Dear Friends,

The Buddha taught that a generous heart leads to happiness in life. This is a practical and accessible teaching that we can and should check out in our own lives. What happens when we practice showing up and responding in a more full and generous way to the ordinary moments of life? I am grateful to have noticed over the years of my practice many little and big ways I have held back out of fear, confusion and doubt. Over time, it has become more and more clear that holding back and stinginess does not lead to happiness.

Imagine if we all lived with an attitude of wanting to be generous whenever possible, and then creatively cultivated the perception that it is always possible. Without this enlivening and expansive experience of generosity, our hearts are destined to constrict with the entangling weight of self-centeredness. The Buddha understood that generosity was one of the most potent and liberating medicines that our hurting hearts require. He said that if we knew what he knew about generosity, we would not let a meal go by without sharing. Of course, it doesn’t help to feel guilty. Instead, the invitation is for each of us to learn how to follow the thread of enlivening joy as we simply connect to ordinary moments in a generous way—not holding back. Remember, we are not prioritizing ourselves above or below the needs of others. We are simply finding ways to generously connect with the moment as it is. We are creating this new habit without expecting perfection or recognition; we are not in charge of how everything unfolds. A growing lightness of heart is the trustworthy and lawful reward arising from these sincere efforts. May we all abide in the happiness of a generous heart.

Wishing us all a peaceful and joyful New Year,

Mark Nunberg

"Generosity brings happiness at every stage of its expression.

We experience joy in forming the intention to be generous.

We experience joy in the actual act of giving something.

And we experience joy in remembering the fact that we have given."

– The Buddha
Mindful Self-Compassion Practice Group
This practice group is for anyone interested in developing practices that strengthen and support mindful self-compassion. Led by Jean Haley and Jane Rauenhorst. Usually the third Friday of the month. January 17th, February 14th (instead of the 21st), March 13th (instead of the 20th), April 17th. 7:00-8:30pm.

EcoSangha Practice Group: Developing a Mindful Lens for View ing the Climate Crisis
Jean Haley and Kaia Svien facilitate this monthly sitting group dedicated to developing an understanding of how the Dharma guides our relationship to the climate crisis. The Dharma teaches us to first acknowledge the truth of the suffering caused by the climate crisis. We practice waking up to what is going on, feeling it in our bodies and responding from teachings of compassion and interconnection as ways to move forward. 4th Thursday of each month, 6:15-8:15 pm in the Community Room. January 23rd, February 27th, March 26th, and April 23rd

COURSES
Find complete program information and register online at www.commongroundmeditation.org.

Buddhist Studies Program
The Buddhist Studies Program is designed for people who have attended three or more mindfulness meditation retreats and have a commitment to daily meditation practice. This ongoing program is designed to deepen our understanding through the study and application of the teachings of the Buddha. Each class will include a short talk, small-group discussions, and guided sitting time. Participants will be expected to use the teachings as a focus of their daily practice.

Anatta—The Buddha’s Teachings on Impersonal Nature
Eight Mondays: January 13 – March 2, 7:30-9:00pm; Optional Sit: 7:00-7:30pm
Led by Mark Nunberg
In this eight-week course, we will investigate the Buddha’s teachings on anatta, the impersonal nature of experience. Insight into the changing and conditioned nature of phenomena weakens all fixed views including the mind’s habit of taking things personally. We often live our lives through the lens of self-centered fear and longing. We are so busy pursuing our attachments that we miss how much stress is involved when the mind identifies with thoughts and emotions. As the mind’s understanding deepens it is possible to live with ease, natural compassion and greater skill as we navigate the joys and sorrows of life.

Buddhist Studies: Cultivating Wholesome Relationships with Mark Nunberg
Seven Mondays, March 9 – April 20, 7:30-9:00pm; Optional Sit: 7:00-7:30pm
Led by Mark Nunberg
Whether we are relating to a partner, a friend, work colleagues, or relatives; our minds are often confused and pushed around by the joys and sorrows of relationships. In this course, we will study the Buddha’s teachings on relating to others, especially how to discern the skillfulness and unskillfulness of our underlying intentions behind our thoughts, words and actions. We will reflect on the possibility of relating to others with lovingkindness, free of fear and attachment, and how it is possible to see more clearly without resorting to judgment and fixed views regarding others.

Mindful Self-Compassion Course with Jean Haley and Jane Rauenhorst
Eight Tuesdays, March 31st – May 19th, 12:30-3:00pm & Half-Day Retreat on Sunday, May 3rd, 1:00-4:30pm

WORKSHOPS
Mindfulness and Art Workshop with Cecilia Ramon: Brush and Breath
Saturday, January 25th, 3:00-6:00pm

Laughter Yoga with Spruce Krause
Laughter yoga involves deep breathing and a deep commitment to being fully in the now. When we are laughing there is no past, no future, and no mind chatter. Laughter increases one’s sense of well-being and promotes a wholesome community.
Sunday, January 26th, 2:00-3:00pm

Living the Practice Workshop: Freedom from Anxiety, Trusting Uncertainty and Change
Led by Shelly Graf, Meski Mebatsion and Mark Nunberg
Our lives are defined and governed by impermanence and uncertainty. So many of our afflictive emotions arise from the many unskillful ways we attempt to manage this experience of change. This workshop will include talks, guided meditations, and large & small group discussions designed to deepen our understanding of uncertainty and help develop an enlivened and wise engagement with the ever-present truth of change. Uncertainty does not have to be a heavy burden that we must bear or deny; it can be the ground of freedom. Please bring a bag lunch – the lunch break will allow for informal discussions and social time.
Saturday, March 7th, 11:00am-5:00pm

MEDITATION RETREATS
Retreating from the distractions of daily life is an essential part of the path of awakening. Please join us for these important opportunities to deepen mindfulness. Those who are new to meditation should attend the intro class or several weekly practice groups before their first retreat. Register for Common Ground retreats at www.commongroundmeditation.org.

Half-Day Retreats
Usually the first Saturday of the month
Saturday, January 4th, 1:00-5:00pm with Mark Nunberg
Saturday, January 25th, 9:00am-1:00pm With Jean Haley
Saturday, February 1st, 1:00-5:00pm with Mark Nunberg
Saturday, April 11th, 9:00am-1:00pm with Shelly Graf
Daylong Retreats
Please bring a bag lunch
Saturday, February 29th, 9:00am-6:00pm with Mark Nunberg
Saturday, March 14th, 9:00am-6:00pm Retreat for Millennials with Shelly Graf and Gabe Keller Flores
Saturday, March 28th, 9:00am-6:00pm with Mark Nunberg
Saturday, February 15th, 9:00am-6:00pm Retreat for People of Color with Pamela Ayo Yetunde and Femi Akinmogbe
Residential Retreat with Mark Nunberg and Wynn Fricke at Metta Meditation Center
Thursday, February 13th – Monday, February 17th

Supporting the Twin Cities’ mindfulness meditation community since 1993 | www.commongroundmeditation.org
Mindfulness and Physical Pain Workshop with Ramesh Sairam
Mindfulness meditation can help practitioners understand the complex nature of pain and provide tools to reduce the suffering associated with it.
Saturday, April 18th, 9:00am-1:00pm

VISITING TEACHERS
Rebecca Bradshaw
Rebecca Bradshaw is the guiding teacher of the Insight Meditation Center of the Pioneer Valley in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and one at the guiding teachers at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts.
Talk: The Buddha’s Recipe for a Gentle and Strong Heart
Thursday, February 13th, 7:30-9:00pm

Chas DiCapua
Chas DiCapua is currently Insight Meditation Society’s Resident Teacher, and has offered meditation since 1998.
Talk: Samadhi’s Role In Freeing The Heart
Friday, February 21st, 7:00-9:00pm

Santikaro
Santikaro is the founder of Liberation Park, a modern expression of Buddhist practice, study, and social responsibility, located in rural southwestern Wisconsin. There he continues to teach, explore nature, and translate the work of his teacher, Ajahn Buddhadasa.
Talk: It All Depends: Friday, March 20th, 7:00-9:00pm
Daylong Workshop: What does Paticca-Samuppada Teach us about Daily Practice? Saturday, March 21st, 9:30am-4:00pm
Workshop: The Dependently Co-Arisen Mess of Us & Climate: Sunday, March 22nd, 1:00-4:00pm

Susan Raffo
In 2009, I attended the Healing Justice space at the US Social Forum in Atlanta and it changed my life. For the first time I found movement people, social justice people, who were interested in the places where systems of power and oppression were held in the tissues of the individual body as well as within systems and communities. I am interested in work that refuses to separate how we individually connect with life from how we collectively claim our lives.
Talk on Thursday, April 2nd, 7:00-9:00pm

YOGA AND QIGONG
No registration required for yoga and qigong classes except where noted.

Mindful Yoga Weekly Practice
In these sessions we practice yoga poses in a way that promotes ease in the mind. Open to adults of all ages and all levels of experience.
Mondays, 5:30-6:45pm (Myra Rucker), Tuesdays, 9:30-10:45am (Nancy Boler, Level 1) or 5:30-6:45pm (Nancy Boler, Level 2), Wednesdays, 5:30-6:45pm (Nancy Boler, Level 1), & Fridays, 9:30-10:45am (Nancy Boler, Level 1), or, 5:30-6:45pm (Anita R.)

Gentle Yoga & Deep Relaxation with Nancy Boler
In this class we study and practice relaxation techniques that allow us to “let go” into a deep state of stillness.
Sundays, 4:00-5:30pm
Jan 5 & 26
Feb 2 & 16
Mar 8 & 22
Apr 5 & 19

Drop-in Qigong
Qigong is a deeply satisfying healing practice that integrates mindful awareness, breath, and movement. This practice develops relaxation, concentration, and vitality. Please join us.
Led by Mark Nunberg, Autumn Compton, and Steve Compton.
Wednesdays, 9:05-10:05am

MINDFULNESS IN THE TWELVE STEPS

Weekly Practice Group: Mindfulness, Recovery, and the Twelve Steps
This ongoing program is for those seeking spiritual development by practicing the principles of the Twelve Steps and the Buddha's teachings in everyday life. This practice group is open to all who have an interest in mindfulness and the Twelve Steps. Led by Charlie B., Mary G., April H., Gail I., Emil J., Marc J., Anita R., Sharon S., and Ollie S.
Fridays, 7:00-8:30pm
Mindfulness and Recovery Retreats with Anita R
Sundays, January 19th and March 15th, 1:00-5:00pm

COMMUNITY EVENTS
Community Potluck
Sunday, March 8th, 12:00-1:30pm

Dharma Talk with Louis Alemayehu
Louis Alemayehu teaches Environmental Sustainability in Minnesota at the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, and facilitates the creation of permacultural farms and early childhood schools in rural West African villages. He also conducts workshops on mindfulness meditation and community-building. Louis serves on Common Ground’s advisory committee and co-facilitates the regular Community Conversations on masculinity.
Talk: Many Paths, One Journey
Friday, March 27th, 7:00-9:00pm

Community Conversation on Healthy Masculinity
Sunday, March 29th, 1:30-4:00pm
Led by Mark Nunberg, Louis Alemayehu, Robb Reed, Omkar Sawardekar, and Malik Watkins
This conversation is open to all those who identify as male, or men, or embodying masculinity.
Continuing a tradition from the Buddhist monasteries in Southeast Asia, all programs are offered free of charge in the spirit of generosity. This offering is possible because of the generosity of people like you who wish to support the continuation of the center.

Mindful giving and receiving frees the heart from clinging. Please join us in the practice of generosity, which leads to both joy and wisdom. Because each person’s circumstances are different, we do not provide suggested donations or constant reminders to give. The center, however, is completely dependent on your gifts.

Your contributions pay for all of the center’s expenses, provide Mark and Shelly’s livelihood, support our teachers, maintain the center’s building, and pay the wages of our administrative staff.

- You may leave financial donations in the dana bowl at the center or mail your gift to 2700 E. 26th St. Mpls, 55406.
- To make a gift online, visit: www.commongroundmeditation.org and click on Supporting the Center, under About Us.
- If it is convenient for you to schedule electronic deductions on a regular basis, it helps simplify the center’s bookkeeping. You can contact your bank for instructions on setting up electronic payments from your account.

Volunteers do many of the center’s day-to-day tasks. Please email gabe@commongroundmeditation.org if you have time and skills that you would like to contribute.

The generosity of your practice and financial support make this center a great resource for us all. All contributions to Common Ground are tax deductible.

Contact Us
Phone: (612) 722-8260
Email: info@commongroundmeditation.org
Website: www.commongroundmeditation.org

COMMON GROUND LEADERSHIP

Staff

Guiding Teacher
Mark Nunberg began his practice in 1982 and has been teaching meditation since 1990. He co-founded Common Ground Meditation Center in Minneapolis with Wynn Fricke in 1993 and continues to serve as the center’s Guiding Teacher. Mark has studied with both Asian and Western teachers and finds deep inspiration in the teachings of the Buddha. Mark practiced as a monk for five months in Burma and completed four three-month retreats at Insight Meditation Society Retreat Center, as well as many months of intensive workshop practice at The Forest Refuge. Mark continues to be a grateful student of Buddhist practice.

Associate Director
Shelly Graf has been practicing at Common Ground since 2003. They are currently being trained by Insight Meditation Society as part of the four-year teacher training program. They are a staff dharma teacher, like Mark Nunberg, the Guiding Teacher. Currently they teach a variety of programs at the center including co-leading residential retreats with Mark Nunberg and Wynn Fricke. Shelly’s administrative role includes partnering with the Guiding Teacher to develop and clarify the center’s vision, policies, and priorities. Professionally, Shelly has been a clinician and administrator in the Social Work and mental health fields since 2005. They have a special interest in waking up to whiteness as part of this total path of awakening. Whatever Shelly’s role may be, they will always be a grateful student of Buddhist practice first.

Office Manager: Gabe Keller Flores
Bookkeeping Manager: Gail Iverson

Board of Directors
Board Chair: Stacy McClendon; Vice Chair: Jana Larson; Treasurer: Dave Halsey; Secretary: Gabe Keller Flores; Directors: Ramesh Sairam, scottie hall; Guiding Teacher: Mark Nunberg

Advisory Board
Steve Armstrong, James Baraz, Joseph Goldstein, Kamaia Masters

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Common Ground is a community meditation center dedicated to the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is the practice of being present with the moment and learning to be at ease with the unfolding conditions of life. With practice, mindfulness reveals deep wisdom, compassion, and freedom. Common Ground is an independent center founded on the teachings of the Buddha. This center follows in the spirit of Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts and Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California and is part of the greater insight meditation, or vipassana, community in the West. Common Ground welcomes skillful means from all Buddhist traditions as well as other spiritual traditions dedicated to wisdom and compassion.