**Fireweed Sangha of Mindful Living**

**Bell Minding Guide**

Note to Bell Minder: Text in ***bold italics*** is to be read out loud to the sangha. The rest is informational for you to read silently to yourself. Before practice, please also read the final page of this guide, which summarizes the role of the Bell Minder.

**Order of Practice** Times are approximate, use your judgement

6:30 to 6:50 INVITE THE BELL once to open practice

READ:

***“Welcome to the Fireweed Sangha of Mindful Living. My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ and I will serve as your Bell Minder this evening. We are a community of practice in the Thich Nhat Hahn tradition of Buddhism. Our Sangha is one of the three jewels of Buddhism that provide refuge and support on our path to enlightenment. These are: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The Buddha – my Buddha nature – is within me waiting to be born. The Dharma presents the teachings of the Buddha from which I might learn. The Sangha – our Sangha – is a lay learning community with no resident teacher. We learn from each other by sharing the experiences, insights, and readings that have been helpful to us in our personal practice. We begin with a 15 minute sitting meditation invited by three full sounds of the bell.”***

Begin Opening Meditation by awakening the bell and inviting three times. Close in the same fashion. The bell minding gathas may be read out loud or recited silently.

6:50 to 7:05 READ: ***“Now is time for the ‘Check-In.’ This allows our*** (15 minutes)  ***Sangha community to connect and nurture one another’s***

***Practice through sharing a sentence or so about your practice. Please keep it succinct so that we have time for a good dharma discussion and meditation later in tonight’s practice. When your turn comes, you may pass if you like but please at least tell us your name. To check in:***

* ***Bow in to begin***
* ***Speak so others may hear (measured & audible)***
* ***State your name***
* ***Briefly share a thought or experience of which you are mindful***
* ***Bow out to finish***
* ***Take one full breath before the next person speaks”***

7:05 to 7:15 GENTLE TRANSITION to Walking Meditation (silent if

(10 minutes) possible, give a nod or eye contact to the walking leader)

7:15 to 7:45 GENTLE TRANSITION to Dharma Reading (silent if possible)

(30 minutes)

1. Dharma Reading
2. Dharma Rules
3. Dharma Discussion

7:45 to 7:50 GENTLE TRANSITION to final Sitting Meditation

(~5 minutes) Look to the Dharma Reader to confirm end of the discussion. Thank the reader and explain final meditation. Open and close with three invitations of the bell. This may be very short, perhaps just the bells with a few breaths between.

7:50 to 7:55 LOVING REMEMBRANCE

(5 minutes) Invite participants to share the names of those in need of loving kindness and compassion. When finished:

“***May all beings be happy, may all beings be free from harm, may all beings be well, may all beings live in peace”*** INVITE THE BELL once to close

7:55 to 7:58 HOUSKEEPING

1. Welcome new members: “***Welcome to all of our new members and visitors. If you did not get a welcome information sheet when you came in, you can find that on the piano after practice. If you would like to join our email list and receive weekly reminders for practice as well as occasional announcements, please write your email on the sign-in sheet on the piano.”***
2. Donations: ***“There is also a donation basket on the corner of the piano next to the door. Sangha donations go to support use of the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship space and pay for our meeting needs. They are completely voluntary.”***
3. Dharma Guide Volunteer

NOTE: The first week of every month, the volunteer will read the Five Mindfulness Trainings (copies already available in the folders on the bookcase)

1. Bell Minder Volunteer - remind the volunteer to connect with the Closing Steward to make sure we have their contact info and for any coaching/mentoring as appropriate
2. Walking Meditation Volunteer
3. Opener (must be at least one Steward) – arrives about 6pm to open the building and begin setting up
4. Closer (must be at least one Steward) – closes up the building, collects the role assignments and contact info from volunteers and coaches the bell minder volunteer
5. Announcements

7:58 to 8:00 CLOSING: Invite members to stretch & stand then read in the following order:

1. ***“We bow to our Sangha honoring the Buddha in each of us.”***
2. ***“We turn to the Buddha figure & bow, honoring the wisdom of all our teachers.”***
3. Choose one of these options for Sharing the Merit:

**Option 1**

***“May the benefit of our practice tonight serve to alleviate the suffering of everyone in this Sangha, and of all beings, everywhere.”***

**Option 2**

***“May we be filled with loving kindness.***

***May we be free from suffering.***

***May we find joy.***

***May we be well.***

***May we find peace.”***

**About the Bell Minder Role**

The Bell Minder is the facilitator of the order of practice. Bell Minders do not lead discussion or moderate. They make space for others with minimal speaking and their skill in holding the space for meditation, the Dharma Reader, and the Leader of Walking Meditation. There are 8 primary duties of the Bell Minder:

1. Begin the opening Sitting Meditation (15 minutes).
2. Invite participants to “Check In” after the opening meditation.
3. Hold a silent space for Walking Meditation.
4. Hold a silent space for Dharma Reading & Discussion.
5. Transition to the final silent, reflective Sitting Meditation.
6. Invite participants to embrace the suffering of people in need of loving kindness.
7. Open the “housekeeping” discussion.
8. Conclude practice with a sharing of the merit.