

GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Summer 2020

TCVC Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 4th
10 am – 12 pm
Home of Sinden
Maredans
333 8th St SE
Minneapolis 55414
Call 612-965-4599
To enter

SUMMER RETREAT JUNE 12-20, 2020

**With Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters assisted by
Vance Pryor**

Training in Equanimity: Resting the mind before it falls into extremes

The Buddha's Fourth Noble Truth is the path to develop for release of suffering. On this retreat we will practice mindfulness of the three trainings of the Noble Path: sīla or harmony within and out, samādhi or tranquility of mind, and pañña or wise understanding. The benefit of such practice leads to increased equanimity or maintaining balance of mind with every experience. Equanimity is the natural response of a mind liberated from reactivity of the extremes of indulgence or aversion. From equanimity, wisdom and compassion can be naturally more readily accessed.

On this retreat we will practice awareness of all experiences beginning with body sensations. This offers the tranquility and stability of mind necessary to open to the whole range of mental activities such as unskillful reactions to unpleasant experiences as well as development of wholesome states of mind and clarity of aspiration in practice.

This retreat training is suitable for new and experienced meditators willing to learn and practice the Buddha's instruction for wise understanding. The full diversity of all individuals is invited and welcome to hear and experience the Dhamma and to see for themselves if this teaching is valuable to you.

Teacher Biographies and Online Registration are available at

WWW.TCVC.INFO

Dear Friends,

Please join us for the TCVC Annual meeting, a potluck and social gathering, with a little bit of official business thrown in. Bring some food or drinks if you wish and your ideas and opinions about our retreats. If you're interested in getting more involved with TCVC, this a good time to participate in a TCVC meeting and learn about the organization and what it takes to organize and facilitate our retreats. Wishing everyone well, TCVC Board



TCVC is a community of people interested in developing and deepening their meditation practice. We provide opportunities to hear and practice the teachings of vipassana (insight) and metta (lovingkindness) meditation, with an emphasis on residential retreats led by senior teachers in the Theravada Buddhist tradition.

Equanimity: An Ally for Life: by Steve Armstrong

I have incurable brain cancer, a fast growing tumor called glioblastoma.

This diagnosis and prognosis called forth all my childhood fears and confusion about cancer. When young, I had learned that cancer was a long, dreadful, painful disease resulting in a severe loss of familiar life-style, wasting away, relentless suffering with eventual decline of life and death. When speaking about a neighbor with cancer, the talk was very somber, in hushed tones and it seemed like we shouldn't mention it openly. It was very isolating. That was the assumption I gathered from the unspoken misunderstanding from my family, my community, and society. Such conventional understanding was terrifying to me.

My childhood lesson was to avoid all pain, to get rid of what I didn't like, eg. being blamed, loss of any kind, and shame when sick; minimizing, denying, avoiding, obscuring through any discussion of the situation. The corollary of such conventional conditioning includes seeking more pleasant experiences, including praise, fame or at least recognition, and including getting what I wanted. The unspoken assumption was that "If I could get what I want, I'd be happy." The Buddha pointed out that these 4 pairs of experience are universal to everyone; no one escapes these vicissitudes of life, eg. pleasure and pain, gain and loss, praise and blame, and fame and disrepute.

Over the last intervening 45 years, I have undertaken to practice mindfulness meditation that is simply paying attention to the continuity of personal life experiences and understanding them with insight and less suffering. Now that "I am living with cancer" my empirical experience is significantly different than what I had previously assumed and believed.

With this medical condition, I have opened to the direct experience of all the unpleasant vicissitudes involved. Being told of my diagnosis and the prognosis involved acknowledging and accepting that this condition is terminal and there is no cure, only managing symptoms. Accepting physical pain is difficult enough but the mental pain of fear, confusion, loss of health and life-style, depression, etc. is more pervasive and the medical treatment of chemo, radiation and anti-seizure medicine doesn't address them.

Mindfulness training involves acknowledging and accepting (as a fact) all experiences such as they are without falling into the extreme reactions of indulging in the pleasant and avoiding the unpleasant. The understanding that all beings experience pain, that it is unavoidable, offered me an alternative to my youthful dysfunctional conditioning to avoid and get rid of pain. In fact being mindfully aware of my empirical experience of the body (no physical discomfort nor pain) and the mind (momentary fear, shame, blame, confusion, apprehension, etc.) is relieving. Mindfulness pixelates the narrative of my life into momentary unpleasantness that I do not need to get rid of, not a problem needing to solve, no one to blame, no confusion to overcome. Additionally, momentary pleasant experience was nothing to seek, indulge in, nor plan for believing that anything could be permanent. These understandings have been confirmed through mindfulness and insight. Accepting things as they are offers relief from all dysfunctional strategies to be safe, healthy, happy, and at ease in life.

Practicing mindfulness nurtures the development of a balanced mind. Open awareness manifests as experiential understanding upon hearing, acknowledging and accepting my diagnosis and prognosis. Equanimity like this provides a safe haven from the tumultuous extremes of liking and disliking, desire and aversion. With the mind of equanimity, neither hopes nor dreads reside in the heart for long. Equanimity balances the wonder of being with the terror of being.

TREASURY REPORT 2019

Retreat Fund	\$ 9,149
Retreat Deposits	\$ 4,500
Scholarship Fund	<u>\$ 1,919</u>
Balance	\$15,568

Thanks to everyone who has donated to TCVC. With your support, many people have been able to undertake intensive retreat practice here in the Midwest. In 2019, TCVC funded scholarships of \$5,320.

Dana, or generosity, is an essential part of TCVC and the Buddhist path. It sustains our organization, and we are always looking for members of the community who have means to give in the capacity they are able. Donations support both our Retreat and Scholarship funds, which help immensely in making the Dharma accessible to a wider range of individuals. The Retreat fund reduces the cost of fees for all attending. The Scholarship fund is for those who make a specific request. If you feel inspired by the Buddha's teachings and the retreats offered by TCVC, please consider making a donation at www.TCVC.INFO or mailing a check to P.O. Box 14683, Minneapolis, MN 55414

Registration for June 12-20 With Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters, assisted by Vance Pryor

Registration opens March 1, 2020. There is a \$25 late fee after May 15, 2020.
Register online at WWW.TCVC.INFO or mail your registration to Todd Stitt,
4532 46th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Name _____ Please identify your gender _____
Address _____ City _____ State: _____
Zip code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
☐ This is my first retreat ☐ I can help set up or clean up ☐ I need a ride ☐ I can give a ride
☐ I have special accessibility, dietary or other needs. (Please enclose a description or email the registrar.)
☐ I use a CPAP or other medical device. (Please specify or contact the registrar.)
☐ I need an assisted listening device.
☐ Enclosed is a scholarship request for \$ _____ Maximum scholarship is \$290
Optional Roommate Request _____
\$ _____ Retreat Fee* Shared ☐ \$580 Single ☐ \$780
\$ _____ Add \$25 late fee if mailing after May 15th.
\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC
\$ _____ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to TCVC)

*The teachers that we ask to lead our retreats do not request or receive any compensation from us for their teaching.
At the end of the retreat, students are encouraged to practice *dana* (generosity) by offering a donation to the teachers.

Vipassana (insight) meditation is a simple and direct practice: the moment-to-moment investigation of the mind/body process through calm, open and precise awareness. Learning to observe experience from a place of spacious stillness enables one to relate to life with a balance of wisdom and compassion.

Held in noble silence, the retreat includes sitting and walking meditation, instructions, Dharma talks, and group and individual meetings with the teachers.

As the teachings of the Buddha are considered priceless, they have traditionally been offered freely. The teachers do not receive payment from TCVC for teaching. The registration fee covers room and board, travel expenses for the teachers and other expenses.

At the end of the retreat, students are encouraged to offer a donation to the teachers to support their living expenses so they may continue to practice and teach.

To apply for a scholarship, include a letter with your registration giving the background of your need. Scholarship requests must be received by the due date and are limited to one retreat per person per calendar year. Those who wish may help others by donating to the TCVC Scholarship Fund or Retreat Fund.

Accommodations at the Koinonia Retreat Center have modern plumbing. Handicap accessible and single rooms are available on a first-come basis. You may leave Koinonia's phone number, 888-801-7746, with family for emergency contact only.

Retreat Schedule

Fri. 6/12	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	7:30 PM
Sat. 6/20	Retreat ends	After 10:30 AM brunch

Attendance Yogis are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM on opening day and to stay for the duration. There are no exceptions.

Yogi jobs are included in the schedule for all participants. These mindful work periods are assigned on a first come, first served basis at check-in time.

Meals Vegetarian meals begin with an evening meal from 6:00–7:00 PM on Friday night and end with brunch on the last day of the retreat.

Registration

Send a check for the full amount to secure your registration. If you are applying for a scholarship, subtract the scholarship amount requested from the registration fee.

You will receive an acknowledgement of registration by email. Shortly thereafter, you will receive a confirmation of your status for the retreat (registration or wait list). Approximately one month before the retreat, you will receive an email giving you more information about the retreat.

If you have any questions or special needs, please email the registrar, Todd Stitt, at retreats@tcvc.info or call 651-500-1469.

Cancellations Notify the registrar if you need to cancel. TCVC retains a \$75 fee for cancellations received through the due date, \$100 after the due date.

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*Retreats are held at Koinonia Retreat Center near Annandale, MN
www.KoinoniaRetreatCenter.com*

Contact Us

retreats@tcvc.info

TCVC retreats are appropriate for both beginning and experienced meditators. We are committed to cultivating a retreat environment that is welcoming to people of diverse identities, including those of all races, ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, abilities and ages. It is our aim that all may feel safe and respected on their TCVC retreat.

TCVC CALENDAR

Dates	Teachers
June 12-20, 2020 <i>Registration opens 3/1/20</i>	Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters, assisted by Vance Pryor
February 12-19, 2021 <i>Registration opens 11/1/20</i>	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 11-19, 2021 <i>Registration opens 3/1/21</i>	Steve Armstrong & Kamala Masters With Vance Prior

Directions to Koinonia from Minneapolis

394 West to 169
North on 169 for 1/4 mile
West on Highway 55 2.5 miles past Annandale
South (Left) on County Road 3 for 4/10 of a mile
West (Right) on 80th Street for one mile
South (Left) on Pilger Avenue for 2/10 of a mile
Allow two hours travel time from Minneapolis.