



LONG BEACH MEDITATION

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

ISSUE 2

- **Letter from our Guiding Teacher**
- **Deep Welcome**
- **Greetings from the Board Treasurer**
- **LBM Book Club**

Letter from our Guiding Teacher

Dear Friends,

The first days of fall are finally here. We welcome cooler temperatures! Children have returned to school, summer vacations are perhaps fond recollections, and Christmas merchandise has already begun to appear in stores. This summer and into the fall season, yet again, California faces the continued tragic consequences of drought and extreme weather, including wildfires. As if this were not challenging enough, this year especially, many of us have been impacted by the steep increase in the cost of living, most keenly experienced by those with limited means. Meanwhile, societal support systems are inadequate at best and eroding in real time. In light of these difficulties and plenty of other significant concerns, the refuge of community is a clear and ever-present need. At Long Beach Meditation (LBM), we strive to maintain and refine a welcoming and peaceful place for the practice of meditation. It is through meditation practice that our capacity to respond appropriately to our families and communities grows and deepens.

Recently, the LBM Board and our teachers collaborated to improve and refine our Mission Statement. Please take a moment to read the statement, a concentrated reflection of our shared intentions, on the LBM website's [About](#) page. Your feedback and comments are always welcomed. Inclusion is at the very core of who we are as a community and an organization. To be truly inclusive is to go beyond all distinctions and differences. As we navigate this perplexing and challenging human life, it serves us well to see and acknowledge that we are all of the same mysterious root. This fundamental awareness is our shared birthright, the common ground of being, the very source of beauty, diversity, uniqueness, and, yes, difference.

Looking ahead, I am committed to working to strengthen our community connections. Our Sangha is local, national, and even international! Meeting locally, at Bay Shore Church in Long Beach, stalwarts welcome new faces each and every week.

Through the incorporation of our online meeting space, we connect with members and supporters from across the U.S., Canada, and beyond. We are committed to improving our meetings and classes in both the in-person and online spheres, investing in new technology as we embrace the reality that the post-pandemic world presents. Seeking to understand and match the current, always-changing reality is the living practice of Dharma practitioners. Over thousands of years and hundreds of generations, countless people have realized this marvelous way to study and appreciate the self, through the radical practice of sitting down and becoming still in body and mind. Zen Master Dogen was once asked, "There are many gates for buddha-dharma. Why do you recommend meditation exclusively?" Dogen Zenji replied, "Because this is the front gate for buddha-dharma."

At LBM we look forward to all that we can achieve and offer together. A human life is such a rare occurrence in the vastness of space and time. In Buddhism it has been said that to be born a human is as rare an occurrence as a sea turtle rising once every hundred years from the ocean depths to poke their head through a knothole in a piece of driftwood! To encounter the Dharma is rarer still! We are each a rare and valuable happening, a living process, not separate from and always connected with one another and our world. To realize and actualize these connections, for the benefit of all, is our great work and calling. Let us dive fully into the teachings available to us and make the most of this precious gift.

I extend my sincere gratitude to each of you. As always, I welcome your reaching out to me directly at jokai@longbeachmeditation.org. Thank you for your presence and support. I look forward to continuing our journey together.

Bows,
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Jokai Blackwell Roshi



Letter from the Board Treasurer

Something immeasurable happens before, during, and after meditation. Perhaps it is a shift in perspective. Perhaps it is some blood returning to the white knuckles. Maybe it's the healing of a relationship, or the courage to handle a situation which once seemed insurmountable. However it appears, it is felt through and through, leaving no doubt of meditation's benefits.

Then there's the measurable financial aspect of a nonprofit organization. For me as both Treasurer of Long Beach Meditation (LBM) and a devotee of its offerings, it can feel a bit odd to talk about the finances and the "business" of dharma. The facts are present though: LBM has expenses. We are fortunate to have a council of wonderful teachers, an experienced Guiding Teacher, a long-standing Operations Manager and newly hired online support. There is rent, insurance, technology, the website, our Zoom account, and various other ongoing and unavoidable expenses that keep LBM's doors open. Lately these expenses total approximately \$5,600 every month.

How do we pay for these expenses and how well are we doing? The financial health of LBM is tended to and aided by recurring monthly memberships, dana collected at events, fees for classes, donations, both private and public grants, and LBM's internal fundraising efforts. The money is collected, counted, and reported at our monthly Board of Directors meetings. Currently our financial health is strong.

During the initial stages of lockdown and well into the pandemic, LBM was able to secure public grants from several levels of government: federal, state, county, and city. These monies allowed us to maintain compensation for our teachers and operations manager and continue to offer the same schedule of sits, first shifting them to online and then introducing a hybrid option beginning in July of 2021.

Most recently LBM was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the City of Long Beach Recovery Fund. This money will be spent in three ways.

The first is new technology aimed at improving our hybrid, in-person and online offerings. Secondly, we want to broaden our marketing efforts with advertisements in local papers and with local print shops. Lastly, our model of paying our teachers is not based on how much dana we collect at events. We compensate them no matter how much is collected, no matter how many people attend. The remainder of the grant money will be used to make sure we continue to support our teachers. It is thanks to these grants that we can rest easy, put forth our best offerings and not worry (much) about breaking even at each event. Our sustaining membership remains steady, hovering between \$1,800 and \$1,900 each month and we are incredibly grateful to each and every person who is currently supporting the organization, has done so in the past, or has their eye on it in the future. Membership is the most reliable financial support upon which LBM depends.

Revenue generated from our regular series of events (Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Full Moon, Saturday Half-Day and Daylong meditations) typically runs from \$1,500 to \$1,700 monthly. Donations not tied to an event are usually between \$100-\$500 per month, and our class series and weekend retreats help close the gap some months, even pushing the money generated over the necessary expenditures.



That's the nuts and bolts of it. Simplified slightly, but there it is, in black and white, and it adds up to two words: thank you. Thank you for your support, in whatever way you can. If you feel inspired to donate, there are multiple ways of doing so on our website: www.longbeachmeditation.org/donate.

If you are rich in time, we are always looking for volunteers. Please reach out to us via email at info@longbeachmeditation.org or by calling 562-448-6887 to find out how you can help, or simply show up early to set up or stay late to put things away. If finances feel constricted right now, your presence at the events counts. So, thank you. Together we are Long Beach Meditation.

Sincerely yours,

Kisen Fredella

A background image of a forest path covered in fallen autumn leaves, with trees in the background. The image is used as a backdrop for the upcoming programming section.

Upcoming Programming October - December 2022

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Oct. 29th | "Transforming the Three Poisons" with Tim Colohan |
| Nov. 12th | "Tusita Heaven Myth" Full Moon Meditation with Franz Manfredi |
| Nov. 19th | Emptiness Part 1: Entering Emptiness with Franz Manfredi |
| Dec. 4th | Sangha Celebration |
| Dec. 10th | Bodhi Day Full Moon Meditation with Franz Manfredi |
| Dec. 12th | Special guest Timber Hawkeye |

Deep Welcome

We often hear the word “Welcome.” Welcome home, welcome back, welcome to visitors and so on. But, what does it mean to feel welcome in a place or group? I feel welcomed when I sense that I belong. When I can bring my whole self and know that I will be accepted. Here at Long Beach Meditation (LBM) participants arrive with varied experiences of belonging and acceptance in the world. We arrive with a multitude of expectations and hopes for what will transpire when we are together.

At LBM we invite you to show up with your full selves, the happy and the anxious self. The inquiring self and the self that knows. When we practice together, with Right Intention, we are building a safe and accepting sangha that allows us to grow together in the dharma. We welcome your questions and sharings. We welcome your presence virtually and in-person. Know that your presence in-person or on a Zoom screen is supportive of all in attendance. You showing up is a “welcome” to others. You have accepted the invitation to be a part of the sangha.

What do you require in order to feel fully welcome in the world? Chances are others need the same thing. Though we may come from different socio-economic, racial, ethnic, or age groups we are more alike than we are different.

We share the desire to be free.
We share the desire to be safe
and loved.



We have a desire for wisdom. We welcome all of that. Know that when we practice together at LBM you are fully welcomed and fully accepted. It is said that “In every generation there will be those with little dust in their eyes” and they will seek out the dharma. You are that person and we are happy to be on this path with you. And know that you are so very welcome and accepted.

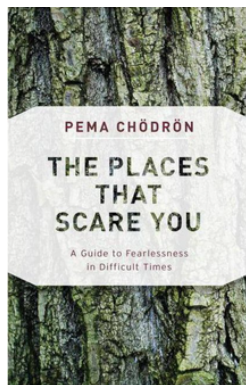
With Metta,

Valerie Cusson



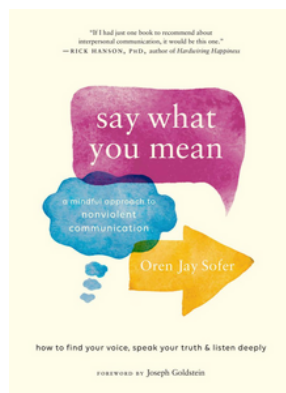
LBM Book Club

The Long Beach Meditation Center book club began in September 2021, as members of the sangha gathered on Zoom to discuss *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*, by Buddhist nun Pema Chodron. We explored what it means to be a warrior for compassion, learning about the tools and concepts to open our hearts and be vulnerable, to experience pain and fear, and to practice the loving kindness and compassion that lead to joy. We struggled with understanding the practice of tonglen, which is taking in the pain and suffering of others while sending out happiness to all beings; and we pondered the paradox of groundlessness leading to a firmer understanding of how fleeting our lives are. The book club has led to stronger relationships with fellow members of the sangha, as well as a deeper knowledge of basic (and more advanced) principles of meditation.



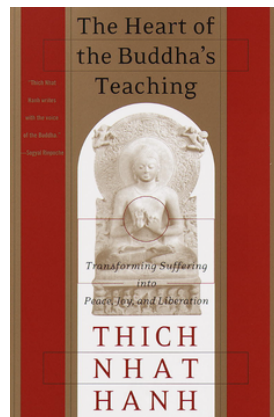
We enjoyed the book club's second selection, *Say What You Mean: A Mindful Approach to Nonviolent Communication*, by Oren Jay Sofer.

This book is grounded in three distinct streams of practice: mindfulness (specifically the texts and practices of Theravada Buddhist tradition); the system of Nonviolent Communication developed by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg; and a therapeutic technique designed by Dr. Peter A. Levine called Somatic Experiencing, which emphasizes the role of nervous system regulation in resolving trauma. We explored opportunities to



practice the three main steps to creating effective conversation: to lead with presence (mindfulness), come from curiosity and care (intention), and focus on what matters (attention).

In September 2022, the book club began reading *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation*, by Thich Nhat Hanh. We are joined once a month by LBM's own Franz Manfredi, who shares his knowledge and understanding to enrich our experience. Co-facilitator Alma Castro says her favorite thing about the book club is "The growing number of regular book club members! Every two weeks I get to hear and learn from others. I've spent countless



hours sitting next to many individuals who attend the book club, there's something special about that. I believe it has laid the foundation of why the book club keeps on growing, we all share this common experience." We welcome anyone who wishes to join this warm community to learn and share together.

By Wendy Danbury



SAVE THE DATE: Sangha Celebration

Sunday, December 4, 2022



Immediately following the Sunday Sit and Dharma Talk with Jokai Roshi, LBM invites you to a Sangha Celebration with food and music, a chance to say hello to old friends and meet new ones. Please RSVP online.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

An outpouring of gratitude to our generous sustaining members, who keep Long Beach Meditation afloat through thick and thin. We just wouldn't be without you.

This quarterly newsletter is our offering in parallel, with news, events, and feature articles written by our teachers and fellow sangha members. We hope it will cast a glimmer of light and joy into your daily routine. May we all meet again soon on the cushion!



SAVE THE DATE: Meditation for Beginners

January 2023 | Details: TBD



SAVE THE DATE: Beach Cleanup & Meditation

Saturday, January 21, 2023

9:30 - 10:00 AM at 1 Granda Ave.

After the cleanup, please join Franz Manfredi for a 30-minute meditation. Trash bags, gloves, and a water will be provided. Dogs are welcomed.





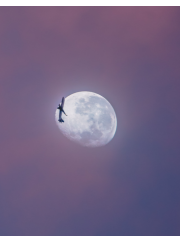
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**Sunday
Meditation**



**Monday
Meditation**



**Full Moon
Meditation**