

CLEAR MIND



Retreat with Sharon Salzberg, August 12–14, 2016

Madison Vipassana, Inc., is delighted to welcome Sharon Salzberg back to Madison to lead a nonresidential weekend retreat August 12–14.

Sharon Salzberg is a renowned meditation teacher and *New York Times* best-selling author. She is a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, and has played a crucial role in bringing Asian meditation practices to the West. Sharon has been a student of meditation since 1971, guiding retreats worldwide since 1974. She is a weekly columnist for *On Being*, a regular contributor to *The Huffington Post*, and the author of many books, including *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* (1995), *A Heart as Wide as the World* (1999), *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (2003), and *Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation* (2010).

The theme of the retreat will be lovingkindness. Lovingkindness is a meditation that cultivates our natural capacity for an open and loving heart. It is traditionally offered with meditations that enrich compassion and joy in the happiness of others



and also deepen our own sense of peace. These practices lead to the development of concentration, connection, fearlessness, and genuine happiness.

Sharon will introduce these teachings and support us in our own experience and cultivation of these qualities through direct instruction and guided meditation using classical techniques in a modern idiom. There will also be opportunities for questions.

The retreat will be suitable for both beginning and experienced students of meditation. Sitting meditation periods will alternate with periods of walking meditation throughout each day. The retreat will be held in silence except for instructions, question-and-answer periods, and Dhamma talks.

The retreat will be held at the Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The Lussier Center offers a beautiful and peaceful setting for this wonderful practice opportunity.

The cost of the retreat is \$140, which covers vegetarian lunches,

teacher transportation, facility charges, and other retreat expenses. The cost also includes a small amount that goes into a fund used to support the needs of our community—for example, by purchasing hearing assistive devices, providing retreat scholarships, or taking on the financial risk of offering completely dana (donation)-based retreats when monks or nuns are teaching. In keeping with Theravada Buddhist tradition, there is no charge for the teachings; however, dana to the teacher is encouraged.

To register for the retreat, complete the registration form at the back of this newsletter. Early registration is encouraged to ensure a spot. Financial assistance is available through our retreat scholarship program. A list of nearby lodgings appears on [page 3](#).

For a taste of Sharon's teachings, sample any of 99 talks available free of charge on the [Dharma Seed website](#). To learn more about Sharon, please visit her [website](#). ❖



Prairie at Lussier Family Heritage Center

Even as a mother protects with
her life

Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart

Should one cherish all living
beings

—From the [Karaniya Metta Sutta](#)
(Sn 1.8; Amaravati Sangha, transl.)

Sharon Salzberg: Mindfulness and Difficult Emotions

I have heard some wonderful explanations of mindfulness. The writer and teacher Sylvia Boorstein calls it “awake attention to what is happening inside and outside so we can respond from a place of wisdom.” The Vietnamese Zen teacher and poet Thich Nhat Hanh says, “I like to define mindfulness as the energy that helps us to be there 100 percent. It is the energy of your true presence.” But my favorite definition comes from a fifth grader at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School in Oakland, California.

In 2007, the school launched a pilot program that offered kids five weeks of mindfulness training from a coach who visited classrooms twice a week, leading 15-minute sessions on how to have “gentle breaths and still bodies.” The students trained their attention by focusing on their breath and noting the emotions that arose. The coach also asked them to cultivate compassion by reflecting—“taking a moment”—before lashing out at someone on the playground. “I was losing at baseball and I was about to throw a bat,” one boy told his class, according to *The New York Times*. “The mindfulness really helped.”

The reporter asked another boy participating in the program to describe mindfulness. It’s “not hitting someone in the mouth,” he said.

His answer is wise, wide, and deep. It illustrates one of the most important uses of mindfulness: helping us deal with difficult emotions. It suggests the possibility of finding the gap between a trigger event and our usual conditioned response to it, and using that pause to collect ourselves and change our response. And it demonstrates that we can learn to make better choices.

“He doesn’t know what to do with his energy,” the student’s mother said at a parents’ meeting. He was, she explained, usually quick to strike out when he was confused or frustrated. But mindfulness training was changing that pattern. “One day after school he told me, ‘I’m taking a moment.’”

Meditation is like going into an old attic room and turning on the light. In that light we see everything—the beautiful treasures we’re grateful to have unearthed; the dusty, neglected corners that inspire us to say, “I’d better clean that up”; the unfortunate relics of the past that we thought we had gotten rid of years ago. We acknowledge them all, with an open, spacious, and loving awareness.

This is just what the practice of mindfulness helps us remember. Working with emotions during our meditation sessions sharpens our ability to recognize a feeling just as it begins, not 15 consequential actions later. We can then go on to develop a more balanced relationship with it—neither letting it overwhelm us so we lash out rashly nor ignoring it because we’re afraid or ashamed of it.

We learn a lot in that middle, mindful place. We begin to discover that, like the Oakland schoolboy, we can always take a moment—to re-center ourselves in our bodies,

acknowledge what we’re feeling, spot our habitual reactions (whether that means erupting when we’re frustrated or silently sulking when we feel criticized), and perhaps decide on a different course of action.

When I first began my meditative practice I was only 18, and although I knew I was deeply unhappy, I wasn’t aware of the separate strands of grief, anger, and fear roiling inside me. All I felt was a single, seemingly solid bank of sadness. Then, through meditation, I began to look within more clearly and detect the various components of my sorrow. What I saw unsettled me so much that I marched up to my teacher, S. N. Goenka, and said accusingly, “I never used to be an angry person before I began meditating!” Of course I was hugely angry: my mother had died; I barely knew my father; I barely knew myself. When I blamed Mr. Goenka, he simply laughed—then reminded me of the tools I now had to deal with the difficult feelings I used to keep hidden. I could begin to forge a different relationship with my emotions—to find the middle place between denying them and giving over to them—because I had acknowledged them.

Mindfulness practice isn’t meant to eliminate thinking but aims rather to help us know what we’re thinking when we’re thinking it, just as we want to know what we’re feeling when we’re feeling it.

Mindfulness allows us to watch our thoughts, see how one thought leads to the next, decide if we’re heading toward an unhealthy path, and if so, let go and change directions. It allows us to see that who we are is much more than a fearful or envious or angry thought. We can rest in the awareness of the

thought, in the compassion we extend to ourselves if the thought makes us uncomfortable, and in the balance and good sense we summon as we decide whether and how to act on the thought.

Meditation is like going into an old attic room and turning on the light. In that light we see everything—the beautiful treasures we're grateful to have unearthed; the dusty, neglected corners that inspire us to say, "I'd better clean that up"; the unfortunate relics of the past that we thought we had gotten rid of years ago. We acknowledge them all,

with an open, spacious, and loving awareness.

It's never too late to turn on the light. Your ability to break an unhealthy habit or turn off an old tape doesn't depend on how long it's been running; a shift in perspective doesn't depend on how long you've held the old view. When you flip the switch in that attic, it doesn't matter whether it's been dark for 10 minutes, 10 years, or 10 decades. The light still illuminates the room and banishes the murkiness, letting you see things you couldn't see before. It's never too late to take a moment to look. ❖

Excerpted from "Mindfulness and Difficult Emotions" by Sharon Salzberg. Originally published in the Spring 2013 issue of Tricycle: The Buddhist Review, vol. XXII, no. 3.



Additional Opportunity to Practice with Sharon Salzberg

Sharon Salzberg will lead Madison Insight Meditation Group's regular Sunday night meditation on August 14, 2016, at the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive. The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a 45-minute sitting, following which Sharon will offer a Dhamma talk. If you can attend her retreat, this will be a delightful way to hear more from Sharon. If you aren't able to attend the retreat, this will give you a chance to benefit from her teaching. Please join us!

August Retreat at Lussier Family Heritage Center — Places to Stay Nearby —

AmericInn Lodge & Suites

101 W. Broadway, Madison
(608) 222-8601

Arbor House

3402 Monroe St., Madison
(608) 238-2981

Clarion Suites at the Alliant Energy Ctr.

2110 Rimrock Rd., Madison
(608) 284-1234

Country Inn & Suites

400 River Pl., Madison
(608) 221-0055

Days Inn

4402 E. Broadway Service Rd., Madison
(608) 223-1800

Lake Farm Park

(Camping next to the Lussier Center)
Dane Co. Parks, reservedane.com/

Sheraton Madison Hotel

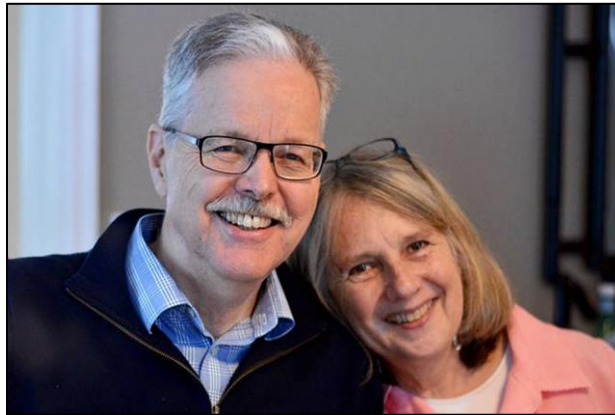
706 John Nolen Dr., Madison
(608) 251-2300

Super 8 Madison South

1602 W. Beltline Hwy., Madison
(608) 258-8882

Lori and Dave – We Miss You Already!

We thought the sangha would want to know that our longtime Dhamma friends Lori and Dave Creswell are moving to Minneapolis for one year in early June. They are moving to be near their son and daughter-in-law who are expecting a second child in July. They plan to be there just for one year and then return to Madison (yay!).



Lori and Dave have both contributed so much to our community over the years. It will take many of us to fill in for all they have done and continue to do for us: Lori has been on the Steering Committee and Board from inception and is now the facilitator for all our meetings; she is the contact for the teachers who lead our retreats; she sets up leaders for Sunday night sittings and manages arrangements with First Unitarian Society for Sunday nights, half-day sittings, and other events at that location; she offers

monthly introductions and gives Dhamma talks, manages retreats, and does just about anything and everything else. Dave has likewise been a stalwart ever since our group began. He was on the Board for many years and will be sorely missed for his role in setting up and supporting Kalyana Mitta groups (see [page 6](#)), arranging and planning half-day sittings, leading monthly

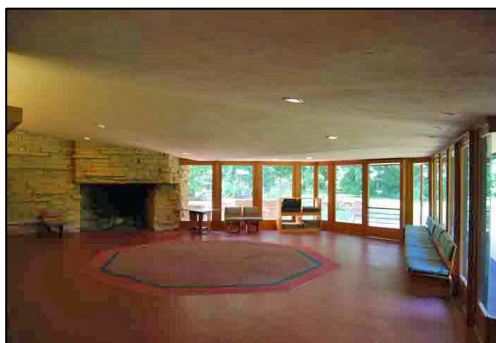
introductions, and offering Dhamma talks.

Our deepest thanks to both Lori and Dave for all they have done over many years to establish, support, and grow our Dhamma community. We send them off with our best wishes and will welcome them back with open arms whenever they are ready and able to return to our community. *Anumodana* to them both—we take delight in the goodness they have done! ❖

Introduction to Meditation

Madison Insight Meditation Group offers an introduction to meditation the second Sunday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Those who come for the introduction have time together with a leader, in a separate room, to introduce themselves, learn some of the fundamentals of sitting and walking meditation, and hear a bit about our group and its history.

These monthly introductory sessions are open to everyone. If you have not meditated before, we invite you to attend one of them. Everyone is also welcome to attend any of our three sitting groups (see [page 5](#)). We hope you will join us! ❖



Gaebler Living Room, First Unitarian Society

Half-Day Sits

Madison Insight Meditation Group will hold half-day sits on three Saturdays in the coming months—June 18, August 20, and October 15—in the Gaebler Living Room at the First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, in Madison.

Our half-day sits begin at 9:00 a.m. (try to arrive a little early), and the formal practice ends at about noon. Three 45-minute sitting periods alternate with two 20-minute walking periods. If you can't attend for the entire morning, feel free to come for a portion of it. Plan to arrive just a little before the hour so you can join the last few minutes of walking and stay for the next sitting.

The morning's practice is followed by a potluck lunch in the same location. Bring something to share if you can, but come anyway if you can't. Questions can be directed to Tony at (608) 231-1558. There is no fee or registration required. Everyone is invited. ❖

Upcoming Classes

Clearing the Path: Meditation in the Context of the Buddha's Teachings

Taught by Janice Cittasubha Sheppard, 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Madison

9:00–11:00 am / Saturdays, July 9, July 16, July 30, August 6 (note the class does not meet on July 23)

This class is intended for those who have established a meditation practice, but are wanting to know more about how and why the Buddha taught mindfulness meditation and how that understanding can strengthen and deepen one's meditation. Meditation is one component of an entire context of teachings that the Buddha offered, and while it is an essential component, it can become dry without the substance provided by the entire understanding of why it

matters to meditate and what we can gain from it.

Clearing the Path focuses on the foundational teachings of the Buddha so you can better understand the benefits and reasons to sustain your practice. The Buddha's teachings provide many lists for cultivating a path to the end of suffering. This class will introduce teachings on the Middle Way, The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, the Five Hindrances, among others. Each class will include a short

period of meditation. This class suggests how to be "Clearing the Path" to peace by developing and investigating the mind with greater intention and understanding.

Participants should have a basic understanding of breath meditation, be comfortable meditating for 20 minutes, and be meditating frequently.

Details on how to register are on the [MIMG website](#). Send questions to janice.sheppard@yahoo.com. ❖

Form and Freedom in Theravada Buddhism: A Yearlong Program to Deepen Practice

Taught by Janice Cittasubha Sheppard, 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Madison

To begin either summer of 2016 or January of 2017

Form and Freedom is a yearlong program for those interested in making a commitment to the Buddha's spiritual path, in broadening exposure to his teachings, and in following his suggestions for traveling the path to awakening. To provide support and guidance for those seeking to deepen understanding of and commitment to their spiritual growth, Form and Freedom will offer a structure for ongoing investigation, guidance, reflection, and community.

During the year we will practice and study according to Theravada traditions that have been sustained over the 2,558 years since the time of the Buddha. Students will be asked to do so not because of blind belief or obedience, but because they recognize how much they have

already benefited from meditation, and they have a willingness to experiment with adding traditional, heart-based practices, and would like greater exposure to the actual discourses of the Buddha.

If you feel a desire to deepen your practice, or if it feels a bit loose, open-ended, unclear, undirected, dry, or free-floating, this program can provide the grounding and clarity to lift your heart, release confusion, and enable you to fully integrate the practice into your life.

The program requires a significant commitment of heart, mind, and time from those enrolled. There will be 12 monthly four-hour gatherings on Saturdays. These will include meditation, Dhamma talks based upon assigned readings, and plenty

of time for discussion and reflection within the group. Between sessions students will be assigned readings and suggested practices and reflections to apply the teachings to daily life. Students will have a "Buddha Buddy" to connect with between sessions. Once the program begins, no new students will be added in order to support the integrity of the group. If there is interest, we may go on field trips together to visit monasteries or hear from visiting monastics.

Enrollment in the course opened in May. If you think you may want to participate, please send an email to janice.sheppard@yahoo.com to receive more details and indicate your interest. ❖

MIMG Sitting Groups

Madison Insight Meditation Group offers three weekly meditation opportunities, one in central Madison, one on the west side, and one on the east side. Bring your own meditation cushion or bench if you have one. Chairs and some extra cushions are available. Details are below.

Central: Sundays 6:00–8:00 p.m.

First Unitarian Society, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison

1st & 3rd Sundays: 45-minute sitting followed by talk and discussion

2nd, 4th, & 5th Sundays: 45-minute sitting, 20-minute walking meditation, 45-minute sitting (breakout group on 2nd Sundays offers [introduction to insight meditation](#))

This sitting group is peer-led.



West: Tuesdays 6:30–8:15 p.m.

9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Middleton (directions on [website](#))

45-minute sitting followed by Dhamma discussion

This sitting group is led by Janice Cittasubha Sheppard, who was trained at Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery as a Buddhist Lay Minister, and at Spirit Rock Meditation Center as a Community Dharma Leader.

East: Fridays 7:30–9:00 p.m.

Main Street Yoga, 1882 E. Main Street, Madison

30-minute sitting followed by 10-minute movement meditation and Dhamma discussion or talk

This sitting group is led by Devon Hase, Craig Hase, and Jack Arpin. Devon completed the Community Dharma Leader training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. Craig has been studying in the American vipassana tradition for a number of years. Jack ordained and lived in a Thai Forest monastery.

Kalyana Mitta Groups

A *Kalyana Mitta* (*spiritual friend* in Pāli) is a group of 8–12 individuals who gather periodically to study and discuss the teachings of the Buddha and his path of practice. Each group determines how frequently to meet, what to read, and how to structure the sessions. Madison Insight Meditation Group gathers the names of those interested, and when there are enough people for a new group, they are notified and assisted in getting the group started. Once established, each Kalyana Mitta manages on its own. Individuals interested in joining a Kalyana Mitta should send an email to Jan Sheppard at janice.sheppard@yahoo.com. ❖

Upcoming Retreats

James Baraz, October 27–30, 2016

Pine Lake Retreat Center, Westfield, WI (residential)

Mark Nunberg, March 17–19, 2017

Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison, WI (residential/nonresidential)

Ayyā Medhānandī, May 21–25, 2017

Pine Lake Retreat Center, Westfield, WI (residential)

DaRa Williams, October 5–8, 2017

Pine Lake Retreat Center, Westfield, WI (residential)

Join Us on Facebook!

Check out the [Madison Insight Meditation Group \(MIMG\) Facebook page](#)! Be sure to click “Like” to have us show up in your newsfeed. We’re using the page to post announcements about upcoming MIMG events such as retreats, classes, and special guest speakers. If you attend one of our [weekly meditation groups](#), this is a good way to learn what else is happening at the other groups and in the broader MIMG community. We may also occasionally post inspiring Dhamma quotations. If you have a photograph or reflections about our retreats or other events, please consider sending them by messaging the page directly—we’d love to post them!



Madison Dharma Community

Did you know Madison has a citywide sangha email list? The Madison Dharma Community list is intended for all Dharma practitioners in the greater Madison area.

The list serves as a resource for anybody hoping to get the word out on Dharma-related news and requests to the widest possible list of interested practitioners. It’s a place to post notices about retreats and other practice opportunities, as well as more personal items, such as “practitioner roommate wanted” or “house available for rent.” It also offers an opportunity for inter-sangha discussions about practice.

Subscribing to the list is fast and, of course, free. Just go to [this link](#) and click on “Join Group.” The list is set up as a Google Group, but you don’t need a Google account to join. The list is lightly moderated to prevent spam.

May the Madison Dharma Community list be of benefit to everyone on the path!

Save the Date for Our Fall Sangha-Wide Picnic!

You asked us to repeat last summer’s successful sangha-wide picnic, and we listened! Join us on Sunday, September 25, for delicious food, conversation, and fun. Bring your family and friends! Learn a bit more about how MIMG is governed and run. Bring a dish to share or just bring yourself—there will be plenty to eat!

When: Sunday, September 25, 11:30–1:30 p.m.

Where: Rennebohm Park, 115 North Eau Claire Ave., Madison, WI 53705

RSVPs are appreciated but not required. Please contact Chris at Cbkeenan44@gmail.com or (716) 997-9361 to RSVP or ask any questions.❖

CLEAR MIND

The Newsletter of Madison Vipassana, Inc.
Madison, WI

This newsletter is published periodically as a service to our meditation community.
It is available on our website at: madisonmeditation.org

Cathy Loeb: Editor
Janice Sheppard: Contributing writer

To subscribe, send an empty message to: mimg-subscribe@yahogroups.com



Nonresidential Meditation Retreat with Sharon Salzberg

August 12–14, 2016

Lussier Family Heritage Center, Madison, WI
Sponsored by [Madison Vipassana, Inc.](#)

Sharon Salzberg is a renowned meditation teacher and *New York Times* best-selling author. She is a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, and has played a crucial role in bringing Asian meditation practices to the West. Sharon has been a student of meditation since 1971, guiding retreats worldwide since 1974. She is a weekly columnist for *On Being*, a regular contributor to *The Huffington Post*, and the author of many books, including *Lovingkindness*, *Faith*, and *Real Happiness*.

The theme of this retreat will be lovingkindness. Lovingkindness is a meditation that cultivates our natural capacity for an open and loving heart. It is traditionally offered with meditations that enrich compassion and joy in the happiness of others and also deepen our own sense of peace. These practices lead to the development of concentration, connection, fearlessness, and genuine happiness. Sharon will introduce these teachings and support us in our own experience and cultivation of these qualities through direct instruction and guided meditation using classical techniques in a modern idiom. There will also be opportunities for questions.

The retreat will be suitable for both beginning and experienced students of meditation. Sitting meditation periods will alternate with periods of walking meditation throughout each day. The retreat will be held in silence except for instructions, question-and-answer periods, and Dhamma talks.

Cost

The cost of this nonresidential retreat is \$140. The registration fee covers vegetarian lunches, teacher transportation, facility charges, and other retreat expenses. The cost also includes a small amount that goes into a fund used to support the needs of our community—for example, by purchasing hearing assistive devices, providing retreat scholarships, or taking on the financial risk of offering completely dana (donation)-based retreats when monks or nuns are teaching. In keeping with Theravada Buddhist tradition, there is no charge for the teachings; however, dana to the teacher is encouraged.

Financial assistance

Financial assistance is available through our retreat scholarship program. Individuals may receive scholarships multiple times. Please ask if you need assistance. Contact Ann at annvarda@gmail.com or (608) 843-7531 to discuss how we can help.

Special needs

To inquire about special situations, contact Ann at annvarda@gmail.com or (608) 843-7531. Please note that we are unable to accommodate special dietary needs.

Ride sharing

To request or offer rides to and from the retreat center, contact Chris at Cbkeenan44@gmail.com or (716) 997-9361.

Registration

Early registration is encouraged. Registration is on a space-available basis and must include the registration form on the [next page](#) and a check to reserve your spot. Confirmation will be by email and will provide information on the facility, driving directions, and recommendations on what to bring. If the retreat is full, you will be placed on a waiting list. Those on the waiting list who do not get a spot will receive a full refund. For questions about registration, contact Ann at annvarda@gmail.com or (608) 843-7531.

Cancellation and refund policy

All cancellations are subject to a nonrefundable \$35 fee. Cancellations received on or before July 15 will be refunded the retreat fee less \$35. Refunds, less \$35, will be given to those canceling after July 15 only if there is another person wanting to register for the retreat.

To register

Send the registration form with a check for the full amount (payable to Madison Vipassana, Inc.) to:

Madison Vipassana, Inc.
c/o Ann Varda
1724 Hoyt St.
Madison, WI 53726

Madison Vipassana, Inc.
Nonresidential Meditation Retreat with Sharon Salzberg
August 12–14, 2016
Lussier Family Heritage Center, Madison, WI
— Registration Form ❖ Please Print Clearly —

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____
Email _____

Sitting preferences . . .

To help us set up the Dhamma hall, please indicate whether you prefer to sit primarily on the floor or in a chair. We will have extra chairs, but not enough to reserve both a chair and a place on the floor.

Chair Floor

We will have just a few extra meditation cushions available to borrow during the retreat, so please bring your own cushion or bench if you have one.

Special circumstances or requests . . .

I would like to use to an assistive listening device. (If you have questions about our assistive listening devices, please contact Mike Kehl at mike.fiddlehead@gmail.com or 608-334-0611.)

If you have any other special needs, requests, or information to share with us, please explain below or contact the registrar, Ann Varda, at annvarda@gmail.com or 608-843-7531. _____

A few last details and a request for help with setup and cleanup . . .

- This is my first vipassana retreat.
- I can help set up before the retreat. I can help clean up after the retreat.
- I need rides from _____. I can give rides to ____ passengers from _____.
- I enclose an additional \$ _____ to be used for scholarships for future retreats.

Send your completed registration form with a check for the full amount to:

Madison Vipassana, Inc., c/o Ann Varda
1724 Hoyt St.
Madison, WI 53726

Checks payable to Madison Vipassana, Inc.

Financial assistance is available through our retreat scholarship program. If your ability to pay makes it difficult to attend, please contact the registrar, Ann Varda, at annvarda@gmail.com or 608-843-7531 to discuss how we can help.