



Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

Ajahn Kumāro Bhikkhu, Resident Monastic
122 Arlington Street, Unit B, Asheville, NC 28801
Elisha Buhler's telephone #: (910) 922-1549
website: mittameditation.com
email: mittameditation@gmail.com

May 2024 Newsletter



Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī)

The perfections (pāramīs) are a set of ten virtues that are cultivated in order to progress on the path to nibbāna, liberation from suffering (dukkha). An overview of the Ten Perfections are presented in the January 2024 Newsletter: The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī). The Ten Perfections (pāramīs) are:

1. Giving (dāna pāramī),
2. Virtue (sīla pāramī),
3. Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī),
4. Wisdom (paññā pāramī),
5. Energy (vīriya pāramī),
6. Patience (khanti pāramī),
7. Truthfulness (saccā pāramī),
8. Determination (adhiṭṭhāna pāramī),
9. Loving-Kindness (mettā pāramī), and
10. Equanimity (upekkhā pāramī).

The subject of this newsletter is on the Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī). The Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī) is discussed in the January 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī) is discussed in the February 2024 Newsletter, the Perfection of Renunciation (nekkhamma pāramī) is discussed in the March 2024 Newsletter, and the Perfection of Wisdom (paññā pāramī) is discussed in the April 2024 Newsletter. The next five newsletters will discuss the remaining perfections.

The Perfection of Energy is the practice of diligent and persistent effort to purify the mind of defilements (kilesa) and is related to Right Effort (sammā vāyāma), the sixth factor of the Noble Eightfold Path (ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga). The Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering. The function of Right Effort is to diminish and eliminate unwholesome (akusala) contents of mind, and to encourage the emergence and maintenance of wholesome (kusala) contents of mind. Right Effort is the arousal of energy (vīriya) to purify the mind of the root defilements: ignorance (avijjā), hatred (dosā) and greed (lobha). Energy (vīriya) is identical with effort (padhāna). Right Effort consists of generating the following four states of mind.

1. The effort to avoid unwholesome states of mind from arising (saṃvara padhāna).
2. The effort to overcome unwholesome states of mind that have arisen (pahāna padhāna).
3. The effort to cultivate wholesome states of mind (bhāvanā padhāna).
4. The effort to maintain wholesome states of mind that have arisen (anurakkhaṇa padhāna).

The following are examples of unwholesome states of mind.

• Wrong Views (micchādiṭṭhi)

1. Eternalism (sassatadiṭṭhi) asserts the existence of an eternal and unchanging self or soul, as well as the following beliefs:
 - Eternalism is the belief in the existence of a self, ego-entity, soul, or a personality existing independently of those physical and mental processes stated as the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) of Existence, and continuing after death eternally. The Five Aggregates are the following.

- i. Material Form (rūpa khandha),
 - ii. Mental Formations (saṅkhāra khandha),
 - iii. Perceptions (saññā khandha),
 - iv. Feelings (vedanā khandha), and
 - v. Sense Consciousness (viññāṇa khandha).
- Eternalism is also the belief in a permanent heaven or hell, where souls will be rewarded or punished.
 - Creationism (Issara nimmāna diṭṭhi) is the view that a creator god exists and is responsible for the creation and control of the universe. This view contradicts the Buddha's teachings on causality (idappaccayatā) and Dependent Origination (paticcasamuppāda). Dependent Origination is discussed in the July 2023 Newsletter.
2. Annihilationism (ucchedadiṭṭhi) asserts that death results in the complete annihilation of the self, ego-entity or personality, denying any form of continued existence after death. This view denies the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, death and rebirth (saṃsāra).
 3. Personality Belief (sakkāyadiṭṭhi or sakkāyavāda) is one aggregate or a combination of all Five Aggregates is a permanent entity or self (atta or atman). The Personality Belief or Ego Illusion (attadiṭṭhi) is of two kinds: Eternalism and Annihilationism.
 4. Wrong Views with Fixed Evil Destiny (niyatamicchādiṭṭhi)
 - Moral Nihilism (natthikadiṭṭhi or natthikavāda) is the view that all moral values are baseless, there are no corresponding result of wholesome or unwholesome actions; that after death no further life would follow, that the Five Aggregates at death would become dissolved into the elements; that nothing is knowable or can be communicated; and that life itself is meaningless. This view is closely aligned with Materialism (sārīkadiṭṭhi), the view that physical existence and material possessions are the ultimate reality, and there is no transcendental dimension or significance to life.
 - Inefficacy of Action (akiriyaḍḍhi or akiriyaḍḍhi) is the view that denies the efficacy of moral actions, asserting that ethical conduct has no impact on one's well-being or future existence; no effort or striving is necessary for spiritual progress, suggesting that liberation can be achieved without practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. This view holds the belief that there is no such thing as kamma, the law of cause and effect.
 - Fatalism (ahetukadiṭṭhi or ahetukavāda) is the view that existence happens due to fate, destiny or external forces; there is no cause for the unwholesome and wholesome states of mind. This view undermines the importance of moral conduct and personal responsibility.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Note 165 ... It seems, though, that the term micchādiṭṭhi is used in the Nikāyas solely in relation to three views: moral nihilism, the doctrine of non-doing, and the doctrine of non-causality (natthikavāda, akiriyaḍḍhi, ahetukavāda).

- Delusion (moha) is ignorance (avijjā) or confusion about the true nature of reality and is an unwholesome state of mind.
 - Ignorance of The Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca):
 1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) is discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter.
 2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya) is discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter.
 3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha) is discussed in the April 2023 Newsletter.
 4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga) is discussed in the May 2023 Newsletter
 - Ignorance of The Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa):
 1. Impermanence (anicca),

2. Unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and

3. Not-self (anatta).

The Three Characteristics of Existence is discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).

- The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) are obstacles for concentration and a peaceful mind, and are unwholesome states of mind.

1. Sensual Desire (kāmacchanda),

2. Ill Will (vyāpāda),

3. Sloth and Torpor (thīnamiddha),

4. Restlessness and Remorse (uddhaccakukkucca), and

5. Doubt (vicikicchā).

See the September 2023 Newsletter-Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā) for a detailed discussion.

- The Ten Fetters (samyojana) that tie beings to the cycle of existence (saṃsāra) and prevent the realization of the transcendental reality nibbāna, and are unwholesome states of mind.

1. Personality Belief (sakkāya diṭṭhi),

2. Doubt (vicikicchā),

3. Clinging to Rites and Rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa),

4. Sensual Desire (kāma rāga),

5. Ill Will (vyāpāda),

6. Craving for Existence in the Form World, fine material existence (rūpa rāga),

7. Craving for Existence in the Formless World, immaterial existence (arūpa rāga),

8. Conceit (māna),

9. Restlessness (uddhacca), and

10. Ignorance (avijjā).

The Four Noble Disciples (ariya-sāvaka) have realized to some extent the transcendental reality nibbāna.

1. Streamwinner (sotāpanna) is free from fetters 1-3.

2. Once Returner (sakadāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-3 and has overcome 4 and 5 in their grosser form.

3. Non-Returner (anāgāmi) is free from fetters 1-5.

4. Perfect Holy One (arahat) is free from all 10 fetters.

- The Ten Kammically Unwholesome Actions (akusala kamma or akusala kammapha) result in suffering for oneself and others, and are unwholesome states of mind.

1. Killing (pāṇātipātā),

2. Stealing (adinnādānā),

3. Sexual Misconduct and unwholesome conduct in regard to sense pleasures (kāmesu micchācārā),

4. Lying (musāvādā),

5. Slandering Speech (pisuṇāya vacāya),

6. Harsh Speech (pharusāya vacāya),

7. Idle Chatter (samphappalāpā),

8. Covetousness (anabhijjhā),

9. Ill Will (abyāpāda), and

10. Wrong Views (micchādiṭṭhi).

- Wrong Intention (micchā-saṅkappa) are unwholesome states of mind.

1. Thoughts of craving and attachment to sense pleasures,

2. Thoughts of ill will, and

3. Thoughts of cruelty.

See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion of Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa).

- Shamelessness (ahirika) is lack of shame or lack of moral conscience and a disregard for the consequences of unskillful and unwholesome actions; the absence of disgust at physical or verbal misconduct. Shamelessness is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Fearlessness of Wrongdoing (anottappa) is the absence of moral apprehension or fear of the consequences of unskillful and unwholesome actions. Fearlessness of Wrongdoing is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Attachment to Rituals and Observances (sīlabbata parāmāsa) is the view that rituals (animal sacrifices, ablutions, chanting, etc.), belief in a god (issara nimmāna) that responds to requests, and observing the external form of moral precepts without internalizing them (i.e., moral precepts are not ingrained in the mind's nature), will result in liberation nibbāna. The Buddha taught that wisdom (paññā) is the most important quality that purifies the mind of defilements (kilesa) which results in the realization of nibbāna. Attachment to Rituals and Observances is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Envy (issa) is jealousy or resentment towards others' achievement, success, wealth, or good fortune. Envy is an unwholesome state of mind.
- Stinginess or Miserliness (macchariya) is being possessive or selfish, unwilling to share or be generous. Stinginess is an unwholesome state of mind.

The following are examples of wholesome states of mind.

- Affirmation of Existence (atthikadiṭṭhi or atthikavāda) is the view that moral values exist in the cycle of existence (saṃsāra), there are corresponding results for wholesome or unwholesome actions; and that after death there is rebirth for those who have not realized nibbāna. Affirmation of Existence is a wholesome state of mind.
- Right View (sammā-diṭṭhi) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path defined as the realization of the Four Noble Truths (ariya catusacca) and is a wholesome state of mind.
 1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha),
 2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya),
 3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha), and
 4. The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga).

See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- The Ten Kammically Wholesome Actions (kusala kamma or kusala kammapatha) result in wholesome states of mind.
 1. Generosity (dāna maya),
 2. Morality (sīla maya),
 3. Meditation (bhāvanā maya),
 4. Respectfulness (apacāyana),
 5. Service (veyyāvacca),
 6. Sharing of Merit (patti dāna),
 7. Rejoicing in the Merit of Others (pattānumodana),
 8. Listening to the Dhamma (dhamma savana),
 9. Teaching the Dhamma (dhamma desanā), and
 10. Straightening of Views (diṭṭhi'jju kamma).
- Right Intention (sammā-saṅkappa) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path and are wholesome states of mind.
 1. Thoughts of renunciation and detachments to sense pleasures (nekkhamma vitakka),
 2. Thoughts of non-ill will (abyāpāda vitakka), and
 3. Thoughts of non-cruelty (avihiṃsā vitakka).

See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, is a wholesome state of mind, and may be developed in the following four contemplations.

1. Mindful contemplation of the body (kāyānupassanā),
2. Mindful contemplation of feelings (vedanā sañña),
3. Mindful contemplation of the mind (citta sañña), and
4. Mindful contemplation of mind-objects or dhammas (dammā sañña).

See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.

- Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi) is a factor of the Noble Eightfold Path defined as the four stages of absorption (rupa jhāna) and are wholesome states of mind. See the May 2023 Newsletter - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering for a discussion on this path factor.
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment (bojjhaṅga) are wholesome states of mind.
 1. Mindfulness (sat),
 2. Investigation of Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya),
 3. Energy (vīriya),
 4. Joy (pīti),
 5. Tranquility (passaddhi),
 6. Concentration (sāmādhi), and
 7. Equanimity (upekkhā).
- Four Divine Abodes (brahmavihāra) are wholesome states of mind and have been discussed in the September 2023 Newsletter - Tranquility Meditation (samatha) and The Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇā).
 1. Loving-kindness (mettā) is the cultivation of unconditional love and goodwill towards all beings.
 2. Compassion (karuṇā) is empathy with others in their suffering; actively seeking ways to alleviate the pain and struggles of sentient beings.
 3. Sympathetic Joy (muditā) is the ability to rejoice in the success and happiness of others; their virtues and success. Sympathetic joy counters envy and jealousy, promoting a selfless and appreciative attitude towards the well-being of others.
 4. Equanimity (upekkhā) is maintaining mental balance and stability in the face of both pleasant and unpleasant experiences; an attitude of detached impartiality towards beings (not apathy or indifference).
- Generosity (dāna) is the practice of giving freely without attachment or expecting anything in return. Practicing generosity contributes to the reduction of the egoic personality, selfish desires and supports the experience of interconnectedness with others. Generosity is a wholesome state of mind and, has been discussed in the August 2022 Newsletter - The Practice of Generosity (dāna) and in the January 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Giving (dāna pāramī).
- Virtue (sīla) is adhering to ethical conduct and moral principles that does not cause harm to others, and results in a clear conscience and a peaceful mind. Virtue is a wholesome state of mind and, has been discussed in the November 2023 Newsletter - Peace (santi) and in the February 2024 Newsletter - Perfection of Virtue (sīla pāramī).
- Wisdom (paññā) is the cultivation of an understanding of the nature of reality. Wisdom arises through insight meditation (vipassanā) and contemplation on the Three Characteristics of Existence (tilakkhaṇa): impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and not-self (anatta). Wisdom is a wholesome state of mind and has been discussed in the October 2023 Newsletter - Insight Meditation (vipassanā).

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

141 Saccavibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Truths

29. "And what, friends, is right effort? Here a bhikkhu awakens zeal for the non-arising [anuppādāya] of unarisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the abandoning [pahānāya] of arisen evil unwholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the arising [uppādāya] of unarisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He awakens zeal for the continuance [thitiyā], non-disappearance, strengthening, increase,

and fulfillment by development of arisen wholesome states, and he makes effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. This is called right effort.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
48.10 (10) Analysis (2)

“And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of energy? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple dwells with energy aroused for the abandoning of unwholesome states and the acquisition of wholesome states; he is strong, firm in exertion, not shirking the responsibility of cultivating wholesome states. He generates desire for the nonarising of unarisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states, for their nondecay, increase, expansion, and fulfillment by development; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. This is called the faculty of energy.

The following sutta describes the importance of cultivating a ‘balance of energy’ and an ‘evenness of the spiritual faculties’. The Five Spiritual Faculties (indriya) are the following.

1. Faith (saddhā),
2. Energy (vīriya),
3. Mindfulness (sati),
4. Concentration (samādhi), and
5. Wisdom (paññā).

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
6.55 (1) Soṇa

“Soṇa, when you were alone in seclusion, didn’t the following course of thought arise in your mind: ‘I am one of the Blessed One’s most energetic disciples, yet my mind has not been liberated from the taints by non-clinging. Now there is wealth in my family, and it is possible for me to enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds. Let me then give up the training and return to the lower life, so that I can enjoy my wealth and do meritorious deeds?’”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“Tell me, Soṇa, in the past, when you lived at home, weren’t you skilled at the lute?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“What do you think, Soṇa? When its strings were too tight, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“When its strings were too loose, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“No, Bhante.”

“But, Soṇa, when its strings were neither too tight nor too loose but adjusted to a balanced pitch, was your lute well tuned and easy to play?”

“Yes, Bhante.”

“So too, Soṇa, if energy is aroused too forcefully this leads to restlessness, and if energy is too lax this leads to laziness. Therefore, Soṇa, resolve on a balance of energy, achieve evenness of the spiritual faculties, and take up the object there.”

“Yes, Bhante,” the Venerable Soṇa replied.

When the Blessed One had finished giving the Venerable Soṇa this exhortation, just as a strong man might extend his drawn-in arm or draw in his extended arm, he disappeared in the Cool Grove and reappeared on Mount Vulture Peak. Then, some time later, the Venerable Soṇa resolved on a balance of energy, achieved evenness of the spiritual faculties, and took up the object there. Then, dwelling alone, withdrawn, heedful, ardent, and resolute, in no long time the Venerable Soṇa realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the spiritual life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness, and having entered upon it, he dwelled in it. He directly knew: “Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.” And the Venerable Soṇa became one of the arahants.

The following sutta reveals the importance of energy or exertion in training the mind and equanimity (upekkhā) for the eradication of suffering.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi
101 Devadaha Sutta: At Devadaha

... 23. “And how is exertion fruitful, bhikkhus, how is striving fruitful? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is not overwhelmed with suffering does not overwhelm himself with suffering; and he does not give up the pleasure that accords with Dhamma, yet he is not infatuated with that pleasure.⁹³² He knows thus: ‘When I strive with determination, this particular source of suffering fades away in me because of that determined striving; and when I look on with equanimity, this particular source of suffering fades away in me while I develop equanimity.’⁹³³ He strives with determination in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him because of that determined striving; and he develops

equanimity in regard to that particular source of suffering which fades away in him while he is developing equanimity. When he strives with determination, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him because of that determined striving; thus that suffering is exhausted in him. When he looks on with equanimity, such and such a source of suffering fades away in him while he develops equanimity; thus that suffering is exhausted in him.

Notes:

932 This is a formulation of the Buddha's Middle Way, which avoids the extreme of self-mortification without falling into the other extreme of infatuation with sensual pleasure.

933 MA explains the source of suffering to be craving, so called because it is the root of the suffering comprised in the five aggregates. The passage shows two alternative approaches toward overcoming craving — one employing energetic striving, the other detached equanimity. The “fading away” of the source is identified by MA with the supramundane path. The passage is said to illustrate the practice of one who progresses on a pleasant path with quick direct knowledge (sukhapaṭipadā khippābhiññā).

The Perfection of Energy (vīriya pāramī) is balanced and assisted by the other perfections. The following are some examples in how energy is balanced.

- Effort (vīriya) is balanced by the Perfection of Truthfulness (sacca pāramī) as being truthful to oneself and with others generates the motivation and energy to continue on the path.
- Effort is balanced by the Perfection of Patience (khanti pāramī), which helps endure challenges and setbacks without losing motivation, becoming discouraged or giving up. Patience allows individuals to sustain their efforts over the long term.

Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planning to attend at www.MeetUp.com. Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at www.google.com/maps.

Activities of the Meditation Center

- Sitting meditation is held everyday at 6:30AM and 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl.

Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.

- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.