



OPENING 1 *“Respectful of countless Buddhas, I calmly light this candle, brightening the face of the earth.”*

Or OPENING 2 *“The dharma is deep and lovely, We now have a chance to see, study and practice it. We vow to realize its true meaning.”*

Welcome, everyone, to the regular Saturday gathering of Midwest Moon Sangha. From now until 10:30, we will give ourselves a gift of stopping and caring for ourselves and community. This time is our chance to stop running, to stop doing, and to clear our minds and dwell in the present moment.

If you haven't already, please turn off any electronic devices.

WELCOMING INTRODUCTIONS -- Let us go around the circle and introduce ourselves. I'm _____, your facilitator today.

There is nothing to do, nowhere to go; these moments are opportunities to put down our projects and our calendars, to let go our worries, fears, and deadlines. We can just 'be'. Be with your mind, be with your body, be with your ancestors, and be truly here with the others present in this place.

OUR TRADITION AND TEACHER In this circle we practice mindfulness, peaceful living, and meditation in the Plum Village tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. Often, he is referred to as Thầy (pronounced Thai) or teacher, in Vietnamese. Thầy has developed the practice of 'Engaged Buddhism' although we welcome any practices or cultural traditions that are healthy and wholesome.

OUR COMMUNITY Our sangha is a community of friends practicing mindfulness and mindful living in order to bring about and to maintain awareness of the present moment. We seek peace in ourselves and others through regular meditation, mindful action, and compassionate service to others. At the Midwest Moon Sangha we have a chance for all of us busy and committed people with a lot on our minds, to come together in community with mindfulness and awareness -- to stop, to be quiet, to calm down, to let go, to find peace— together. We come together to take care of ourselves in a safe place and in community with others who share our practice.

IF THERE ARE NEWCOMERS If you are new to us, we offer a special welcome. We are of all ages, all kinds of experience, and at all levels of practice. You don't need to be a Buddhist to practice. As we practice together you will learn to breathe and to be more alive and at peace. Everyone can practice because everyone can breathe. If you are new, or this is your first time ever doing something like this, we welcome you and we will all benefit from your presence. Don't worry, there are no rules to break and nothing to do wrong. Many of us work hard to cultivate what is called the beginners mind.

BOWING, breathing AND THE BELL You will notice we put our hands together and bow before and after speaking, or to acknowledge each other. This is to say that "the being in me recognizes the being in you." You don't have to do this if you are uncomfortable. We use the bell to bring us back to our breath, and to mark the beginnings and endings of things in our meetings. We say we 'invite' the bell—like you would invite a friend—to bring our attention to the present moment. We invite the bell as an invitation to come back to ourselves. Whenever the bell sounds, we bring our attention to the breath and breathe 3 times, settling and returning home to our true selves.

SCHEDULE Guided Sit / Walking / Silent Sit / Reading / Dharma Share / Announcements / Chant

LET US INVITE THE BELL *"Body, speech, and mind in perfect oneness – I send my heart along with the sound of the bell. May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness and transcend all anxiety and sorrow...listen, listen, this wonderful sound brings me back to my true self."*





FIRST SIT -- (~20 minutes) If newcomers are present, provide basic instruction on sitting, breathing. Newcomers: Find a comfortable seated position and rest your hands gently at your side, on your lap, or folded left hand held in right with thumbs touching. Starting at the base of your spine, gently straighten it, stacking one vertebrae on top of the next until you reach the top of your neck. Envision a straight line along your spine extending through the crown of your head. Gently lengthen yourself along that line. Relax your face, your jaw. Let a half-smile come over your lips as your gaze softens. Relax your shoulders and your arms. Relax your legs. And breathe.






Breathing in, I am aware that I am breathing in. Breathing out, I am aware that I am breathing out. Breathing in, my breathe goes deep. Breathing out, my breath goes slow

Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I feel at ease.

Breathing in, I smile. Breathing out, I release all tension.

Breathing in, I am enjoying this present moment Breathing out, I know this is a wonderful moment  




WALKING MEDITATION (~20 minutes) Now we will begin our walking meditation. Walking is a very precious practice. Walking meditation means that we know we are walking. To practice, walk slowly, in a relaxed way, with your head upright and a light smile on your lips. Simply keep in touch with both your breathing and your steps. When we practice, take one step as you breath in and another as you breath out. The link is in the counting, using a word, a phrase, or a gatha. A gatha that we often use is “I have arrived, I am home.” {from 14 verses on Meditation>} *“The breath and the footstep generate the source of mindfulness which enables one to recognize, to be in touch with the wonders of life.”*




Let’s arrange ourselves around the room (or gather outside) and after the third bell, we will begin walking in a clockwise direction. When you are ready, invite the bell three times.    Close with two bells.  

SECOND SIT -- (~20 minutes) Today, our second sit for today will be...

[silent, guided, or a restorative (deep relaxation)]

{on adjusting posture>} *“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy day.*

Conscious breathing is my anchor.” When you are ready, invite the bell    three times. Close with two bells.

READING Introduce the reading you have chosen. Invite the bell    three times. Read... Close with two bells.

- (1st Saturday) – The Five Mindfulness Trainings Recitation Ceremony
- (2nd Saturday) – A reading from Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh
- (3rd Saturday) – A reading from Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh
- (4th Saturday) – A reading from the source of your choice


DHARMA SHARING ... is a time for us to share how our practice has been going over the past week. Whoever is moved to speak first, please bow to the group to signal that you would like to speak and bow when you are done. Then, we will continue sharing around the circle in a clockwise direction. If you have nothing to share, just introduce yourself and say “good morning.” Please allow everyone to share before sharing a second time. Once everyone has shared...Is there anything else anyone would like to share? Please hold announcements to after closing.



<p>CLOSING 1 -- “Sharing the Merit” <i>“Transmitting the trainings, practicing the way of awareness gives rise to benefits without limit. We vow to share the fruits with all beings. We vow to offer tribute to parents, teachers, friends and numerous beings who give guidance and support along the path.”</i></p>	<p>Or CLOSING 2 -- “Until we love and take care of ourselves, we cannot be of much help to others...May I know how to nourish the seeds of joy in myself every day. May I be able to live fresh, solid and free. May I be from from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.”</p>
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Newcomers, please leave us with your contact information if you would like to be included in any email announcements. Our next meeting will be: next Saturday here at We hope that everyone can come. In the meantime, the important thing is to generate peace in yourself and to share it with others.

CHANT – SONG -- If time (or if you make extra time by shortening the meditations a bit) select a song from one of Plum Village’s songbooks and lead the group in singing or a chant. Make sure to make and bring copies of the lyrics for everyone.

Now we will close our Saturday gathering with three sounds of the bell and a bow to each other. At the sound of the **first bell**, we will simply breathe. At the sound of the **second bell**, we will stand and bow to each other. And finally, at the sound of the **third bell**, we will breathe and leave refreshed. 

Please end promptly at 10:30 because others may have reserved the space.