

GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Winter 2024

Teacher Biographies and
Online Registration are
available at

WWW.TCVC.INFO



WINTER RETREAT FEBRUARY 18-25, 2024

Chas DiCapua and Rebecca Bradshaw

Listening to life: meditation from the receptive heart

In meditation we receive our embodied experience, letting it teach us the way life is and how to hold the vast range of joy and sorrow that comes with being human. This retreat will focus on listening to our life moment by moment, letting go of demands of how it should be and resting fully in how it is. This receptive meditation takes us deeper into the truth of things, helping our heart orient towards wisdom and compassion. Our daily schedule will include guided insight and loving kindness meditation instructions, talks on the teachings, and meeting time with teachers. Optional qi gong will also be offered.

To support the integrity of the retreat, participants will be expected to commit to the entire retreat.

Dear Friends,

The TCVC board has made changes to both our retreat venue and the dates for our winter and summer retreats.

TCVC will be holding these retreats at [Koronis Ministries](#) near Paynesville, Minnesota instead of St. Anthony Spirituality Center. Koronis Ministries is less than two hours away from the Twin Cities, which will reduce travel time for some of us by about a third. The retreat center is also less expensive. We're looking to reduce the registration cost of our retreats by about a quarter.

Koronis reminds us of Koinonia Retreat Center (now closed), where we practiced for many years. The center is on the shores of a beautiful lake in a quiet, natural setting with lots of trails. The meditation and dining halls have views of the lake and there's ample room for indoor walking meditation. Everyone will have a single room.

We hope you'll join us for this precious time, guided by wise and skillful teachers, in a beautiful and supportive setting.

Wishing you well,
TCVC Board

COVID Safety Protocols for Retreat Participants:

- Bring masks and plan to wear one in all public spaces. Only N-95, KN-95 or KF-94E masks are acceptable. Bring 2 FDA-approved rapid Covid Antigen Tests. If possible, bring additional tests in case further testing becomes necessary. Make sure the tests haven't expired.
- You will take a Rapid Test upon arrival at Koronis Ministries. Your test must be negative in order to check in and enter the rest of the building. You will take a second Rapid Test about 72 hours into the retreat. Depending on conditions, participants may be able to remove their masks after the second round of testing. Koronis staff will test with us and wear masks.

Active and Receptive Mindfulness by Rebecca Bradshaw

Mindfulness can be experienced in both an active and receptive mode. We can play with these orientations while looking at a flower. What happens when we look actively at a flower, knowing what it is? In contrast, what is the experience of receiving the sight of a flower? Why, it's downright psychedelic. Flowers are amazing. With active mindfulness we already know what a flower looks like, and we may dismiss any real intimacy with the experience. With receptive mindfulness we let ourselves be touched by the experience as unique vibrant moments of life

Usually when we are mindful of some sense experience, our attention goes out in an active manner to meet that experience. A sight appears, for example, and our attention goes out towards what is being seen. A sound arises, and our attention moves towards the sound. Deeply rooted in our mammalian conditioning, this active attention has an agenda to understand what the thing is and whether it is friendly or a threat. This orientation is geared for our survival, and it's looking for clarity. However, this active bearing tends towards efficiency and moves quickly into the conceptual mind to name and analyze, glossing over the true nature of this evolving experience.

Once we've figured out what we need to know, we pay less attention. We proceed according to our expectations, assuming things will act a certain way. When we've confirmed that they are more or less doing so, we no longer look and listen, and the experience loses vibrancy and aliveness. Yesterday, sitting at the lake, I heard what I labeled as an electric saw and felt aversion. I knew what it was and established my stance towards it. When I relaxed and received the experience, the saw sounded like a cello and it was beautiful. When I knew what the sound was (an electric saw), I limited it to my expectations, but when I received it with the open heart, the sound came alive in a fresh, vibrant way, entirely different from my assumptions.

Receptive mindfulness doesn't go out to get experience but rather lets the expressions of life come to us. From this receptive paradigm, we experience yin mindfulness, a resting quality of effortlessness in our meditation. We soften and let ourselves be touched by sights, sounds, body sensations, smells, and tastes. We relax into not-knowing, and allow space for the freshness of this moment. Experience turns out to be more alive, always new, never a dull moment. The mystery of life comes forth. We can't really nail anything down; we can only experience it.

Try it out with a sense experience, for example, the experience of eating a mouthful of rice or any other food. In the active mode, we taste the rice, we know it's rice, and we may even describe it as somewhat bland. What happens when our attention is receptive and we let the taste of rice come to us? The flavor and texture of rice changes throughout an entire mouthful, with a different taste at the beginning, middle, and end. It's more alive, unconfined by the limitations of concept.

We can experiment with receptive mindfulness with hearing. Take, for example, the experience of hearing wind in the trees. With more active mindfulness, how is our experience of the wind in the trees? With more receptive mindfulness, what changes? Perhaps we see that what we thought was a single sound ("wind in the trees") is a chorus, with high, middle, and low notes, building to a crescendo and then fading, sometimes a shush, a whisper, a flutter, and a patter. This chorus reflects the true nature of life, constantly moving and changing. Receptive mindfulness moves us closer to the truth of things, to unremitting impermanence.

Mindfulness from a more receptive orientation, however, widens into awareness. At its widest, awareness feels fully receptive. Awareness could be described as listening to experience. As a truly good listener, we are receptive, not fixing or judging or commenting. We listen to experience, and we let it tell us how it is.

With receptive mindfulness, we are co-participants with the world rather than managers of life. We are fully embedded, rather than separate and in charge. We rest in belonging. We allow ourselves to be vulnerable and touched by life rather than focused on obtaining our desires.

Control has fewer places to hide in this paradigm. Our attempts to grasp or to push away are seen clearly in the spaciousness of the receptivity. We rest in being rather than activate into doing.

Of course, we need both active and receptive mindfulness. Active mindfulness is very handy for figuring out how to deal with and manage the life around us. When we feel scattered, aiming our attention can help us collect ourselves. Yet let's not miss the beauty of receptive mindfulness, which allows us to see more clearly the nature of life and enjoy the mystery of this world.

Adapted from Rebecca's upcoming book, *Down to Earth Dharma*, to be published by Shambhala Publications in the fall of 2024.

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.

Registration for February 18-25, 2024 with Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw

Register online at WWW.TCVC.INFO or mail your registration to Phil Harper,
1148 Hague Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104

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 need an assisted listening device.

I agree to follow all COVID Safety protocols including wearing a mask in public areas, and taking COVID Rapid Tests as directed. **(Required for all participants)**

Scholarship request (\$50 - \$400) \$ _____

\$ _____ Retreat Fee* \$550

\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC Retreat Fund Scholarship Fund

\$ _____ Total Enclosed (Make check payable to TCVC)

*The teachers who 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 receive a scholarship, enter the amount requested and subtract this amount from the registration fee.

Scholarships are limited to one retreat per person per calendar year. Those who wish to may help others by donating to the TCVC Scholarship Fund or Retreat Fund.

Accommodations at Koronis Ministries are ADA-compliant, and everyone will have a single room. Pillows, sheets, a light bedspread, wool blanket and towels are provided.

You may leave the Koronis Ministries phone number (320)243-4544 with family for emergency contact only.

Retreat Schedule

Sun 2/18 Registration 3:00–6:00 PM

Evening meal 6:00 PM

Retreat opens 7:30 PM

Sun 2/25 Retreat ends After 10:30 AM brunch

Attendance Yogis are expected to arrive no later than 5:00 PM on opening day and to stay for the duration. There are no exceptions.

Meals Vegetarian meals begin at 6:00 PM on opening night and end with a 10:30 brunch on the last day of the retreat.

Registration

Send a check for the full amount to secure your registration. 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 retreats@tcvc.info or call or text the registrar, Phil Harper at 612-396-5632.

Cancellations Notify the registrar if you need to cancel. Cancellation fees are as follows:

Before February 1: \$75

On or after February 1: \$400

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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
February 18-25, 2024 Registration opens November 1, 2023	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 8-16, 2024	Kamala Masters & Tara Mulay
February 2025 (dates tbd)	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 2025 (dates tbd)	Kamala Masters

Contact Us

retreats@tcvc.info