another moment of reflection…how might our small actions contribute to a greater equity among the people of the world? (Silence)

And Pope Francis, addressing our Sacred Mother Earth as one of the most neglected and oppressed… "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us…This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts…is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she groans in travail... We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters."

A final silent reflection…knowing that it is our thoughts, words, and actions…our interactions with one another and with our environments…that determine the future of life on Earth, what healthy habits have you adopted that are helping to change the direction we are heading? Is there one more small change that you can make? (Silence)

Dalton – Musical Meditation

What Kind of World, written by Daniel Nahmod

Rev. Diana – Our Spiritual Traditions support the idea that we are responsible for one another. We are interconnected at a very deep level…with one another, and with our planet. We are truly expressions of One Source, One Life. Indigenous cultures of long ago taught that what we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

Liberation Theology refers to a spiritual path that teaches solidarity with the oppressed and most vulnerable and seeks to lift them up. It emerges as a response, usually to the failure of the dominant or preceding theology to meet the needs of its people.

The actions of one who practices Liberation Theology are intended to improve the health of the community by raising up its most vulnerable members, thus they are political in nature. And they are anchored in religious or spiritual commitment…attempts at embodying and demonstrating the spiritual Truths held by the faith tradition.

I believe that a True and Authentic Spirituality…a heartfelt and soul-stirring religion, leads me to both internal and external freedom. It points to where I am bound and offers teachings and Practices that help me reveal my native state of Wholeness…it helps me to release myself from mistaken beliefs and perceptions that keep me limited. It brings Peace to my heart and mind…Joy to my life…Beauty to my world.

Let's close in prayer…

Holy One…Great Spirit…Mystery of all Mysteries…the Truth back of all that is. There is only the One Source, the One Life, expressing and experiencing Itself as creation. I Am an expression of the Divine…you Are the Sacred taken form. There is nothing else. How good it is to know this Living Presence firsthand…to feel Its Presence, to sense Its Guidance, to Know Its Generosity as the countless blessings that fill my life. What a privilege…what a delight.

Last week we heard *So Many Blessings*…with its Sanskrit lyrics *Maha Deva*…which means *Great God*…and we sang our thanks together as one voice…maybe we can join our voices one more time in thanksgiving.

Dalton – Musical Prayer

So Many Blessings, written by Steven Walters

Rev. Diana – We thank you for your *So Many Blessings*. Knowing that our time together this morning and our deep gratitude have been prayer enough, I rest in my deep faith, trusting that all that is unfolding is for the Good…all that I experience from this moment

forward *is* answered prayer. May I have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. And so, letting go, and letting God, I call it done. 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 as it feels right and taking in whatever is before us. Look around at who is sharing in celebration this morning…your Spiritual Family…and honoring each one for sharing space with you this morning…honoring these beautiful souls who share their gift of music with us this morning…Thank you Anton and Laura.

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.

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 Music

- ***Metta***, written by Tienne Beaulieu

Rev. Diana – Blessing for the Offering

Brief Invitations

Dalton Fitzgerald – Taizé Closing Song

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

Conscious Conversation

Lucinda – Opening Prayer

Rev. Diana – Welcome or welcome back. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Rev. Diana Johnson, and I am the Pastor and Spiritual Director here at 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 Fitzgerald – Opening Music

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

I Am (As God Created Me), written by Michael Stillwater

Rev. Diana – What a powerful lyric…a powerful chant. I Am as God created me…in the Light, in the Life, in the Glory. There's a word we don't hear in the more Universal spiritual traditions…in New Thought/Ancient Wisdom. Words are powerful…it's time to reclaim some of them…in the Love, in the Light, in the Glory. That leaves us elevated and ready 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 for the creation of a ***Love-Soaked World***. Because if the world is 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. And today's title, ***We Are the Ones***, leaves no room for questions. So I invite you now to settle in…take a slow, deep breath, and consciously engage every bit of creative power at your command.

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…ours is 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…We affirm these many blessings with a Powerful *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.

In this world of our creation, 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. We affirm these many blessings with a Powerful *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. We affirm these many blessings with a Powerful *Yes!*

It is by the Power and Intelligence of the One Life 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 Spiritual Family that is sharing this space with you this morning…There has been a shift in energy… We have just set a Powerful intention… Our prayer is rippling out into the race consciousness, doing its Good Work. And there's nothing that anyone can do about it…our loving act of defiance for this week. Doesn't it feel good?

Our theme this month is ***Nothing New Under the Sun***, and the topic of Conversation this morning has been ***We Are the Ones.*** I can hear it already… "Not again!" Week after week, same old story, told with different words. ***We Are the Ones***.

If you were here for Taizé, this will be a bullet-point review, so that we can use it as our starting place for a Conscious Conversation.

First, we reflected on the spiritual traditions of the world and how they share in one particular story…

…that protecting and caring for those most in need is our work. We cited Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Hebrew and Christian Scripture to support this statement. And then we asked, "How is it that the world's spiritual teachings have been so clear, and yet we have missed the mark so completely?"

Let's take this as our first question: "How is it that the world's spiritual teachings have been so clear, and yet we have missed the mark so completely?"

We went on to consider that maybe ***We Are the Ones*** who can make these changes. ***We Are the Ones*** to write a new story.

We spent time in contemplation of a call to action by Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Dominican Priest, widely regarded as the Father of Latin American Liberation Theology.

Next we heard another statement from Archbishop Oscar Romero of the Salvadorian Tradition.

And finally, we heard a call to action by Pope Francis, addressing our Sacred Mother Earth as one of the most neglected and oppressed…

We considered the idea that our Spiritual Traditions support the idea that we are responsible for one another. We are interconnected at a very deep level…connected to one another, and to our planet.

Finally, we defined Liberation Theology as a spiritual path that teaches solidarity with the oppressed and most vulnerable and seeks to lift them up… that it emerges as a response, usually to the failure of the dominant or preceding theology to meet the needs of its people. And we said that it is political in nature, and religious in commitment.

And that's where I want to jump into the conversation this morning. First, let me say that the premise of the book Liberation from Discord by Rev. Dr. David Alexander is that New Thought/Ancient Wisdom is intended to be a Liberation Theology, but that it has been co-opted and sold as a means for manifesting your dreams. He feels that it cheapens this rich and powerful tradition that has its roots in the feminist and women's suffrage movements. And he thinks that the movement's founders are likely turning over in their graves 😊

So, let's move into another question. What do you think it means to say that Liberation Theology is political in nature, religious in commitment?

Let's break it down…let's review the meaning of *political*. (concerned with the activities that govern our communities/societies)

I was warned to keep the politics off the pulpit. How is that possible? I can't talk about anything that has to do with the activities that govern our community or society? Isn't that a little bit limiting? A little bit narrow minded? Are we not all adults here, having a conversation that matters? Can we not be trusted?

By saying I should keep these topics off the pulpit, it is being assumed that we are not capable of deep listening and respectful conversation. It is denying us the opportunity to build bridges.

How is *political* different than *politicized*? (politicized means taking sides – it is divisive and works counter to building bridges – it keeps us caught up in who is right and who is wrong, and out of the arena of solutions thinking)

Okay, so the actions of one who practices Liberation Theology are intended to improve the health of the community by raising up its most vulnerable members, thus they are political in nature. And they are anchored in religious or spiritual commitment…they are attempts at embodying and demonstrating the spiritual Truths held by the faith tradition.

Rev. David goes on to say that Liberation Theology is *emergent*…it emerges as a response, usually to the failure of a dominant or predecessor theology in meeting the needs of its people.

He says it is *contextual*…it is anchored in the experience of a particular group of people who view the dominant theological system as being inadequate at addressing the struggles of the marginalized. In other words, it has a cultural context. For example, he talks about the Black Liberation Theology Movement, the Feminists' Liberation Theology Movement, etc.

And he says it is an attempt to *radically live out the Truth* hidden within the dominant theological system. For example, Love thy neighbor actually means Love they neighbor. And it is our job to do just that.

Okay, I'm going to ask you to put on your thinking caps today…to pull forward everything you know about the New Thought/Ancient Wisdom Traditions, or to listen to those who might be speaking. I'll continue to direct with a series of questions. Are you ready?

We're going to start by naming the various branches of the New Thought/Ancient Wisdom traditions.

What are the specific branches? (Primarily Science of Mind and Spirit, Unity Worldwide, Divine Science, and Independent Teachings/Figures: like Joel Goldsmith's *Infinite Way*) or contemporary positive thinking/prosperity paradigms.

Let's hold up the New Thought Movement to the qualities that Rev. David says are present in a Liberation Theology.

Is New Thought emergent? Say more…

(it emerged as a response to health/the failure of the medical system of the times to bring about healing; it focused on the power of the mind in maintaining health and wellness…started in the 1830's)

What else might it have been a response to? (religion/our relationship to the Divine; previous religion discouraged rational thinking and reason, expecting followers to accept doctrine without question; NT emphasized the power of human intellect and reason in the pursuit of spiritual understanding)

What else might it have been a response to? (Truth – as a response to the specific and limited doctrine of Christianity; NT focused on Universal Principles, reason and rationality. It had a commitment to intellectual freedom and diverse interpretations)

Okay, so it seems to meet the first criteria. It is emergent. Now, is it contextual? Is it set in a particular context? (it demonstrates the desire to create a universal context, inclusive of all humanity rather than focusing on a particular group)

Rev. David's argument is that a Universal context is still a context. So, yes…it is contextual.

Finally, does New Thought demonstrate solidarity with the oppressed? How? (It identifies all people as equal in spiritual status; all are perfect expressions of God)

Summarizing a couple of paragraphs, he claims that New Thought affirms our natural state, which is the quality and nature of God; it affirms harmony and wholeness; it unites all followers with 'a power within' that can free, liberate or emancipate them from hidden beliefs in lack, limitation, or unworthiness.

And so he argues that New Thought/Ancient Wisdom meets all of the qualifications of a Liberation Theology. It is emergent, contextual, and demonstrates solidarity with the

oppressed. Being that this is so, he states that it is the responsibility of New Thought Practitioners and followers to lift up the oppressed, to consciously unite with liberating forces, and to bring politics onto the podium (without politicizing) with religious conviction.

What is *religious conviction*? What does it mean to say I do something *religiously*?

Has that been your experience of the New Thought Movement?

He says that Liberation Theology calls us to "live the demands of the faith". What does that mean?

We are not specifically a New Thought church. We are an Interfaith Spiritual Community. But New Thought/Ancient Wisdom has been an influential part of my spiritual journey. When I picked up this book, I felt like I had come home. Rev. David understands New Thought more deeply than most other Ministers, Practitioners, or followers that I have come in contact with. I think he is right on the money. I'd like to wrap up be reading you a couple of paragraphs from the end of chapter 1, then offer a moment for final reflections.

Read from pp. 13-14

Are there any final comments that want to be spoken right now?

Let's Close in prayer…

A prayer for our earth

This prayer by Pope Francis appeared at the end of his 2015 encyclical Laudato Si'. It is for all who believe in God who is the all-powerful Creator.

> All powerful God, you are present in the universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with your peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united, with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle, for justice, love and peace.

And I would add…Thank you, Spirit, for this gift of Life… for the countless ways you bless each one of us, every day. I Am most humbled by, and grateful for, your Generosity.

As we move into this week, I commit to being the change I wish to see in the world. I begin with my thoughts…keeping close counsel…staying out of criticism and

judgment…assuming highest intent. I follow with kind words, gentle tones, and caring expressions. And as I remain present to my states of mind and heart, and to my thoughtful communication, my compassionate actions flow easily and freely. We Are the Ones…I Am the One…who writes a new story in my own life, which weaves gracefully into the new story we are writing together.

Thank you, Great Mystery, for this beautiful day…for this amazing and beautiful group of humans…for this safe and comfortable space…and for the Grace that brings us together each week to build bridges of understanding through Conscious Conversation…having conversations that matter.

Thank you for the countless hands that brought our food to the table today…from planting the seeds, growing and harvesting, packing, shopping, and cooking. May each one be blessed and know they are a blessing in this world.

I trust that our time together has been prayer enough, and so I rest now in Your Loving Presence, in faith that a prayer spoken and deeply felt is a prayer answered. May I have eyes to see and ears to hear all that unfolds from this moment on as answered prayer. I let go…I let God. And so it is! Amen!

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.

As we pass our basket this morning, we're going to bring back a little Michael Franti and Spearhead…

Dalton – Offertory Music

- ***One Love***, written by Bob Marley & Curtis Mayfield

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Lucinda – Invitations

- **All regularly scheduled classes and groups are taking place this week.**
- ***Shining Light on Scripture - Mythos: A 15-week Lecture Series*** **by Joseph Campbell. Viewing and discussions led by Chris Johnson, RScP – beginning this Wednesday, September 23rd, 11:30am – 1:30 pm. Drop-ins welcome. Suggested donation: $10 All donations gratefully received. Never let $$ keep you from attending Mystic Heart classes and groups.**

- ***The Autumn Threshold: A Fall Equinox Sound Bath*, led by April Jimenez and Maile Gorospe, this Friday, September 25th, 7:30-8:30 pm. Suggested Donation: $20 Bring a friend…Bring a yoga mat, chairs are available.**
- ***Life-Sized and Wild: A Women's Support and Movement Circle*, led by April Jimenez, this coming Saturday, September 26th, 10-11am. All donations gratefully accepted.**

Looking Ahead…

- ***A Toast to Murder: Secrets Pair Best With Wine*, Friday, October 23rd, 6:30 pm. This is a five-course Murder Mystery dinner, with April and Maile leading the fun, and dinner prepared by Rev. Diana. This is a Mystic Heart Fun Raiser. Two tickets have been paid for. There are only 18 seats available. Tickets are $40/person. Bring a friend… bring two. But get your tickets soon…they're bound to sell out.**

Watch your email or get on the WhatsApp Group Chat for more information on new events coming up in the months ahead. If you're not on the WhatsApp group and want to be, please let Rev. Diana know.

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.

Dalton Fitzgerald – Closing Song

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

©2026 Mystic Heart Spiritual Center, All Rights Reserved
Permission is granted to duplicate for non-commercial educational use only.
All rights to music performed remain with the copyright owners.
Diana Johnson's music is © by Barefoot Angel Publishing, ASCAP.
Chris Johnson's music is © by SeaJay Music & Publishing, ASCAP.