



2/26/23 UPDATE -- KATE JOHNSON was sick on 2/25 and had to postpone. Watch for updates.

IWM Sangha News — 2/23/23 — March Newsletter

Sangha Wide Common Read - Kate Johnson on Feb 25 - Two Follow Up Discussions

Much appreciation to everyone who participated in the sangha's Common Read of Kate Johnson's *Radical Friendship*. We have had many interesting, connecting and rewarding discussions: in the two ongoing Kalyana Mitta (Spiritual Friends) groups, in five well-attended drop-in groups focused on specific chapters of the book -- and in informal conversations here and there! Guided by Kate's writing, we have talked about all the levels of what true friendship means -- individually, in creating meaningful community, and in efforts to increase justice in the world.

We are looking forward to Kate joining us this Saturday in person and on zoom -- it will be wonderful to have as many of us as possible come together! [Please register here](#) if you have not yet had a chance.

There are also two follow-up conversations already planned, one facilitated by Ruth Folchman in a Monday night open practice session on [Feb 27](#), with this invitation: "We will explore what's been touched in us through the Common Read and the learning and insights of the book, with its beautiful teachings about our hearts' longing for authentic friendships," and then another offering facilitated by Jean Esther on Wednesday night [March 1](#),

described as “an opportunity to continue to explore dharma practice in our relational lives, particularly with an eye towards the impact of socio-political conditioning of power, privilege and inequity within our relationships.” Please join us!

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In January 2023, for the first time since the pandemic started, IWM was able to hold Rebecca Bradshaw and Jean Esther’s annual non-residential weekend retreat - *Coming Home to the Refuge of the Dharma* - at the Cherry Hill Cohousing community (pics below). For more than two decades, sangha member Nancy Bair has served as the on-site organizer for this special weekend. Some 30 people came; in addition to locals and those from other parts of our state, this year we were joined by residents of CA, ME, NY (3), and OH!

This coming month, in addition to Wednesday night Dharma and opportunities to follow up on IWM’s Common Read, starting on [March 14](#), meditators who have some mindfulness/insight practice will have an opportunity to focus for five weeks on working with pain. Later in the month, on [March 25](#), for people who identify as white and want to bring Dhamma qualities of mindfulness and compassion to the process of learning about racism, white supremacy culture, and identity there will be a half-day retreat. Looking ahead to [April 15](#), IMS’s longtime resident teacher, Chas DiCapua, will offer a half-day retreat on *cultivating a suitable home for the heart*.

Looking back on 2022, IWM offered the following:

- 52 Dharma talks/discussions and community practice (offered weekly on Wednesday nights).
- 25 offerings including: 8 courses; 3 continuing courses; 1 experienced students group; 8 retreats; 4 retreats for White & Awakening in the Dharma grads; 1 Town Hall.

- 4 days a week - open community practice (some followed by discussion).
- Kalyana Mitta groups (aka spiritual friendship study groups; currently 3).

It's been 25 years since the Dhamma Dena Meditation Center opened. Although the center's name has changed twice since then, IWM continues to offer teachings and meditation practice support for all who are interested, rooted in the Insight tradition, and centered on the Buddha's teachings of liberation for all.



Images above: January 27-29, 2023 Non-Residential Weekend Retreat

Programming Committee looking for several new members

The role of the Programming Committee is to organize and schedule classes, half-day and day-long offerings, talks, series, affinity groups, and other programming that supports the mission of the Insight Meditation Community of Western Mass (IWM). The primary activity of Programming Committee members is to organize IWM's calendar of offerings and invite teachers to IWM. The committee collaborates with the Board and the Teachers' Council as appropriate. [Click here](#) to read more and apply to serve on the Programming Committee.

Dharma Dialogue with Jennifer D.

Unpleasant, Pleasant, Neutral

Let's explore the first of these. Unpleasant. It could relate to mind-states of distraught thought patterns. Or body sensations of pain, discomfort and ill-at-ease. Or heart awareness of strong emotions. What we may see in common as we look at all of these with curiosity and interest, is that they seem to be followed by aversion. Not wanting any of them to be as they are. Wanting to push them away, coupled with a huge dose of non-acceptance. All of which leads to a continuation of the unpleasant that arose in the first place. For me, when anything unpleasant is in my consciousness, it looks permanent, non-spacious, like it is not going to pass away at all. When we look at the minute details of the moments between the moments, there are glimpses of it passing away, even if it arises again in the next moment. The more acceptance we can muster for the unpleasant state of mind/body/heart and the more acceptance that is in us, the easier it is to relax into letting go, and to see what is available to us in the next moment.

With Metta,
Jennifer D.
Community Dharma Steward

Downloadable Flyers

Below are downloadable flyers in case you want to share them with a friend or post them on a public bulletin board:

- [Radical Friendship](#) with Kate Johnson
- March Offerings: [click here](#)
- Upcoming Courses & Retreats:
- [Practicing Wise Attention and Effort in Working with Pain](#) with Michael Grady
- [Grounding Antiracist Practice in the Dhamma](#) with Lore Detenber, Bernadine Mellis, and Jen Cannon
- [Cultivating a suitable home for the heart](#) with Chas DiCapua

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Feedback

If you have comments, questions, or ideas you'd like to share, please contact us: leadership@insightwma.org.

With much care and metta,
IWM Board