



# Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 67 • Spring 2025

## An Invitation to Celebrate

— *Compassionate Ocean Turns 25* —

### January 2025 marks 25 years since Compassionate Ocean was founded.

This is an opportunity for us to pause, reflect, and celebrate the journey of our sangha and the many, many lives touched by our practice together. Throughout the coming year we will have special events to honor this milestone.

**You are warmly invited to join in.** Events throughout the year will celebrate the path that has brought us here, and the path that continues to unfold.

### Winter

***Buddhist Art Through the Ages: A Guided Tour***  
**Followed by Social Gathering with Refreshments**  
**MIA (Minneapolis Institute of Arts)**

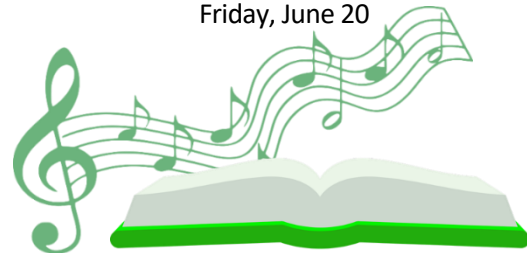
Saturday, April 5



### Spring

***Flowing Like a River***  
**An Evening of Music and Poetry**  
**Compassionate Ocean**

Friday, June 20



### Summer

***The Zen of Oz***  
**Presentation, Film, and Reception**  
**The Heights Theatre in Northeast Minneapolis**

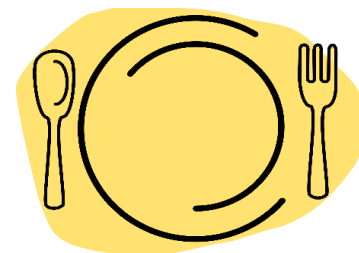
Sunday, August 3



### Fall

***25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala***  
**Community Banquet and Program**  
**Compassionate Ocean**

Saturday, October 4



Planning is in progress for these and other events throughout the year. Stay tuned for more information. Better yet, contact [admin@oceanzen.org](mailto:admin@oceanzen.org) and let our event planning team know you want to help.

# How can I help?

## Compassionate Ocean Zen Center invites

**you** to participate in one of the many wonderful and essential activities that support our practice and the activities of the Center. Behind-the-scenes activities enable our Center to function. Some activities require an ongoing commitment throughout the year, while others involve a one-time effort.

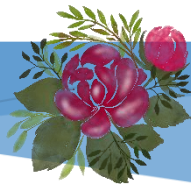
**To be a strong and successful sangha, we need the support of many beings.** We encourage you to select an activity that uses your talents and fits your schedule, and then get engaged!

Here are some of our immediate needs. Throughout the year, additional opportunities arise.

**Training is provided** for all these roles.

**If you are interested in participating, please email [admin@oceanzen.org](mailto:admin@oceanzen.org).**

## Help with Temple Flowers



It is our practice to keep fresh flowers on each altar in our temple as an offering to the Buddha, and also as a reminder of the impermanence of life. We are seeking one or two additional people to help with the flowers.

### Tasks:

- Purchase cut flowers for the altar (turn in the receipt to be reimbursed.)
- Arrange flowers and place them on the altars.
- Clean up.
- Check flowers on off weeks, removing dead blooms and topping off the water in the vases as needed.

### Time commitment:

We typically change flowers once every two weeks. Depending on how many helpers we have, you would be responsible for the flowers once every month or two. Purchasing and arranging flowers may take 1 to 2 hours.

No prior flower-arranging experience is required.

### Special perks:

Use your creativity! It's also a great opportunity to practice mindfulness.

## Become a Dōan

The dōan acts as timekeeper and sounds the bells that mark the beginning and end of each period of zazen (sitting meditation) and kinhin (walking meditation).

### Additional Tasks:

At our temple, the dōan also:

- unlocks the front door,
- greets people as they enter,
- leads opening and closing chants,
- makes announcements, and
- assists the teacher or speaker as needed.



### Time commitment:

We are seeking several people to serve as dōan for our ongoing Sunday morning services (about 8:45 – 11:15 AM). Depending on the number of people available, you might serve once or more a month.

We are also seeking doans for our weekday morning sittings and service, which goes from 7:00-8:15 AM. One doan would commit to most sessions of one weekday.

### Special perk:

You get to ring the bells!

## Host at an Open House

Compassionate Ocean periodically hosts open houses at the Center as well as information tables at community outreach events. Hosts provide information to people who express interest in our Center or in Zen.

### Tasks:

- Greet people, talk about the Center's programs, answer questions.
- Set up and set out flyers and other literature.

### Time commitment:

It depends on the event and how many helpers we have, but shifts are typically 2 to 4 hours. This role does not require an ongoing commitment.

### Special perks:

Meet people in the larger community and spend time with other sangha members serving as hosts.



# Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413  
(612) 781-7640 • OceanZen.org

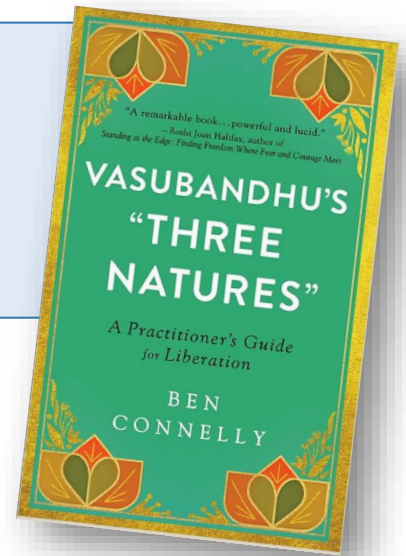
## Spring Programs 2025

# Three Natures

**Taught by Genpo Michael O’Neal, with Joen O’Neal**

*[The teaching of three natures] is intended to crack through every hardened way of seeing things the mind and heart can make. It is to turn the mundane into the wondrous, the tiny into the vast, the infinite into the immediate, the known into the inconceivable, and anguish into joy, peace, and compassion.*

—from Vasubandhu’s *“Three Natures”: A Practitioner’s Guide for Liberation*  
By Ben Connelly



This class examines the three natures, or three aspects of how we can experience our world— imaginary, dependent, and absolute—as described by the great fourth-century Buddhist teacher Vasubandhu. This teaching presents a way of taking care of our lives that can transform suffering in ourselves and in our communities.

The primary course text is *“Vasubandhu’s Three Natures: A Practitioner’s Guide to Liberation,”* by Ben Connelly, Assistant Guiding Teacher at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center. In his introduction, Connelly says, “The three natures provide an empowering model for understanding how we can practice freedom from harmful personal and family patterns, addiction, trauma, and systems of oppression; they show a path to personal and communal healing. They affirm agency...while relentlessly challenging tendencies to become prejudiced or stagnant.”



The class will be led by **Genpo O’Neal**, a Guiding Teacher of Compassionate Ocean and a Zen priest. **Joen O’Neal** will assist with the teaching. Ben Connelly has been invited to be a guest teacher at one of the classes.

**Wednesdays, April 2–May 21 (eight sessions) (#B113)  
7:00–9:00 P.M.**

*This course will be held in-person at the Center,  
with an option for remote participation via Zoom if requested.*

**Course fee: \$185 (\$165 members)**

*Please deduct \$15 if you already have a copy of the course text, Vasubandhu’s  
Three Natures by Ben Connelly.*

*Reduced fees are offered as needed; please contact the Center to discuss.*



[www.oceanzen.org/buddhist-studies](http://www.oceanzen.org/buddhist-studies)

## Introductory Program in Mindfulness

# Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

*This program is a comprehensive, well-structured introduction to mindfulness practice in everyday life.*

It follows the nationally-acclaimed MBSR model developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, presenting mindfulness as a universal practice for people of any (or no) religious background.

Skills are introduced in class, practiced at home, and integrated to form new habits. The program enables participants to develop their own base in mindfulness integrated into everyday life, using the practices of:

- sitting meditation
- gentle yoga
- body awareness meditation
- daily-life applications of mindfulness
- stress and relaxation practice

### What's included:

- an individual interview with the instructor
- eight two-and-a-half hour classes
- a six-hour Saturday retreat
- a copy of the book *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- four mp3 guided meditations
- weekly handouts

27 CEUs are available for nurses, social workers, educators, and psychologists.

The course fee is \$350, which includes the above materials. Gift Certificates are available. Payment plans and limited need-based support are also available. Please contact the Center to discuss.

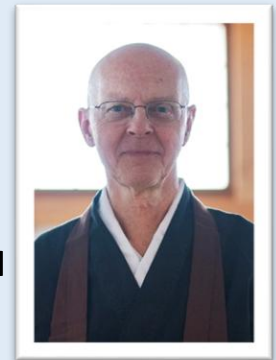
Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required.



**Tuesdays,**  
**April 1–May 20**  
**6:30–9:00 P.M.**  
(eight sessions) (#620)

**Instructor:**  
**Genpo Michael O'Neal**

*Genpo has been teaching this course since 1995.*



*This course will be offered in-person only.*

**Day of Mindfulness Retreat**  
**Saturday, May 10, 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.**

This retreat is part of the spring MBSR program and is included for all current participants in the MBSR course. It is also open to graduates of past Compassionate Ocean MBSR courses on a donation basis. People not enrolled in the current course should visit [oceanzen.org/retreats](http://oceanzen.org/retreats) to register.

### What past participants have said about our MBSR Program

*"I feel more relaxed and centered, more accepting of myself and others."*

*"The eight-week mindfulness class is an excellent way to both introduce and deepen this practice. It helped lower my stress and alleviate some pain issues. My mother was so impressed by the changes in me that she signed up too!"*

*"The meditation taught in this class is invaluable, ideally suited for those who are skeptical or new to meditation."*

*"Very, very meaningful and wonderful instructors and classmates. Life-changing experience."*

### Future MBSR Course Dates

- Summer course: June 10 – July 29
- Fall course: Sept. 23 - Nov. 11

[www.OceanZen.org/mindfulness](http://www.OceanZen.org/mindfulness)



## New to Zen?

*Newcomers are always welcome to participate; the boxed activities are especially for you!*

## Meditation & Dharma Talks

Most Sunday mornings throughout the year, Compassionate Ocean offers meditation practice (sitting and walking) followed by a Dharma talk and discussion. The talks focus on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Our practice is in the tradition of Soto Zen, with inspiration from the mindfulness practices of Thich Nhat Hahn. Everyone is invited to participate. There are no prerequisites or fees; donations are welcome. Sunday gatherings are co-led by Genpo and Joen O'Neal.

**Sundays, 9:00-11:15 A.M.**  
**(In-person and via Zoom)**

- 9:00 sitting
- 9:25 walking
- 9:35 sitting
- 10:00 dharma talk and discussion
- 11:15 ending



## Welcome Session for Newcomers

Guided meditation instruction and a Dharma talk oriented to those newer to Compassionate Ocean or Zen will be presented at these Sunday morning programs. These welcome sessions provide extra orientation and are a great time to bring a friend to attend the Sunday morning program for the first time. No pre-registration is necessary.

**(In-person and via Zoom)**

- **Sunday, Apr. 13, 9:00–11:15 A.M.**

## Intro to Zen Practice Mini-Course

This two-session introduction to Zen meditation and related practices is a starting point for those curious about or new to Zen. In it, guiding teacher Genpo O'Neal discusses Zen and its place in Buddhism and human life, answers questions about Compassionate Ocean Zen Center, and provides instruction in sitting meditation. The mini-course is in-person only. There is no fee.

- **Mondays, May 5-12, 7:00-9:00 P.M.**

**To register:**

[www.oceanzen.org/intro-to-zen](http://www.oceanzen.org/intro-to-zen)



## Weekday Morning Meditation

Five mornings a week, Compassionate Ocean hosts a forty-minute zazen (sitting meditation) period followed by a short chanting service. Everyone is invited to participate.

**Monday–Friday, 7:00–8:15 A.M.**  
**(In-person and via Zoom)**

- 7:00 zazen (sitting)
- 7:40 chanting service
- 8:00 temple cleaning
- 8:15 ending



## Weekend Sesshins (Retreats)

A *sesshin* (literally, “to gather the mind”) is a time when formal Zen practice is our primary focus. Sometimes these are informally called “retreats,” but in actuality they involve going forward into the heart of our lives. Each sesshin offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. Sesshins are led by Genpo and Joen O'Neal.

- **Friday, Mar. 28, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, Mar. 30, noon**
- **Friday, May 2, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, May 4, noon**
- **Friday, June 6, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, June 8, noon**

These weekend sesshins will include sitting and walking meditation, a Dharma talk, a work period, and an opportunity to meet with a teacher. Each weekend sesshin also includes four vegetarian meals.

**Fee:** by donation.

**To register:** [www.OceanZen.org/retreats](http://www.OceanZen.org/retreats)

## Annual Meeting

**Sunday, Apr. 27, 9:00 A.M.** *This will be in place of our usual Sunday morning program.*

Our Annual Meeting is an opportunity for all who are interested in the well-being of Compassionate Ocean to reflect on the state of our Center. Board members and our guiding teachers will review accomplishments from the past year, and board committees will report on finances and other important areas.

Sustaining Members of Compassionate Ocean will elect new members to the Board of Directors. There will also be an opportunity for everyone to share reflections, ideas, and aspirations for our Center. Following the meeting everyone is invited to stay for brunch. You can also attend via Zoom.

## Become a Member



*You are invited to become a **Sustaining Member of Compassionate Ocean.***

Sustaining membership donations provide foundational support for the principles, practices, and community that make up our Center. Sustaining membership provides the largest single source of financial support for Compassionate Ocean, and makes it possible for our activities to continue and to be widely affordable.

Becoming a member is easy! Just complete an online pledge form at [www.OceanZen.org/membership](http://www.OceanZen.org/membership).



## Art-A-Whirl Weekend: Open House

Compassionate Ocean will be having an Open House on Art-a-Whirl weekend, **Friday, May 16–Sunday, May 18.**

Located in the heart of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District, Compassionate Ocean will be open to members of the public during this fun but frenetic weekend, providing a moment of peace, a chance to see our building, and an opportunity to learn about our practice.

**We are seeking volunteers for Art-a-Whirl weekend**—to help clean the building (before and after the event), greet and guide guests, and answer questions about our building, our programs, and Zen practice. Support will be provided. Email the Center for more information.



***Make Compassionate Ocean a part of your Art-A-Whirl plans! Stop in while you're out enjoying Minneapolis's Arts District or email [admin@oceanzen.org](mailto:admin@oceanzen.org) to volunteer at our Open House.***

## Thank You!

We are **deeply grateful** to all who contributed to our 2024 Year End Appeal. **Over \$30,000 was donated** to help make it possible for us to offer space and programs that support our mission of cultivating full engagement with life-as-it-is, for the benefit of all.

## Guiding Teachers



Joen O'Neal and Genpo Michael O'Neal are the Guiding Teachers of Compassionate Ocean Zen Center. They practiced and taught for many years at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Hokyoji Zen Monastery under the guidance of Dainin Katagiri Roshi. They have also practiced with Thich Nhat Hanh in France and the United States, and completed an MBSR training for professionals with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Both Joen and Michael are Zen priests.

*The Guiding Teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, call the Center.*