



# Insight Meditation Community of Western Massachusetts

(formerly known as Insight Pioneer Valley)

## IWM Sangha News - 1/26/23 - February Newsletter

### 25th Anniversary of IWM

This is the 25th year of IWM's existence - looking forward to celebrating as a sangha!!

### IWM's Sangha-Wide Common Read of *Radical Friendship*

We'd love to hear from you if you're participating in IWM's sangha-wide Common Read of *Radical Friendship* and haven't yet filled out our brief survey; [please click here](#) to let us know how you're participating.

- We're grateful to the facilitators for the drop-in discussion sessions that will be held on Feb 1, 9, 15, 18, 20th. [Click here](#) to read more.
- Registration will open soon for Feb 25th in-person/hybrid event with Kate Johnson!

### Nurturing the Enthusiasm

#### Warm Invitation for Further Exploration - Feb 27th

We are so grateful for the enthusiastic response to the Sangha-wide "Common Read" of *Radical Friendship*, culminating with Kate Johnson joining us on February 25th. We are hoping to nurture this enthusiasm for Sangha and the attitude and heart of the *Mitta Sutta* and other teachings of the Buddha on relationship. During the Monday evening Zoom-based Community Open Practice on February 27th, 5:30-6:45, [Ruth Folchman](#) will invite us to explore how we can and intend to connect in an ongoing way with the learning and insights of the book and its beautiful teachings about our hearts longing for authentic friendships and what we can do to create them. You are warmly

invited to come for a shorter meditation and then open exploration and sharing about how we can continue to develop the full potential of admirable friendship and spiritual connection on our path to liberation.

### **Programming Committee looking for several new members**

Summary of the Programming Committee:

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).

Activities of the Programming Committee include:

- Organizing IWM's calendar of offerings (including contacting teachers; confirming topics and dates; obtaining bios; and providing information to IWM staff for publicity of offerings, etc.)
- Creating a process to allow the sangha to offer suggestions at any time on programming ideas.
- Collaborating with the Board and Teachers' Council to approve and schedule classes/offerings.
- Collaborating with the Teachers' Council to create a feedback procedure for classes, retreats, and other offerings.

[Click here](#) to read more and apply to serve on the Programming Committee.

### **Financial Update**

Thankfully, the Finance Committee's preliminary year-end review shows that IWM ended the 2022 fiscal year with an operating budget balance of \$2,320. Mid-way through December, our expenses had exceeded our income by \$9,600. The Board is

grateful that sangha members' year-end giving, combined with the contributions IWM received throughout the year, more than

<b>2022 Preliminary Year-End Overview: Income and Expenses</b>	<b>2022</b>
Registration/Donations connected to Offerings/Programs	\$17,817
Friends/Recurring Donations	\$29,272
One-Time Donations (Hybrid Equipment, Giving Tuesday, Year-End, Unsolicited; does not include in-kind donations)	<u>\$19,780</u>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$66,869</b>
Staff, Taxes, Consultants, Mentoring, Teacher Supplements	(\$42,473)
Rent, Phone, Internet, Insurance	(\$12,904)
Programming, systems, all other	<u>(\$9,172)</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>(\$64,548)</b>
<b>Operating Budget Balance</b>	<b>\$2,320</b>
<b>Restricted Funds Expenses - Supplement BIPOC Teachers' Dana</b>	<b>(\$1,502)</b>

closed the gap. In addition, IWM expended \$1502 from restricted funds to supplement dana for BIPOC teachers.

### **Sangha Stewards Deep Bow**

In addition to expressing gratitude to IWM teachers, we are grateful to the sangha members who served from October through December in the following ways:

- Zoom Hosts/In-Person Greeters/Hybrid Hosting: Catalina A, Suzanne A, Lucy B, Holly B, Adam C, Cheryl K, Cathy R, JM S.
- Day-to-Day Operations (Admin/Teacher Liaison/Technology/Volunteers): Lucy B, Adam C, Anne F, Cathy R.
- Finance Committee: Lucy B, Jen G, (staffed by Fariba G)
- Green Metta: Betsy H, Rick H, Diana R, Andrea Z.
- Programming Committee: Candace C, Hal F, Anne F, Manny M (staffed by Casper L)

- Community Dharma Stewards: Suzanne A, Holly B, Jen C, Jennifer D, Hal F, Ruth F, and Jaya K
- Peer-led Tuesday morning open practice and discussion and Friday evening open practice: thanks to all who hold the space on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- Facilitators (KM, White Caucus, White & Awakening in the Dharma): Jen C, Lore D, Jean E, Ruth F, Bernadine M, Melissa T.

### **Stewarding Our Sangha - Opportunities to Express Generosity**

- **Attorneys?** From time-to-time the Board has questions it's useful to discuss with an attorney. Because those we occasionally turn to are sometimes on retreat or otherwise unavailable, if there are additional attorneys within our sangha who might be willing to give pro bono advice, please email us at [leadership@insightwma.org](mailto:leadership@insightwma.org).
- **Hosts/Greeters:** On February 8th, we have an opening for a Zoom host for a Dharma talk and discussion with Peggy Gillespie entitled *All You Need is Love*. To learn more or to volunteer, please email [volunteer@insightwma.org](mailto:volunteer@insightwma.org).
- **Center Dana:** We are grateful for all the ways that members of our sangha give of their time, talents, and financial resources. We welcome any and all contributions. If you're inspired to give money - we'd be delighted to grow our numbers of Friends of IWM (recurring contributors) and always welcome one-time donations anytime - [please click here](#) to choose the amount you'd like to contribute as well as the frequency. Thank you for practicing generosity in this way.

### **Dharma Dialogue with Jennifer D.**

Hello all - Let's just call this "Awareness Continued." Not that we could ever cover the topic no matter how many Chapters we write, but just to say, "Let's continue our Dharma Dialogue"

which we have started and hopefully we will gather more impetus as we go. Some teachers and other practitioners use Awareness, Attention, and Mindfulness interchangeably. For me, having Mindfulness be the intention of my meditation practice helps dissolve the conflict of Awareness **of** and Attention **to** and puts Mindfulness right in the center of the present moment without having to be prompted to return “there.” And any wandering from this present moment experience is merely an opportunity to return. Merely? What is the expression? “Simple, but not easy.” I don’t think it is a matter of semantics. I do think it is up to each of us to see what works best for our practice without it becoming an intellectual exercise. We can bring the qualities of curiosity, inquisitiveness, and openheartedness to our investigation and notice what occurs each and every moment. Of course, thoughts, feelings and body sensations will be present for Noticing, and could throw us into pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, and give us the opportunity to come back to the moment. What do you see in your practice? As we increase our intention of Noticing, what do you see arising and passing away? And can that looking happen from Awareness, Attention and/or Mindfulness?

All for now. My hope is that others will join in this Dharma Dialogue - there is one person who has contributed over the past few months already. If you like to write, or even if you don’t, you can share bits and pieces of your practice in ways that are comfortable. A few words or phrases constitutes a dialogue. Anonymity is welcomed. If you would like to join in, please send an email to [leadership@insightwma.org](mailto:leadership@insightwma.org).

May we continue to support each other on our spiritual paths.  
With Metta,  
Jennifer D.  
Community Dharma Steward

**Dharma Dialogue - Response from Rachel R.**

Accepting Jennifer D's invitation to reflect and comment on her January newsletter piece:

*My understanding of Awareness in our practice is that there is a sense of Noticing, but not necessarily someone who Notices. Being in the present moment includes whatever is happening right here, right now*

What came up for me in reading what Jennifer wrote above is the distinction I learned from J. Goldstein on 'prompted' vs 'unprompted' mindful awareness. When I first started out on the path, mindfulness was mostly 'prompted' i.e., I'd tell myself I was going to tune in to sounds, or the breath, or some other sense door, and there was a 'me' noticing what was coming through. Then over time I began to notice that I am oftentimes simply being Aware, with no prompting at all. As Jennifer said, in those fleeting moments, there is no one noticing - just pure experiencing - until of course the mind comes in and goes, 'Ahhh...very pleasant' or what not.

### **Downloadable Flyers**

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

- February Offerings: [click here](#)
- Upcoming Courses & Retreats:
- [Coming Home to the Refuge of the Dharma](#) with Rebecca Bradshaw and Jean Esther
- [Practicing Wise Attention and Effort in Working with Pain](#) with Michael Grady

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### **Feedback**

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

With much care and metta,  
trellis, Lucy, Hal, Holly