

Newcomers Welcome Guide

Welcome to the Five Stones Sangha. A sangha is a meditation community, and our sangha practices mindfulness meditation in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh, meeting on Monday evenings from 5:30-7:00 at the Friends Meeting House at 3311 NW Polk Street in Corvallis. We start promptly at 5:30, plan to arrive early to get settled. If it is your first time coming, please arrive 15 minutes early to get a short orientation from one of the Sangha Stewards. When you arrive, tell the person leading that it is your first time meditating with us and they will point out someone to orient you.

Some guidelines for practicing with us:

- Anyone is welcome to meditate with us, regardless of religious background. You are not required to be a Buddhist to join us.
- Chairs are available, as well as some pillows for sitting on the floor if that is your choice. You are welcome to bring your own meditation pillow/bench.
- Be sure to turn your cell phone completely off (not vibrate or just silent) before entering, or leave it home/in your vehicle.
- We practice deep listening whenever someone is sharing with the group. Anything shared during dharma discussion is private and not to be shared with others or discussed with the person sharing outside of our practice.

We have a detailed brochure about our practice available on our website; here is a brief description of what you can expect during our weekly practice:

- After welcoming everyone and giving an overview of the evening's schedule, the leader will invite each person to bow in and say their name and summarize their weekly practice. We typically call this the "Weather Report" as we can use a weather analogy to describe how our week has been (you are not required to share at any time)
- Guided Meditation – an approximate 10 minute guided meditation practice, with the leader using short phrases and inviting the bell
- Walking/Movement meditation – we usually slowly circle the room twice, focusing on our steps and breath. Sometimes a yoga-based movement meditation replaces some of the walking meditation, and in the summer we may walk outside. Options for staying inside and opting out of any stretching/movement that isn't appropriate for you are offered.
- Silent Meditation – a 20 minute silent sitting period. The leader or our sangha chanter may start this meditation with a solo rendition of the Evening Chant.
- Opening Verse – after the silent meditation, the sangha chants the Opening Verse
- Dharma Presentation and Discussion – the leader will present a teaching from Thich Nhat Hanh or other Buddhist leader. This is typically a 10 minute or so presentation, followed by a sharing where anyone can bow in and share their experience of whatever was presented. On the first Monday of the month, the Dharma presentation is always a recitation of the 5 Mindfulness Trainings. On the last Monday of the month, we share tea and snacks, as well as any poetry, readings, etc. that people bring.
- Closing – we end by standing up and sharing the closing gratitudes, where we bow to the Sangha, Dharma, and Buddha. After that we share the merit, which goes as follows "*May the merit of this practice benefit all beings, and bring peace*". After this we have announcements and then quietly exit the building, as there is another group practicing meditation in the adjoining room.