

# GRASSROOTS DHAMMA



Summer 2025

*TCVC Annual*

*Meeting and Potluck*

*All are welcome!*

**Saturday, May 3rd**

**10am - 12 pm**

**Gazebo of Jean Fagerstrom**

**3156 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S.  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55406**

**612-423-2926**

## **SUMMER RETREAT JUNE 8-15, 2025**

**Deborah Helzer and Annie Nugent with Wynn Fricke**

### ***Continuity, Clarity, and Care***

Insight blossoms when the mind is able to rest in the flow of things as they are with steadiness and ease. In this retreat, we will be exploring ways to foster both greater continuity of attention and greater softness of heart. By opening to the inevitable difficulties presented by our minds and bodies in an intensive retreat, we learn to navigate the present moment more skillfully, cultivating patience and commitment, wisdom and compassion.

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

**Teacher Biographies and Online Registration are available at [WWW.TCVC.INFO](http://WWW.TCVC.INFO)**

Dear Friends,

We're delighted to welcome back Annie Nugent and Deborah Helzer for the summer retreat. Annie taught a fall retreat with TCVC in 2009. She has been a regular teacher of the annual 3-month retreat at Insight Meditation Society (IMS), with this fall being her 20<sup>th</sup> year teaching that retreat. Deborah first came to Minnesota as a teacher trainee with Steve Armstrong and Kamala Masters in 2004. She also taught our summer retreat in 2023 with Vance Pryor.

TCVC is committed to supporting teachers-in-training through our retreats. Annie and Deborah will be assisted by Wynn Fricke, cofounder of Common Ground Meditation Center. Wynn is part of the new IMS/Spirit Rock teacher trainee group. She will be observing mostly and serving as an occasional practice leader.

Everyone is welcome to our Annual Meeting this spring. We're looking forward to gathering in Jean Fagerstrom's gazebo for some good food and drink and Dhamma discussion. This is a good time to check out whether you'd like to get more involved with TCVC or join the board.

Our dear friend, Naomi Baer, passed away last fall from leukemia. She was a true pillar of TCVC and of the Dhamma, someone we counted on to help pull together our retreats for some 25 years. Her steadfast presence and deep practice will be missed.

Wishing you happiness and peace,  
TCVC board

### **Treasurer's Report 2025**

Retreat Fund	\$12,708
Scholarship Fund	3,257
BIPOC Fund	1,736
Balance	\$17,701

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## ***Getting Comfortable with Discomfort by Deborah Helzer***

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About a decade ago, I had a conversation with a young father that has stayed with me. He had recently taken up mindfulness meditation and was not entirely pleased with the results. “Before I started meditating,” he said, “I was so sure of myself as a parent.” He had clear ideas about how his children should behave, how his partner should deal with them, and what was best for his family. “Now,” he said, “I just don’t know anymore.” He was becoming more and more aware of the forces driving his thoughts and actions: the desires, the fears, and the confusion. He was realizing that not all of his ideas and decisions were so obviously correct as he had once imagined.

As I listened to him, I remember feeling such *mudita* – appreciative joy. Here was a man who was truly stepping onto the path, becoming self-aware, aware of his own mind and heart, and opening to a much fuller and wiser way of being with himself and his family.

And, at the same time, I felt great compassion. Mindfulness is truly a double-edged sword. To step onto the path of mindfulness is to volunteer for greater uncertainty. The reward is the greater richness and authenticity that this can bring to our lives. But, at times it can be hard to open to how things actually are: how messy our minds are, how little certainty there is, and how little control we have. Most of us, when we sign up for that first meditation class or retreat, have little idea what we are getting ourselves into.

I’ve come to realize more and more over the years just how much of the path rests on learning to hold all of this uncomfortable ambiguity with patience and some semblance of equanimity. This is a huge part of maturing in the practice, learning to be comfortable with discomfort. We naturally want clarity, simplicity, and resolution. At times, we may find it, and that is a blessing. But it’s bound to change, and then, change again.

A frequent question that comes up in dharma conversations goes like this. I have this situation in my body, or my mind, or my life that is difficult to bear. I’ve approached it with mindfulness. I’ve gotten great insight into its causes and dynamics. I’ve cultivated kindness and compassion towards it, but still it doesn’t change. What am I doing wrong?

Of course, the answer is nothing, nothing but being human. The path of practice, like everything else, does not unfold according to our wishes, but due to a myriad of causes and conditions. Things will change as the conditions supporting them evolve. Some of those causes we may be aware of and have some influence over, but many others we cannot. It is a mistake to think that if we were really practicing the right way, everything would be clearer. The messiness of it all is part of the process.

The Buddha said that the dharma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end. Much of the terrain of the practice lies in that middle ground. We’ve awoken to some understanding of the truth of *dukkha*, the inability of experiences to satisfy our desires. And there’s no way to un-know that. But, there is also a lot of wisdom still to be gained. We see ourselves acting out the same unskillful habits over and over, unable to change through sheer force of will or intellectual understanding. All we can do is watch. We are in the middle.

And, according to the Buddha that is also good. This is where the majority of our spiritual life will unfold, in that often uncomfortable middle ground. It can be unsettling, but it is also rich terrain. It is where we will continue to grow and awaken. If we can learn to embrace the uncertainty, to roll with the ups and downs, then our dharma practice is bound to bear precious fruit. As the poet Basho wrote, “Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.”

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*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.*

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## Registration for June 8-15, 2025 with Deborah Helzer and Annie Nugent

Register online at [WWW.TCVC.INFO](http://WWW.TCVC.INFO) or mail your registration to Todd Stitt,  
4532 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue 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       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.
- Scholarship request (\$50 - \$400) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Retreat Fee\*    \$880 Single room/single bath (limited availability)    \$570 Single Room/shared bath

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Optional tax-deductible donation to TCVC     Retreat Fund     Scholarship Fund     BIPOC 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 your emergency contact person.

### Retreat Schedule

Sun 6/8	Registration	3:00–6:00 PM
	Evening meal	6:00 PM
	Retreat opens	7:30 PM
Sun 6/15	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

Register and pay online at [www.TCVC.info](http://www.TCVC.info) or 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](mailto:retreats@tcvc.info) or call or text the registrar, Todd Stitt at 651-500-1469.**

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

Before May 16: \$75

On or after May 16: \$200

**TWIN CITIES VIPASSANA COLLECTIVE**

**3518 E. 25TH ST.  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55406**

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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.

*In person retreats will be held at*

*Koronis Retreat Center*

<https://www.koronisministries.org>

*15752 Co R 181*

*Paynesville, MN*

**Contact Us**

**retreats@tcvc.info**

**TCVC CALENDAR**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
June 8-15, 2025 Registration opens April 1st	Deborah Helzer & Annie Nugent with Wynn Fricke
February 15-22, 2026	Chas DiCapua & Rebecca Bradshaw
June 7-14, 2026	Deborah Helzer & Vance Pryor