



Engaged Buddhist Election Retreats

www.electionretreat.org

Thank you for participating in our Letter Writing Retreat!

This packet contains:

- Retreat Schedule
- Retreat Guidelines
- Chants

- Letter writing Instructions
- List of Sample Reasons to Vote (“Wording on Letters”)
- Vote Forward Voter List
- 20 letters

- 20 envelopes (*we’ll need the rubber bands later, so save them!*)
- 20 stamps
- Manila return envelope

Please let us know right away if anything is missing. We will send you a Zoom link to the retreat a few days beforehand. See you soon!



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Letter Writing Retreat Schedule (Pacific Time)

- 9:45** Open Zoom meeting
- 10:00** Welcome, Introduction and Orientation by Retreat Host
- 10:25** Chant leader offers incense/flowers at altar
- 10:30** Zazen meditation (30 minutes)
- 11:00** Standing Chant: Metta Prayer
- 11:05** Dharma talk (25 minutes)
- 11:30** Discussion
- 11:40** Chant: Four Vows
- 11:45** Coordinator offers letter-writing Instructions
- 12:00** **Letter Writing, part 1 (50 minutes)**
- 12:50** **Pause, questions (10 minutes)**
- 1:00** **Letter Writing, part 2 (50 minutes)**
- 1:50** Coordinator offers instructions for returning letters to organizers
- 2:00** Zazen meditation (20 mins)
- 2:20** Chant: Three Refuges
- 2:25** Parting remarks and feedback
- 2:30** Social time

Total time 4.5 hours



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ONLINE LETTER-WRITING RETREAT GUIDELINES

The stakes in the General Election this November are higher than ever, as we face multiple overlapping crises: COVID-19, economic meltdown, systemic racism – and especially the appalling crisis of political leadership. Our retreats combine our Buddhist practice with political engagement, as we work together for change. Though we may not be able to meet in person, we devote ourselves today to a day of mindfulness, of focus, and of effort, as if we were practicing together in a zendo or temple.

1. Please clear your calendar for the entire four-and-a-half hours of the retreat. We suggest you let family and friends know that you'll be in a retreat during this period, and ask that they not disturb you.
2. You'll want to create a quiet place to sit. If possible, position your device so you can be seen during meditation, preferably in profile. It will be helpful for letter-writing if you lay out the packet of materials beforehand and clear a space for writing.
3. Using the Zoom link you received by email, try to join the retreat at about 9:45 a.m. Pacific (10:45 MDT, 11:45 CDT, 12:45 EDT) so we can all settle in before the retreat begins.
4. Please follow the schedule completely. It may be convenient to place the printed schedule next to your electronic device for easy reference. If you need to miss part of the retreat, please notify the Retreat Host, by using the chat window in the Zoom program. If you must leave the group temporarily, turn off your video or simply step out of the frame.
5. Please maintain silence except during chants and scheduled discussion times. Silence your cell phone. Please refrain from eating, except during breaks and letter writing (it may help to make a lunch beforehand).
6. Chant wholeheartedly along with the chant leader, even though you can't be heard by the rest of us. We can see you and feel your presence, and we support one another in this way.



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Letter Writing Retreat: Chants

Metta Prayer by Maylie Scott

May I be well, loving, and peaceful.

May all beings be well, loving, and peaceful.

May I be at ease in my body, feeling the ground beneath my seat and feet,
letting my back be long and straight, enjoying breath
as it rises and falls and rises.

May I know and be intimate with body mind, whatever its feeling or mood,
calm or agitated, tired or energetic, irritated or friendly, breathing in and out,
in and out, aware, moment by moment, of the risings and passings.

May I be attentive and gentle towards my own discomfort and suffering.

May I be attentive and grateful for my own joy and well-being.

May I move towards others freely and with openness.

May I receive others with sympathy and understanding.

May I move towards the suffering of others with peaceful and attentive
confidence.

May I recall the Bodhisattva of compassion: her 1,000 hands,
her instant readiness for action, each hand with an eye in it,
the instinctive knowing what to do.

May I continually cultivate the ground of peace for myself and others and persist,
mindful and dedicated to this work, independent of results.

May I know that my peace and the world's peace are not separate,
that our peace in the world is a result of our work for justice.

May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.

Four Vows

Beings are numberless;
I vow to awaken with them.
Delusions are inexhaustible;
I vow to end them.
Dharma gates are boundless;
I vow to enter them.
Buddha's way is unsurpassable;
I vow to become it.

Refuges

I take refuge in Buddha
I take refuge in Dharma
I take refuge in Sangha

I take refuge in Buddha as the perfect teacher
I take refuge in Dharma as the perfect teaching
I take refuge in Sangha as the perfect life

Now I have completely taken refuge in Buddha
Now I have completely taken refuge in Dharma
Now I have completely taken refuge in Sangha

Refuges (Pali)

Buddham saranam gacchami
Dhammam saranam gacchami
Sangham saranam gacchami

Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami
Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami
Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami
Tatiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami
Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami