

# A compassionate mind, peaceful life

## Vietnamese Buddhist temple opens in Iroquois Park

**Savannah Eadens** Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A new place of worship is meeting the needs of Louisville's growing Buddhist community and serving as a center for preserving Vietnamese culture, language and faith for the hundreds of immigrants who have made Louisville home over the years.

The new Buddha Blessed Temple, 7748 Third Street Road in the Iroquois neighborhood, will fill the demand for "spiritual inclination in our community," said the Rev. Thich Hang Dat, a monk who founded the organization that built the 14,000-square-foot temple.

And while the center is targeting the Vietnamese population in Louisville, it will be a space for everyone, Dat said, regardless of nationality, race or gender.

"Our temple is for refugees, immigrants and everyone that practices spirituality and meditation," Dat said. "This Buddhist temple is for the whole Louisville community."

While Buddhism is a minority among faith practices in Louisville, its followers are growing, said Hung Le, a member of Louisville's Vietnamese community board and a retired pilot who served with the South Vietnamese military alongside the U.S. in the Vietnam War.

Growing so much that the Dalai Lama visited Louisville in 2013 and spoke to a crowd of 16,000 at the KFC Yum



**Buddhist monks from around the world gathered at the new Buddha Blessed Temple on Third Street Road in Louisville for the grand opening ceremonies on Sept. 1. Nearly 700 people attended the temple's opening.**

Center.

For many Vietnamese immigrants, like Le, who have been in the U.S. for several decades, the new temple provides a foundation to celebrate their culture and faith, and pass it down to newer generations of Vietnamese families, he said.

The temple opened Sept. 1, when beneath the unrelenting summer heat, hundreds of shoes piled on the concrete steps outside the Vietnamese temple, the largest in the Midwest.

Nearly 700 people gathered to celebrate the grand opening in an ornate ceremony that included the River Lotus Lion Dance, group prayers by several monks, a Vietnamese flower offering and a speech from Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer and U.S. Attorney Russell Coleman.

Coleman used the religious opening ceremony to make a plea to Louisville residents. "Our city is hurting. From

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## Yarmuth: Votes aren'

### Rep. says impeachment of Trump not an easy task for Dems

**Phillip M. Bailey**

Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As lawmakers return to Washington this week, Democrats are being prodded by progressive activists and groups to take aggressive action against the president, but Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Ky., said the votes for impeachment just aren't there.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., surprised political on-lookers by recently declaring the House had begun formal impeachment proceedings. He has since made court filings seeking more access to special

counsel Robert Mueller's evidence and witnesses as part of his panel's investigation.

Critics of that course of action, including senior Democrats, are concerned that impeaching Trump will embolden his base ahead of the 2020 elections. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, for instance, stiff-armed the idea by saying last week the "public isn't there on impeachment."

Asked whether the 235-member Democratic caucus can get to the needed majority, Yarmuth expressed doubts in an interview with the Courier Journal.

"I don't think we do right now," he

said. "And I think that is really what is guiding Nancy in remaining reluctant to bring impeachment proceedings because she knows, at least at this point she believes, there's no way we can get 218 votes."

Under the Constitution, the House would vote on one or more articles of impeachment, and if at least one got a majority vote, the president would be impeached. The proceedings would then move to a trial in the Senate, which could remove Trump by a two-thirds vote.

One hundred and thirty-seven House

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Children and young adults performed cultural dances and songs during the opening ceremonies of the Buddha Blessed Temple on Sept. 1 in Louisville's Iroquois neighborhood. PHOTOS BY MARTY PEARL/SPECIAL TO COURIER JOURNAL



Thuy Tien sang as part of the opening ceremonies for the Buddha Blessed Temple on Sept. 1.

PHOTOS BY MARTY PEARL/SPECIAL TO COURIER JOURNAL

## Temple

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violence and drug addiction,” he said, asking the congregation to work with other communities in Louisville to spread their teachings of peace.

The Buddha Blessed Temple began in 2006 under the leadership of Dat, a professor at Indiana University Southeast and the University of Houston.

Dat’s center acquired the 15.5 acres of land in the roquois Park area in 2016, and with donations from the community, construction on the 14,000-square-foot building began in spring 2018. The structure, which has a fusion of Asian and western architecture, was completed this summer.

Louisville has two other Buddhist centers, the Drepung Gomang Center at 411 N. Hubbards Lane and the Louisville Zen Center at 757 S. Brook St. Dat wants to differentiate from the other locations by attracting and supporting the entire Louisville community, not just Vietnamese.

Dat hopes Buddhist principles of compassion, non-violence and meditation will attract Westerners interested in the faith.

In addition to weekly Buddhist teaching and meditations, the new temple will offer a myriad social services, including English and yoga classes, after-school tutor programs and homeless support services.

Dat, who came to the U.S. from Vietnam more than three decades ago, is a student of Zen teacher, Hsuan Hua, a Chinese monk who founded Buddhist organizations in the U.S. The congregation at Buddha Blessed Temple will follow Quy Nguong Zen Buddhist tradition, which emphasizes a modern and progressive practice of Buddhism.

“We teach a compassionate mind, and peaceful life,” Dat said. “Because wherever you go, you spread that compassion and peace. You care for others. This is a gathering place for caring for others.”

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