



On **Valentine's Day, Saturday February 14th**, you are invited to join in prayerful **Meditation to release Divine Love** out into our hurting country and world. In the Christian New Testament, I John 4:7 says: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

Praying for God's love to flow out into the world is a way of praying for peace as well. 2 Cor. 13:11 calls the Almighty "the God of Love and Peace." The biblical concept of shalom (שָׁלוֹם) is a multi-valent and multi-dimensional term, meaning not just peace but the state of being whole, complete, in harmony, full of love, well-being, and "rightness." Shalom is between people and nations, encompassing the physical and spiritual, embracing both the natural and social worlds, true "peace on earth."

In my studies on Spirituality over the decades, I learned that Zen Buddhist Meditation – an emptying of thought in order to be mindful – corresponds to Christian Contemplation – which also is a letting go, but it is in order to be filled by God. Christian Meditation, instead of the goal of an empty mind, focuses on a word or phrase and keeps coming back to it. So, meditating on God's love and peace (or Divine Love or Healing Love or however you want to envision it) means that when your attention starts to wander away, to just bring it back to focus on Love again. In Christian Meditation, besides words you can focus on images, pictures in your mind, of what Love looks like, imagining the energy of love filling you up and extending out as love energy into the world. But pray and meditate according to whatever spiritual practice fits you.

Although meditation prayers throughout the day are welcomed, some specific times have been set so that others may join in Meditation. In Christian monastic tradition, each day had eight distinct prayer times: Matins (midnight), Lauds (dawn), Prime (6 a.m.), Terce (9 a.m.), Sext (noon), None (3 p.m.), Vespers (evening), and Compline (before bed). Along those lines, we request 5 specific times to Meditate on Love on Valentine's Day:

6:00 AM 9:00 AM 12:00 Noon 3:00 PM 6:00 PM

You may spend 5 minutes or 30 minutes or a full hour at any or all of the suggested times for meditation. You may only be able to make one or two of the suggested times for meditation during your day. You may only be able to Meditate for 5-10 minutes at 4 of the times, but free to spend 30 minutes at another.

For those living in the Charlemont Massachusetts vicinity, you are invited to join us in person at the 3:00 PM Meditation in the Church Library, reached through the back of the building (next to the Parking Lot) for a 45 minute session meditating on Love and Peace.

As of Wednesday Feb. 4th, there are individuals and groups planning to meditate around the country and around the globe.

~Rev. Dr. Janet Adair Hansen, Charlemont Interim Pastor