



The Sitting Room

A newsletter from the Greenville Zen Center

ISSUE NO. 2 · AUGUST 2026

A PLACE TO BEGIN · THE REFLECTION

Three Sundays in.

We have sat together three times now, on July 5, July 19, and August 2. We've had somewhere between thirty and forty people join us each morning, which is further along than we planned for this early.

The mornings have had an amazing feel to them already. People arrive before eight and find a cushion and settle in. Someone shows a newcomer what to do with their hands or where to sit. The bell sounds, and for thirty minutes nothing happens at all, which is all of it; we practice Shikantaza, "Just Sitting".

Here is what has happened so far, and what you told us when we asked how things were going.

"It already feels nourishing to be sitting in silence in a room full of like-minded individuals."

FROM A SURVEY RESPONSE, AUGUST 2026



FROM THE CUSHION · A SPECIAL WELCOME

Great Tree came down for our first morning.

Genjo, Head of Practice at Great Tree Zen Temple in Alexander, North Carolina, drove down on July 5 to sit with us and give the first dharma talk this sangha has ever heard. Most new groups sit for months, sometimes years, before anyone in the lineage comes to speak. Great Tree has held the practice since 2005, and Genjo gave us a morning of it on the day we opened the doors.

We are still grateful, and we mean to let that friendship deepen slowly over the years ahead.



After our first sit, July 2026. Jay, Adam, Jennie, and Genjo.





FROM THE CUSHION · THE TALK

The empty boat.

On July 19, our second Sunday, Adam told the story of the empty boat. You are out on the water when another boat comes across the current and knocks into you. The anger rises before you have decided anything, and you already have your words ready for whoever is steering. Then you look over and find the boat is empty. It slipped its mooring upstream and drifted down on its own. The anger has nothing to fasten onto, and it goes.

The boat did not change. You did.

Nearly every person or thing who bumps into us in life can be thought of as an empty boat, carried by causes set in motion long before we came into the picture.

Adam's suggestion was to practice meeting people and events that way on purpose, starting with the small collisions. It is a good deal easier to say on a Sunday morning than to do on a Tuesday afternoon, which is a reason we keep coming back to the cushion.

If the talk stayed with you, Kosho Uchiyama's *Opening the Hand of Thought* is the book we would put in your hands next.



The floor at eight in the morning.





FROM THE CUSHION · THE QUESTION

Jennie asked what our sangha is going to be.

On August 2, Jennie used the word sangha and then asked the room a good question about it. She reminded us that sangha is one of the three treasures, alongside the Buddha and the dharma, and the word means assembly, or community. In practice it means the people you sit with and everything that grows up around the sitting: the conversation in the car park afterwards, the person who shows a newcomer what to do with their hands, someone noticing when you have been away a while.

That question is why we sent the survey.



Sunday mornings, summer 2026.

"I hope this becomes a community. I don't do church any longer but miss the community of church."

FROM A SURVEY RESPONSE, AUGUST 2026





FROM THE SANGHA · THE SURVEY

What you told us.

Twenty of you answered, and several of you at length. Thank you. The survey was anonymous, but a few things were clear.

20

responses in the
first week

15

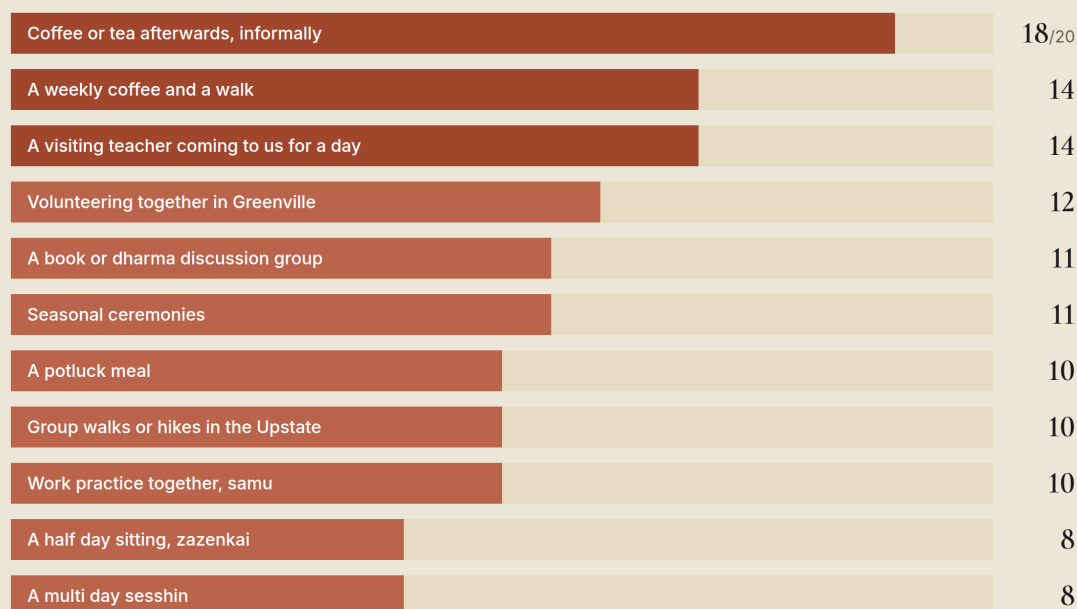
would come **two or three**
times a month or more

13

offered to **help** with
something concrete

WHAT YOU WOULD COME TO

Coffee first, and more sitting.



The clearest answer was more sitting, so we are moving to weekly Sunday mornings. The second clearest was coffee afterwards, so we are starting that now.

NEXT SITTING
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16
GREENVILLEZEN.ORG

Twenty responses, gathered between August 2 and August 7, 2026. The survey was anonymous, and several of you wrote a good deal more than we asked for.





Weekly, and coffee afterwards.

We are going weekly. Fifteen of twenty expect to come two or three times a month or more once we sit every week, and eight said most weeks. That answers the question we have been holding since June. The start date waits on one thing only, which is having enough trained leaders to staff every single Sunday and cover for one another. We will announce it here as soon as it is certain.

Coffee starts now. Eighteen of twenty want coffee or tea afterwards, informally, and fourteen would come to a weekly coffee and a walk. This one costs us nothing and needs no permission, so we are simply going to start doing it. We will name a nearby spot at the end of Sunday's sitting.

Thirteen of you offered to help with something concrete: setting up, putting away, greeting newcomers, making tea, keeping time and ringing the bell, taking photographs, helping organise an event. That list is the reason weekly is even possible, and we will be in touch with each of you.

On talking to each other between sittings there was no winner, so announcements stay on email. Further out there is real appetite for a visiting teacher for a day, volunteering together in Greenville, a book or dharma discussion group, seasonal ceremonies, and longer sitting. Those will come in their order.





FROM THE SANGHA · DĀNA

How this is paid for.

Several of you have asked how to give, so here is the real answer. Everything at the Greenville Zen Center is volunteer-supported. Nobody takes any payment for this work, not for teaching, not for leading, not for organising. There is no salary line, and there is not meant to be one.

What money we do need is small and specific. Cushions and mats so anyone can walk in and sit, whatever they bring. A bell. Incense. Printed guides for newcomers. Hosting the teachers who drive down to sit with us. A fund that will build toward a future permanent home. That is nearly the whole of it today, and every dollar goes to the practice.



Sustaining membership. The most useful thing is a small monthly gift, because it lets us plan. We suggest:

- \$15 a month** a cushion and mat, kept in the room for whoever comes
- \$35 a month** the materials a Sunday morning needs
- \$75 a month** helps bring a teacher to the Upstate

Any amount is welcome, one time or monthly. Give what is easy to give.

The Greenville Zen Center is a recognized 501(c)(3), so your gift is tax-deductible, and you will receive a receipt. We use Zeffy, which is free for the center, so the full amount reaches the practice. No one is ever turned away for lack of giving, and every sitting stays free. The most generous thing you can do is still simply to come and sit.

BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER

zeffy.com/donation-form/build-the-foundation

GREENVILLE ZEN CENTER · THE SITTING ROOM · 7





This Sunday.

Reserving a place is a small kindness that helps us prepare a seat for you.

WHEN	Sunday, August 16, 2026 · 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.
WHERE	Cancer Survivors Park , Center for Hope & Healing 52 Cleveland Street, Greenville, SC 29601
PARKING	Free public parking in the lot at 44 Cleveland Street.
RSVP	Save your place at luma.com/greenvillezen
BRING	Yourself, and your own cushion or bench if you have one. Cushions and chairs are provided too. Loose, comfortable clothing.
NEWCOMERS	Especially welcome. Come at 7:45 and someone will show you everything before we begin. Cushions, benches, and chairs are provided, and there is never a charge to sit.
COST	Free to attend. Offerings are welcome, and entirely your choice.
AFTERWARDS	Coffee nearby for anyone who would like it. No need to sign up, simply follow the group out.

ALSO ON THE CALENDAR

Sunday, September 6

Until the weekly schedule begins.

A NOTE ON OUR HOME

Cancer Survivors Park has given us a generous place to gather, and we are grateful to be there. As the community grows and as offerings allow, we hope one day to settle into a home of our own. That day will come the way everything here comes: slowly, surely, together.

STAY IN TOUCH

greenvillezen.org · hello@greenvillezen.org

IN GASSHO · THE CLOSING

To everyone who has carried these first three mornings, in ways large and small, thank you for being here. We look forward to sitting with you.

THE GREENVILLE ZEN CENTER

