

Cedar Rapids Zen Center – Jikyouji

MINUTES – Sangha¹ Meeting – September 26, 2021 – Convened at 10:35 AM

Called to order by Ryan Wheeler

Present: Treasurer Ryan Wheeler, Secretary Kelly Kruse, Resident Teacher Zuiko Redding, Travis Hunt, Erica, Lara Dayzs, Greg Jahiel, Allison Keegan, Yayoi Teramoto

COUNCIL was held

PRACTICE REPORT – Zuiko Redding - See Appendix A

TREASURER'S REPORT

Accounts as of 9-22-21

Checking (Hills) \$12,949.45

Savings (Hills) \$2,478.03

Savings (LACU) \$35,834.34

- LACU Savings Allocation: 65.8% CRZC, 34.2% New Teacher Fund

New Teachers Fund (LACU) \$14,834.06

Savings (GreenState CU) \$5.75

CD (GreenState CU) 0.95% \$24,938.64 10/25/2021

CD (LACU) 0.648% \$31,935.59 05/03/22

CD (GreenState CU) 3.26% \$11,790.17 06/17/23

Mutual Funds (Cetera) \$52,026.98 (Split 55.7% as NTF and 44.3% as CRZC)

- \$52,000.67 Mutual Fund
- \$26.31 Cash, Money Funds, Bank Deposits

Total \$186,793.01 (August total: \$185,948.92)

The total amount within the NTF \$56,067.88 (NTF + NTF CD + 55.7% of Mutual Funds)

Method to use for calculating Total amount in New Teachers Fund

1. Take 55.7% of total mutual fund ($52,026.98 \times 0.557$) = 28,978.48
2. Add this amount to LACU New Teacher Fund = 14,834.06
3. Add this amount to the fully matured NTF CD amount (matured, now 34.2% of LACU Savings) = \$12,255.34

Meeting with Thrivent Financial

Mutual Funds

Thrivent advisors reviewed our existing mutual fund.

¹ A community of Buddhists that practices together. Also used to mean the community of all Buddhists in the world.

It's a socially responsible, somewhat risk averse Calvert Class C fund. Class A funds are generally recommended. Their high sign-up fee is offset by lower annual fees if the fund is held long enough. For this fund, the Class A 0.93% would have offset the 4.75% sign-up fee in Year 7, making it preferred over our 1.68% annual with 0% sign-up Class C. For our mutual fund this would mean about \$500/yr Future mutual fund investments should consider how long we expect to hold the fund.

Our Calvert fund is a good fit for us on several fronts compared to Thrivent. First, Thrivent doesn't offer socially responsible funds in-house. Outside providers of those funds define socially responsible different than us, for instance funds that threaten women's freedom to make healthcare decisions. Second, Thrivent's annual fee would be 1.51%, not significantly better than our Calvert fund through Cetera.

Thus, switching our fund to Thrivent would risk investments that run counter to Zen Center's ethics, and all we'd gain is the convenience of its holder not changing every few years.

CDs

For our CDs, Thrivent's advisors said alternatives could be Brokerage CDs or Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). All of these are more secure than stocks / mutual funds, but none are significantly better than our CD rates because low yield is the price of security.

If we considered these versus CDs, Thrivent suggests their **Limited Maturity Bond Fund**. Its current 1-year yield is 1.6%, 3-year at 3.1%. Both have a 0.43% annual operating expense. Be careful not to compare this to our CDs and say, "Hey, that's 300% more than we're getting today!" It is, but the difference still is not significant. It also isn't guaranteed. Bond markets can and do change in response to US Treasury actions.

As I see it, the main benefit of switching from CDs is to have an investment vehicle that's lower maintenance than CDs which we leave us searching for where else to put them each time they mature, and the time it takes to reinvest them never feels fast enough.

Concluding Thoughts

We should have three pools of money. The first — checking and savings — is liquid and used for daily expenses. It earns practically nothing from year to year.

The second is locked and should serve as a buffer in case the stock market crashed. Its security means it will be low yield. It should be accessible to us in case our expenses outpace the sangha's donations.

Third should be a growth pool. It would be more volatile — mutual funds — and in some years will experience losses, and for that reason it should be a pool that we seldom need to use because a loss is only a loss if it's sold when it's a loss. Over any 30-year period for the last century, the stock market has been the most reliable source of growth at ~10% of any investment vehicle.

The Board and/or the sangha should decide what percentage of our funds we want in each of the-

se pools, then find vehicles for the second and third pools, and finally manage our funds to align with those percentages.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT – Zuiko Redding

Work day – September 11 – cleaned the zendo² and entry, powder room, and stairs. Removed weeds and planted grass seed around the tree stump in the right of way. Thanks to Pete and Yayoi.

Next Work Day: October 9 – Possible projects – yard work, cleaning library and basement, painting the porch floor.

Active projects

- Gutter repair and house painting – Tryon Contracting will be painting the house to repair derecho damage in September or early October.
- A tree for Tim Bryant. Zuiko proposes getting a 10- or 12-foot ginkgo tree. If we get one this year, it should be planted before November. Zuiko will pay half the cost and she'd like to propose that we raise money for the rest. Zuiko is now looking at trees. A ten-foot tree is likely to be around \$600 with planting.
- Zuiko has arranged with Tryon to replace upstairs porch storm windows in the fall. This should cost around \$1,600. The board is currently deliberating this.

Projects needing attention – possible work day items

- Paint porch floor
- Clean library
- Yard work
- Sanding projects in office - see "Pending short-term projects"

Finished projects – Denny Novak came and picked up the old porch furniture. He's offering it to his employees at Zoey's, then will take what's left to the County Home Road recycling center.

New Projects – None.

Periodic projects

- Pour vinegar into furnace water exhaust tube – every 2 – 3 months – September, 2021
- Change furnace filter – September, 2021
- Check battery water – sump pump – October, 2021

Pending short-term projects

- Eight-foot shelf boards for basement. Need several. Zuiko will get them from Home Depot or Restore.
- Sand doors in office and library so they will shut – we have sandpaper and a pad sander.
- Sand credenza drawer in office so it will shut.
- Replace fence by side of house.

Pending long-term projects – Things that need to get done sometime

- Painting - Woodwork and walls in library, hall, office, Zuiko's room, and stairwell/touch up garage/touch up porch, paint porch deck
- Fix ceiling in bathroom and probably Zuiko's sitting room. The plaster is falling down. Zuiko will contact Roger Brecht who did the kitchen for us for an estimate and possible work. Put off until next March.

² Meditation hall

- Refinish floors – Would be nice to begin with the zendo and the entry
- Garage door may need replacement in the next few years
- Explore possibility of making the Center handicapped accessible.
- Inspect and take care of gaps in limestone on foundation

Communications Report – September 2021 – Zuiko Redding

Currents stats

- 488 sent – 485 successful deliveries
- 148 unique opens – 30.5%
- 3 clicks – 1%
- 294 total opens

Fewer opens than last month – We had 230 unique opens in August.

Facebook stats

August

- 1 – Learning to express the truth – 155 reached, 19 engagements, 1 share, 12 likes, 1 comment
- 8 – Claiming our inheritance – Kelly Kruse – 153 reached, 15 engagements, 0 shares, 11 likes, 1 comment
- 15 – Yogacara and Sawaki Roshi – Doju Layton – 126 reached, 7 engagements, 0 shares, 5 likes
- 22 – Don't be eager to speak – 207 reached, 18 engagements, 3 shares, 9 likes
- 29 Non-thinking – 222 reached, 16 engagements, 2 shares, 12 likes

Averages for August – 173 reached, 15 engagements, 10 likes

September

- 5 – Being here – 186 reached, 21 engagements, 1 share, 10 likes
- 12 – Just relax – 224 reached, 36 engagements, 4 shares, 12 likes, 2 comments
- 19 - Amitabha/Amida – 215 reached, 26 engagements, 1 share, 13 likes, 1 comment
- 26 – Bhaisyajaguru/Yakushi

Averages – 208 reached, 27 engagements, 12 likes

Gray typeface – counted in last month's report

Highlighted – most popular posts

NEW BUSINESS

1. Got tree and plans to plant it - \$2,289 from fall fundraiser
2. Vice President?
 - No, we don't have one
 - Motion to solicit for volunteers by Kelly – Second by Zuiko – Carries
 - Zuiko will send out email
3. Deepl.com may be a good resource for those currently studying languages
4. Jenn mentioned the Iowa Humane Alliance fundraiser happening now

ANNOUNCEMENTS for CRZC

Monday Night Dharma³ – Mondays on Zoom 7:00 PM

Introduction to Zazen⁴ - 3rd Wednesday of each month 7:30 PM, Zoom/in-person hybrid

Baika⁵ practice - Fridays right now, please tell Zuiko if you want to join but can't do it at that time

Sesshin⁶ – 15-17 Oct - Zoom

NEXT MEETING: October 31, 2021

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Kruse

Appendix A

Practice Report –

September 26, 2021

General Impressions –

Though COVID transmission is high in Linn County, I'm trying to keep our doors open. We now have the vaccine, so we're a bit better protected. People are coming for noon and evening zazen. There's only one person besides me, so we have space.



With no work periods on Sundays, we're having regular monthly work days. Work is also the practice of zazen, so this is an opportunity to practice with others, as well as take care of your Center.

I auditing a course on Zoom with the Institute for Buddhist Studies in San Francisco. The course is in Japanese translation of Buddhist writing and I'm deepening my skills in Japanese and learning lots of new things. My dharma talks should improve with this. And I'm enjoying it immensely.

Center Activities

- Introductory evening – Kelly did the evening from Rock Island and we had two participants, one on Zoom and one in person.
- Sunday sitting – Attendance on Sundays brings five to ten participants on Zoom. We need to encourage in-person participation.
- Daily sitting – Zoom sitting at 12:15 is now on Wednesdays. Tune in!!
- Baika practice – Annora and Zuiko practice semi-monthly on Friday afternoon. We invite others to join us.
- Monday night dharma – Six to eight people meet by Zoom. We're discussing *Trust in Mind* by Mu Soeng.

Special Events

- None this month. Discussion – thinking of doing a fall ango⁷.

³ The nature of reality; Buddhist teaching

⁴ The style of meditation we do at our Center, "just sitting"

⁵ Buddhist singing and percussion instrument practice

⁶ Silent meditation retreat

⁷ Period of intensified practice

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Sangha Members' Activities

- Kelly teaches the introductory evening
- Inmates continue to sit in the prisons, though our regular visitors can't be there.
- Andy King manages our Facebook page and the *Currents* newsletter.
- Eric manages our web page and does technical support for our system.
- Gus writes thank-you notes to donors, supplies web site sayings, and mows the lawn.
- Brian Brandsmeier and Kelly Kruse are our Inter-Religious Council representatives.

Zuiko's Activities

- Writing and posting summary of each Sunday's dharma talk to sangha members and on Facebook and the website.
- Monthly letters to inmates accompanied by copies of dharma talk summaries.
- Working on book on "Eight Awakening Points of Great People" to be published by Sanshinji's Dogen Institute
- Member of Sanshinji's board of directors.

Other Items

- Talk by Ryushin Hart on October 10. Discussion – he also has a YouTube channel.
- Sesshin with Shoryu Bradley on October 15-17.

Calligraphy by Koshu Itabashi Roshi — *While losing, we win. It's a secret skill.* To allow ourselves to lose or to accept loss is an ace up our sleeves. We allow our opponent some dignity and perhaps they become softer toward us.