

Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center



*Still Water Day of Mindfulness in Bethlehem,
West Bank, October 2016*

December 15, 2016

Dear Still Water Friend,

We are grateful you are part of our Still Water community.

Still Water is now in its seventeenth year. Practitioners gather for meditation and sharing fourteen times each week at eight different locations. This year we've welcomed new groups that meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Friday evenings at Blueberry Gardens in Ashton. The ongoing groups in Annapolis, Silver Spring, Columbia, Sandy Spring, Gaithersburg, and Takoma Park continue to thrive, including our Spanish-speaking Sangha, Contemplando una Flor de Loto. Still Water also supports many affinity and service groups including the Mindful Families group, the Mindful Educators group, the volunteers at Shepherd's Table, and the Free Where You Are Prison Mindfulness Community. All together, nearly two hundred participants join us for practice each week.

As well as our ongoing weekly and bi-weekly groups, Still Water practitioners came together for many special events in 2016:

- a New Year's Day Brunch and several Sharing Dinners in the homes of practitioners
- a Five Mindfulness Trainings Transmission Ceremony
- afternoon and evening Introduction to Mindfulness Practice workshops at two of our practice venues, three public libraries, and at a training for an advocacy network
- seven separate days of practice offered by Still Water practitioners and three guest Dharma teachers
- five multi-day practice retreats, two organized by our Mindful Families group
- workshops and classes:
 - four multi-session Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation courses
 - an eight-session study group on the The Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing
 - a three-session class on the Five Mindfulness Trainings
 - Companions for the Journey groups, providing support in intimate, small-groups
 - a Mindfulness and Trauma Release Exercises workshop
- a twenty-seven day teaching tour of Israel and the West Bank, facilitated by six Still Water practitioners

Your support has made it possible for Still Water to offer all of the above opportunities for practice, community, and study. Your gifts have also given life to the new improved Still Water website, www.stillwatermpc.org, which went online in April.

In financial matters, Still Water is guided by the tradition of Dana, or generosity — a gift from the heart that brings joy and benefit to both the giver and the receiver. Still Water does not charge fees for its weekly programs and most special events, and offers a sliding scale of payment and scholarships for events, such as retreats and days of practice that do require a fee. Since it began, Still Water has been supported entirely through voluntary donations from its members and friends.

Dana allows our community to meet its many expenses, including rent for gathering and retreat spaces; contributions to Plum Village and other not-for-profit institutions; remuneration for our guest teachers; and a modest salary for our senior teacher, Mitchell Ratner, whose full-time work is to offer the teachings and organize the community with the support of the Working Group and Board.

We ask you to continue to support the work of Still Water and, if possible, to increase your donation. You can do this by becoming a monthly donor, enlarging the amount of your monthly contribution, or making an end-of-year gift to the community. All contributions are tax-deductible. Whichever way you choose to give, please know that we respect and value your support.

Still Water also welcomes Dana in other forms, including help with planning, organizing, and staffing events, as well as with building and maintaining our online and social media presence. Please let us know if you can assist in these ways.

Still Water undertook its first international teaching tour in the fall of 2016. At the invitation of the Israeli and Palestinian Sanghas, six Still Water practitioners toured Israel and the West Bank for twenty-seven days. They offered retreats and Days of Mindfulness for more than four hundred participants, including Israelis, Palestinians, and a group of Eritrean asylum-seekers. (Mitchell's tour blog is available on our website under "Resources – Still Water Blogs.") Mitchell recently wrote: "At the end of the trip, when the Still Water group shared about what the trip had meant to them, a dominant theme was the seductive quality of comfort. Spending time in Israel and Palestine helped group members see how easy it is for even well-meaning members of a dominant group to focus on their own comfort and safety while blocking out or giving little attention to the injustice and oppression inflicted on members of another group in the same country or neighborhood. The members of the Still Water group vowed to learn more, see more, and do more."

Thank you for supporting Still Water in its efforts to generate more understanding, peace, and compassion in the world. May we all aspire to listen to one another more deeply, to see our own situation and the situation of others more clearly, and to do more to relieve suffering in ourselves, our communities, and the world.

In gratitude,

The Still Water Working Group

Abbie Chessler, Connie Anderson, Eliza King, Gene Klinger, Lori Perine, Lynd Morris, Michelle Johnson-Weider, Mitchell Ratner, Scott Schang, Tim McCormack



Mindful Family Retreat, May 2016



Walking meditation at the six-day Israeli retreat, October 2016