

Sunday, Jan 30. (One week following General Meeting)

VB provided some background on what we were doing and why. The goal of the meeting? To nurture more connections between members and strengthen practice by inviting each of us to be involved in the life of the LBM ` Peggy presented the discussion topics - LOCATION, ACTIVITIES, INVOLVEMENT, CONNECTION -as an outgrowth of survey questions and Tricia distributed copies of the survey results.

Representing the “Visioning” committee, Wendy invited the sangha to actively engage in these topics as an expression of service. Service might include donations of time to sangha activities, outreach, money, or ideas. All form an essential part of practice.

LOCATION - Are you happy with Unity Church? If not, why not? Any suggestions?

There were a number of perspectives and opinions about Unity Church

- One person commented on the convenience / proximity
- A few mentioned that parking was often a challenge
- One individual compared the “energy in the space” to other meditation spaces with which she had experience. She was positive about Unity.
- One person mentioned that noise was a constant irritant.
- Another person mentioned (via Email) they did not mind the noise, it was “something to work with.”

A few comments indicated that movement to a new space would be a positive goal. However, the cost of a larger permanent space would require memberships or other means of raising money. The absence of a regular membership / fee structure at LBM is viewed positively by some folks who might otherwise feel excluded due to scarce financial resources. Dana is an important value for sangha members to keep in mind. The “fundraising” aspect is necessary for the financial health of the sangha. A few people commented that generosity and charity are part of the practice. Some members believe that people will do what they can, as they can.

ACTIVITIES Regardless of location, would you like additional sits per week? Would you consider yoga/meditation all-days or half days on a Saturday, at Unity or some other location?

Mention was made that there are a growing number of activities beyond regular Sunday sits: Weds. Evening study group Thurs. and Sat. AM beach sits, Omadawn collaboration

SOME IDEAS: Dharma education and teacher training would be positive. Folks other the VB should be able to lead beginner’s classes. Library needs organizing; Speakers committee—how many guests / who / when?

An important theme that seemed to develop was that of cultivating a “practice path to retreats.”

- A desire for a more structured, multi-session Beginner’s class experience was mentioned by several folks.
- One person suggested more teaching of “the basics”: “Dharma 101,” 4 Noble Truths, etc.
- Some desires a stronger focus on meditation practice
- For example, an intensive annual “refresher” period was suggested as a way for all to have the opportunity to re-visit and renew practice fundamentals
- (BY email) A 3 hour Saturday sit would be appreciated by at a few folks.

ACTIVITIES Continued

- Many folks do not have the confidence to do a one or three day retreat, need a more incremental build to that experience
- Distance to Rancho PV for retreats a concern for a few folks.
- “Mentors” in the sangha might make the experience less lonely or daunting for some.

In scheduling additional activities, the most practical challenge for an expanded practice schedule is logistics of scheduling. This applies both the Sangha members and teachers

INVOLVEMENT -What sort of committees would you like to see and/or be a part of: hospitality, technical support, "inreach" within the sangha, outreach to the community at large, plus anything else you can think of!

Several ideas and needs were raised around the areas outlined above. Committee sign-ups were posted on clipboards and circulated. AC members mentioned several of the ideas that had been presented on the survey, such as hospice outreach, school classes (such as that at CSULB).

Some additional ideas (such as an outreach to homeless folks, teen teaching, and family outreach) were mentioned. Members were invited to express their interest / vision for such activities to VB. AC mentioned that plans for these committees were not theoretical. Rather, there is a clear organizational plan now in place to capture volunteer desires and energy

CONNECTION - What way would you prefer to connect with the sangha outside of the scheduled meetings? Some suggestions: kirtan; poetry readings; potlucks. Be creative!

“ACTIVE” practices might include:

- Arts and meditation--One person had experience with Shambahla Arts
- Kirtan / chanting practices (suggestion by Wendy, follow-up Gerald)
- More yoga with meditation; mention was made of Omadawn evenings
- Seal Beach sit

More frequent potluck dinners were mentioned. People like to eat!

Connection can also be connection with other people and groups. For example, partnering with another group for activities (such as we do at Omadawn) is a clear possibility.