



Insight Meditation Community of Washington

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202-986-2922 ~ 1-866-900-IMCW

Welcome to Vipassana Meditation Class Led by Tara Brach

Wednesdays 7:30 - 9:00 PM ~ Orientation at 7 PM

River Road Unitarian Church, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD – Corner of River Road & Whittier Blvd

We are glad you are interested in vipassana meditation and hope the following information will serve as a useful introduction to our community.

Who are we?

This class is sponsored by the Insight Meditation Community of Washington (IMCW), a spiritual community or "sangha" that is dedicated to promoting the instruction and practice of Buddhist Insight Meditation (vipassana) and related Buddhist teachings in the metropolitan D.C. area.

What is vipassana?

Also known as Buddhist Insight Meditation, vipassana is a meditation practice that trains us to live mindfully in the present moment. Vipassana literally means "to see clearly." When we live with an open heart and clear mind our interconnection with all things becomes visible, and wisdom and compassion arise naturally.

Meditation is not intended as an escape from life. Rather it is a courageous practice in opening, accepting and awakening to our true nature. As we do this, we discover the capacity to be intimate with ourselves, each other and all of life.

Who teaches the class?

Tara Brach, Ph.D., is the founder and senior teacher of IMCW. She is a clinical psychologist and author of *Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*. Tara teaches classes locally, and leads vipassana retreats at meditation centers around the country. We are fortunate that each year a number of renowned vipassana teachers, as well as members of the IMCW Teachers Council, are invited as guest teachers to lead this class.

What happens in class?

The typical class begins with meditation instructions and a 30-minute meditation or "sitting." This is followed by a "dharma" talk (dharma means "path" or "way") that addresses different facets of the Buddha's teachings, including how to bring the heart of meditation into our daily life. After the talk there is time for questions, individual sharing and general announcements. All dharma talks are audiotaped and available for purchase. Orders are taken each evening and the cost is \$10 per tape.

As a group we create a sacred field of mindfulness as we meditate together and listen to the dharma talk. "Dharma etiquette": Meditation starts at 7:30. Out of respect for your fellow meditators please make every effort to arrive on time. If you arrive after 7:45, you will be directed to seats in the lobby where you can hear the teacher. At the break between the meditation period and the Dharma talk, you are welcome to find a seat in the sanctuary or the balcony, or, if you need to, to leave.

What if I am new to class?

We know the challenges of arriving new to a class as large as this one and we want you to feel welcome and included. In that spirit we offer several opportunities to gather and talk with others. Before class there is an Orientation at 7 PM where a member of the IMCW Board of Directors or other volunteer introduces newcomers to the format of this class and answers questions. Everyone is invited to attend at any time.

Tara, and several experienced meditation students, are available after class. So please feel free to stay around, have a cup of tea, ask questions or just come up and say hello.

What if I am totally new to meditation?

The IMCW resource tables have the latest information on all our activities, as well as offerings by other Buddhist groups in the area. You will also find cassette recordings of dharma talks given by Tara and other vipassana instructors, a list of recommended books, books for sale, and other informative handouts. Please feel free to ask for help selecting books and tapes to get you started.

Introduction to Meditation classes are offered periodically, but meanwhile, there is no reason to delay starting because instructions are given at every class. You will find the cassette tapes a helpful supplement (especially the four-part beginners' series, and basic meditation instructions). There is also a printed sheet with basic meditation instruction and "How to Meditate by Yourself." Try practicing each day, even if only for a very short time. Feel free to ask any questions that arise.

On the first and third Wednesdays of the month an IMCW volunteer coordinates the Book & Tape Exchange where you can borrow donated books and tapes for a nominal fee for one month. If you have Buddhist related materials to donate, please bring them and help us expand the Exchange.

How do I sign up?

This is an open class and you are welcome to come whenever you like. If you would like to receive further information on IMCW events, simply add your name and address to the mailing list located at the IMCW resource table. You will receive email announcements, the bi-annual Awakening Mind newsletter, and the Contribution Campaign mailing.

What is the cost?

In keeping with Buddhist tradition, there is no required fee. Rather, students express their gratitude for the teachings by offering donations. This is called "dana" (dana means generosity), and allows for an open-hearted exchange between student and teacher. Often we are asked, "What is an appropriate donation?" and we suggest \$10-\$15. We pay \$275 rent to the church for each class and the remainder goes to the teacher. Dana baskets are located near the entrances to the sanctuary. There are also envelopes available for those who wish to contribute to the IMCW operating budget, which funds our administrator, website, newsletter, office, etc. IMCW is a non-profit 501(c)(3) religious organization and your donations are tax deductible.

What else does IMCW offer? Please visit our website for more information: www.imcw.org

In addition to this Wednesday evening gathering we offer a variety of other activities including day-long, weekend, and week-long retreats; weekend classes and evening sitting groups in the DC metropolitan area; Kalyana Mitta ("spiritual friend") groups that allow us to deepen our practice in smaller, more intimate settings; mentoring program for those who are committed to developing a regular practice or deepening their practice; community gatherings for friends and families which give us a chance to get to know one another while enjoying music, food, and other festivities.

How can I get more involved?

Please join us in any classes, retreats, or other events that appeal to you. You are also welcome to participate on an organizational level by volunteering your time or expertise. This is called "dana of effort" and for many people becomes an integral part of their practice. We are always looking for new ideas and volunteer involvement. If you are interested check the IMCW resource table for volunteer announcements or contact the IMCW Administrator at 202.986.2922, 1-866.900.IMCW or meditate@imcw.org.

A note about mindful parking:

Over the years, the members of the River Road Unitarian Church have been very gracious by sharing precious space for our weekly classes. Because this is a popular and often crowded facility, please help us by not parking in any of the marked fire lanes or driveways, and only park in handicapped spaces if you are authorized to do so.

Do you have more questions?

We hope so! Please feel free to contact the following people outside of class: IMCW Administrator at 202.986.2922, 1.800.900.IMCW or meditate@imcw.org; Dori Langevin 301.588.0852 or dlangevin@pire.org; Jon Waterman 703.204.0135 or BodhiJon@aol.com; Phyllis Smolkin 301.565.0312 or hsmolkin@erols.com.