

# Meditation Medley Retreat at MORSL Monday March 3

## Synopsis of Event

Have you been curious about meditation but feeling lost amid the wide range of styles and traditions? Are you looking to carve out some time to reset and incorporate some inner wellness habits into your routine? Join us for a mini half-day retreat at MORSL to sample a few techniques and approaches that we hope will help you invite meditation into your life. Each practice will be introduced and facilitated by one of MORSL's presenters, with time to debrief after each exercise. Participants will have a chance to explore additional resources and craft a personal plan based on needs and preferences.

## Format

This is a hybrid event. A limited number of in-person spots are available for students who are able to participate at MORSL, on the downtown campus. Registration is required, and once capacity is reached, you may request to be wait-listed or you can register as a remote participant via zoom (synchronous).

- Register to attend **in-person** on [the myinvolvement event](#) if you'd like an in-person spot. Registration is required, and once capacity is reached, you may request to be wait-listed or you can register as a remote participant via zoom (synchronous). The event will not be recorded for privacy reasons.
- Register to attend **online** through the "[Meditation Medley: A Half-day Retreat at MORSL](#)" Virtual Attendee Registration Form. We will send you a reminder and Zoom link via email.

### *Good to know*

- Over the 3-hour retreat, there will be several short breaks, and light refreshments will be offered for in-person participants.
- Note that we will be sitting on the floor and standing at times, so clothing should be loose enough to allow for comfortable movement.
- You will need to remove your footwear (you can keep your socks on) and leave your boots, coats and bags such as backpacks in the cloakroom (in-person participants).

## Location of in-person event

3610 rue McTavish, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (Rooms 36-2 & 36-3)

The building is on the corner of McTavish and Dr Penfield. When walking up McTavish, cross Dr. Penfield and continue further a bit. The entrance is on the left, and is set back a bit from the sidewalk. You can find more info on our [Contact page](#) with some visual aids, and further details if you open up the Accessibility tab (+).

Maps - [Campus map](#) | [Google map](#)

**Contact for inquiries:** Carlene Gardner, [carlene.gardner@mcgill.ca](mailto:carlene.gardner@mcgill.ca) or 514-398-1932 (office)

## Event Program

Session	Leader	Description
9:30 – 10:00 AM	Carlene Gardner, MORSL (in person)	Welcome/Registration and light breakfast; zoom room opens at 9:50 AM
10:00 – 10:15 AM	MORSL (all)	Opening of retreat with round table introductions of presenters and participants (in person and online)
10:15 -10:45 AM	Milda Graham	<b>Yogic Meditation</b> A seated meditation on cushion or chair, no prior experience assumed or required. After initially engaging the body to enhance seated meditation posture with comfort, pranayama, a breath awareness practice, will be introduced. This practice cultivates a more interiorized state, preparing the mind for the formal meditation session. Shifts of the body may occur as participants settle in, and guidance is provided towards progressively longer periods of group silence and stillness.
10:55 – 11:20 AM	Jonathan Stewart	<b>Meditation for any spiritual path: the Gnostic approach</b> Discover how insights from the ancient and suppressed religion of Gnosticism can guide meditation and contemplative practice for any spiritual path (or no spiritual path for any agnostics and atheists who meditate or want to start meditating). We won't be doing any specific "Gnostic meditations" but instead going over and practicing some basic contemplative and meditative practices using the lens of Gnosticism.
11:30 – 11:50 AM	Nicholas McCorrister	<b>Metta Meditation</b> Metta or “loving kindness” meditation is a practice that cultivates compassion and goodwill towards ourselves and others.
12:00 – 12:20 PM	Khoa Duong	<b>Mindful Eating</b> People often think of meditation as sitting quietly on a cushion, immobilized like a statue. However, meditation should be an integral part of our life, as lively as possible. To meditate-in-action is to maintain awareness and mindfulness in the continuous and daily activities. Practicing mindfulness is like turning on the headtorch as we go on our path. Mindfulness can act as an energy source that could illuminate our living, helping us to see the beauty in the ordinary and to protect us from accident and downfall. In this session, I invite you all to practice <i>Mindful Eating</i> . We will spend about 12 minutes to eat one raisin or one orange clove together (yes, the whole 12 minutes only for an orange clove.) We will spend the rest of time to share our experience.
12:20 – 12:40 PM	Facilitator Panel: Milda, Jonathan, Nicholas, Khoa	Reflections on the experience of sharing in others’ meditative practices, with participant Q&A and group discussion. Moderator: Carlene Gardner
12:40 – 1:00 PM	Closing Activity	Sharing resources and time to craft a personal plan to invite meditation into our lives moving forward.

Please note that there will be a 10-minute break between the practices to allow for transition.

## Presenter Bios

**Milda Graham, B.A. Religious Studies**, is MORSL's Yoga and Meditation Workshop Facilitator. She was motivated by the performance and teaching of these practices to return to university. She is pursuing an MA in Religious Studies here at McGill, with a focus on yoga, Hinduism and Sanskrit.

**Rev. Deacon Jonathan Stewart** is our Gnostic Faith liaison. He's volunteer clergy for the Gnostic and mystical Apostolic Johannite Church's Montreal community. Originally from Canada's East Coast he lives in Montreal working as a freelance writer and as professional Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction facilitator and mindfulness coach. Meditation is a particular interest of Jonathan's and he's been meditating in both Buddhist and Christian traditions since he was a teen; this has come in handy as he married a Buddhist and is happy to have common ground in his interfaith marriage. Outside of his specific Christian Gnostic denomination, he's interested in the mystic traditions of all faiths and is happy to be a resource for any student in regards to both mysticism and meditation regardless of one's beliefs or lack thereof.

**Nicholas McCorrister** is a U3 International Development Student. He is half Canadian and half Colombian, and grew up in the tiny Southeast Asian nation of Brunei. Nicholas is interested in East Asian religions, meditation and mindfulness, and plant medicine. He coordinates and facilitates the McGill Meditation Club, and is also a Conversation Partners Program volunteer with MORSL.

**Khoa Duong, MD MPH MHPE**, is a medical doctor and educator from Vietnam currently pursuing a PhD in Health Sciences Education at McGill's Institute of Health Sciences Education. His research focus is how to train physicians to be *health advocates* for their patients and the communities they serve. He practices Zen Buddhism in the tradition of [Plum Village](#) and Vietnamese Mahayana Buddhism, and is a member of the Order of Interbeing. His root teacher is Thích Nhất Hạnh (often called *thầy*), and is grateful for all the traditions of Buddhist teachings from the time of Siddhartha to all the teachers and realized practitioners.

**Carlene Gardner, B.A., MATL**, is a life-long Unitarian-Universalist with more than 15 years' experience in youth and young adult programming. As Director of [MORSL](#), she develops educational and experiential programs, fosters partnerships with religious and spiritual groups on and off campus and advocates for cultures of inclusion for students of all religious, spiritual and secular identities. She is currently furthering her research into young adult spirituality as a PhD student in contemporary religious studies at Université de Sherbrooke, and is active in climate chaplaincy communities of practice.



## Resources

### *Recommended reading/websites*

- Kempton, Sally. (2011). *Meditation for the Love of It: Enjoying Your Own Deepest Experience*.
- Shankarananda Swami. (2013). *Happy For No Good Reason: A Meditators Guide*. Shaktipat Press.  
<https://ebook.yourcloudlibrary.com/library/oclc/detail/7an989>
- Vivekananda. (1973). *Rāja-yoga* (Rev. ed). Ramakarishna-Vivekananda Center.(originally published 1896)
- Mindful Eating: <https://plumvillage.org/mindfulness/mindfulness-practice#eating>
- Art of Mindful Living: <https://plumvillage.org/mindfulness/mindfulness-practice>
- MORSL [Guide to Meditation in Various Faith Traditions](#)
- Apostolic Johannite Church (Gnostic community) <https://www.johannite.org/>

### *Video and Audio Resources*

- MORSL Meditation Techniques class ([recordings](#))
- [Controlled Breathing and Visualization \(approx. 23 minutes\)](#)
- [Meditation for stress reduction \(approx. 25 minutes\)](#)
- [Guided Meditation on Loving Kindness \(approx. 13 minutes\)](#)
- Short yogic breaks [MORSL YouTube](#)

### *Groups and spaces for in-person practice*

- [McGill Meditation Club](#) at MORSL, Tuesdays 5-6pm
- [Quaker midweek meeting](#) at MORSL, Wednesdays 4:30 – 5:30pm
- [Montreal Meditation](#), check website for next series of classes
- [MORSL meditation and prayer space](#), 10AM – 4PM weekdays

### *MORSL's in-house library collection (on site use only)*

- Sit Like a Buddha; A Pocket Guide to Meditation
- Sitting Still Like a Frog; Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and their parents)
- Stoicism and the Art of Happiness
- The Buddha Walks into a Bar...
- The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan
- The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World; God Is Not One
- The Experience of Insight; A Simple & Direct Guide to Buddhist Meditation
- The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion
- The Mindfulness Prescription for Adult ADHD
- The Miracle of Mindfulness
- The Morning Star; New and Selected Zen Writings
- The Pocket Book of Positives
- The Poetry of Impermanence, Mindfulness and Joy
- The Posture of Meditation
- The Spade Sage; A Story about Finding Happiness
- The Teaching of Buddha
- The Three Pillars of Zen; Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment
- The Way to Freedom, Core Teachings of Tibetan Buddhism
- The Wise Heart; A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology
- Words Have No Meaning
- Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind