

WHAT TO EXPECT ON RETREAT

Retreat Format

The retreat format consists of alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation. The teachers provide instructions along with a daily talk and regular check-ins. There is at least one question and answer period each day. The schedule is designed to build momentum in your practice. We usually rise around 5:30 AM and the last sit ends about 9:30 PM. The schedule is a guide, not a requirement. We encourage you to make the most of your time and the instructions offered by the teachers. We also encourage you to take good care of yourself and listen to what your body needs.

Interviews

Interviews are relaxed, low-key ways to check in and talk about your experience with the teacher. They provide an opportunity for you to ask questions and receive individual guidance in your practice. You will be offered a private interview with the teacher or a small group interview about every other day. Attending the interviews is important, as it's the best way for the teacher to support you and your practice.

Sitting

Feel free to experiment with your sitting arrangement. It may take awhile to discover a style of sitting that feels right. You may sit on a cushion, bench or in a chair. Chairs are also available. Many people alternate between a chair and cushion or bench.

Noble Silence

Once the retreat begins, you will be asked to honor what is known as 'noble silence' – a quieting of the body and voice that helps cultivate a calm and peaceful retreat environment. This powerful tool greatly enhances the deepening of concentration and awareness. Noble silence also fosters a sense of safety and spiritual refuge.

Please give Koinonia's phone number, 888-801-7746, to a family member or close friend to use in case of emergency so you do not have to check your cell phone. Also make arrangements prior to arriving at the retreat for someone else to handle any communications while you're away. In this way, you can maintain the integrity of your own practice and protect the retreat environment for everyone else as well.

What to Bring

Be comfortable: modest, comfortable clothing for sitting and outerwear for walking outdoors. You may want a blanket to put over your shoulders or on your lap while meditating.

TCVC has some meditation cushions and benches but not enough for all. Bring a floor pad if you use one.

Summer: umbrella and sunhat. It can be quite cool in June so bring some warmer clothes too.

Winter: boots, indoor walking shoes or slippers for both the main retreat center and also the residence halls.

We ask that you do not wear or bring strongly scented lotion, soap, shampoo, perfume, hairspray or essential oils as there are several people in our community with severe allergies. While it's difficult to find products with no fragrance whatsoever, some brands, such as Nature's Gate, have less scent than others.

Towels and bed linen are provided, but are washed with scented detergent. Bring your own if you are sensitive.

Vegetarian meals are provided along with tea and coffee service. If you have special dietary needs, you may bring supplemental food. A small refrigerator and microwave are available in the Retreat House and Woodhaven residence halls. If you have severe food allergies or intolerances, please inform the registrar to determine if we can safely meet your requirements.

Other optional items: water bottle, alarm clock, and flashlight.

Bring your checkbook if you intend to offer dana.

Don't forget your sense of humor!

For More Information

Please don't hesitate to discuss any questions you may have with the registrar or manager of the retreat. We want to make your retreat as rewarding as possible. We look forward to serving you.