



# Dharma Rain Zen Center

## Strategic Plan

1-10-2019

### **Overview**

Dharma Rain Zen Center is a Soto Zen temple for lay practice that was founded in 1972 and given its current name in 1987. It is dedicated to helping people cultivate and realize Zen Buddhism in everyday American lives. DRZC is what it is today in a large part because our founding abbots, Kyogen and Gyokuko Carlson, had a vision to establish a place of practice for lay people that would be accessible, while offering depth of practice to those who wanted it. Gyokuko was also determined to involve families and children as an important part of the sangha, because in many places children were seen primarily as an obstacle to serious Zen practice.

Other aspects of DRZC are the result of careful choices: its central, urban location; open-handed offering of the Dharma without an inner circle of those who are “really” practicing and an outer circle of those who are not; and offering most Dharmic events for free or at relatively low cost.

Our first strategic plan was developed in 1997-1998. It included five focal areas: membership, delegation, transition planning, succession, and facilities and management. Dharma Rain has met or exceeded the goals set in that first plan, especially in increasing membership, expanding our facilities, delegating operational responsibilities, improving communication within the sangha, and developing our children’s programs. The success of our first plan demonstrated that strategic planning works by focusing our intention and by providing a consistent touchstone for making organizational decisions.

Our sangha intentionally and successfully transitioned from a pastor-centered community with 50-150 active members, to a program-centered community with 150-225 members. In November 2011, we initiated a new strategic plan to guide our growth. In 2014 we began a process to move our temple complex to a new location, allowing for more space and programming. As this has occurred, our financial, physical, administrative, and spiritual resources have continued to be stretched in multiple directions. The current plan is an effort to clarify and direct our collective intention regarding our future growth and development.

The Board, Dharma Council, and Dharma Garden Council have evaluated these recommendations and determined which we will pursue. A process for monitoring our progress and amending the plan are detailed in the Appendices. The Strategic Planning Committee would like to express its deep gratitude to all who participated in the strategic planning process and helped to create this document. It is our hope that this plan is a meaningful, living document as Dharma Rain continues to fulfill its mission as a sanctuary of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in such a way as to cultivate compassion, love, wisdom and understanding.

## **Mission (Why We Exist)**

To transmit the teachings and practice of Soto Zen Buddhism by cultivating compassion, love and wisdom.

## **Vision (How We Carry Out Our Mission)**

We are a Soto Zen Buddhist Sangha sharing the practices of zazen meditation, mindfulness, reflection and ethical living. We seek to relieve suffering by the skillful use of Buddhist teachings and the generous acceptance of all beings. We honor the ancestors and traditions of the past while we adapt to the needs of current practitioners and future generations. Our shared intention is to cultivate authenticity and integrity in our own lives and in the larger community in which we live. Our hope is to engage in wise and compassionate activity for the benefit of all beings.

## **Equity Statement**

Dharma Rain acknowledges that suffering is a human condition made worse by bias and prejudice toward people based on race, ethnicity, income, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and other traditionally marginalized identities. We acknowledge the individual and collective impact of privilege, bias, and prejudice in our own sangha, and within American Zen. We commit to address our structural inequities as an institution. We welcome and affirm all who come here to seek the Way and celebrate our differences while harmonizing the one and the many.

## **Values**

*Transformation and community:* We acknowledge the importance of both depth and breadth in our practice lives and recognize that over one's life different lessons and sources of nourishment are needed from the temple and sangha. We emphasize the central place of zazen, the transformative power of student-teacher relationships, and periods of intensive practice. We also emphasize the importance of connection with sangha, with maintaining the precepts, and with bringing practice into our relationships outside of the sangha.

*Thorough commitment:* Practice needs to be integrated throughout our lives. We operate the institution in an ethically sound, socially mature, environmentally sustainable, ecologically sensitive, and fiscally responsible manner. We strive to model the Dharma in how the organization operates and communicates.

*Accessibility and inclusion:* We strive to make the Dharma available via many pathways and to a diverse spectrum of people, guided by the understanding of the importance of Way-seeking mind. We have made an explicit commitment to equity and openness and attempt to minimize obstacles that people encounter in their search for the Dharma.

*Honor lay and monastic paths:* We value the interdependence of lay and monastic approaches. We appreciate a container that celebrates the creativity and authenticity of lay practice as well as the rigor of formal monastic practice. Each approach is valid and can lead to the same liberation, and each approach benefits from engagement with the other.

## **Rigor in Practice**

Above all, we invite and support people to discover their own edge of practice. All of our programs, facilities, events and activities support these specific intentions, either directly or indirectly. Dharma Rain has done well at making practice broadly available for lay, 21<sup>st</sup> century American lifestyles by providing an array of dharma gates. We have shown a strong commitment to cultivating a family-friendly environment, to inclusion, equity and openness, to modeling practice integrated with all aspects of life, and to supporting a wide variety of programs (e.g., seminary, residency, classes, retreats, term student programs, discussion groups, Dharma Garden, prison programs, outreach speakers, the Daoren Circle, regular Disciple meetings, associated & affiliated groups, and introductory workshops).

DRZC had met goals from the 2011 Strategic Plan for frequency of one day and week-long retreats, for adjusting the liturgical calendar, and for supporting the formal container and senior practitioners. In addition, Seminary went through a major revision and DRATT (Dharma Rain active transmitted teachers) has taken on more mentoring and administrative responsibility.

### **Recommendations**

Make a conscious decision to do two specific things to increase inclusivity. First, we would continue to improve the accessibility of sesshin and other rigorous practice events to under-served groups. Second, we would create new practice events specifically oriented to those under-served groups.

Experiment with and introduce a variety of 'rigor-lite' practice offerings.

Prepare and announce adaptations for elder, differently-abled, and others at sesshin and zazenkais. Announced available adaptations might include any or all of reclining stations, slower ringing of bells, encouragement to adjust posture as needed, and so forth.

Continue efforts to simplify the yearly calendar to more closely accord with the training cycle, to fit better with the school year, and to keep fall term as a unit. Keep the website up to date twelve months into the future.

Clarify which group is responsible for which dharma-related tasks and decisions. Establish guidelines for what we offer.

Ensure that mentorship emphasizes work practice as Dharma rather than just the technical aspects of doing a job right. Emphasizing that leadership is valued equally in both non-teaching and teaching roles.

Support lay practice away from the temple by making an effort to reference the value of home practice in dharma talks, classes, workshops, and other events. Emphasize in classes and dharma talks how what is being taught can be applied to daily lay life.

Increase the visibility of Dharma Garden programs and the prison program to the adult sangha. This would involve us all in the diversity, practice, and perspectives inherent in our Sangha.

## **Caring for the Sangha Treasure**

Our members and participants are the heart of Dharma Rain Zen Center. How well we meet the needs of the sangha is a reflection of the health and vitality of the temple itself. Currently, Dharma Rain Zen Center utilizes a variety of formal and informal methods to meet the spiritual and pastoral care needs of its members. Formal methods offered include classes, liturgy, and the opportunity to meet with dharma teachers. Informal methods include the Sangha Support Network through which Sangha members can ask for help, such as requesting groceries or meals when confined after a surgery; our Guestmaster team, which greets newcomers and answers questions; and a newly formed Sangha Outreach Program to provide visits and practice-support to homebound members who request it.

### **Recommendations**

Invest in developing the pastoral care skills of teachers and senior students to help foster a culture in which pastoral care takes place at a sangha level. By providing opportunities for pastoral care training to teachers and senior students, we can cultivate a broader understanding of how to care for sangha members as the need arises during everyday interactions. Trainings may cover topics such as confidentiality, basic psychology, ethics, our Safe Environment Policy, how to intervene in a mental health crisis, and how to discern when a referral to professional services should be made.

Develop a cohort of priests, lay teachers, and senior students trained to proactively offer pastoral care to sangha members both in the temple and out in the community during life transitions. This investment would enable us to more skillfully reach out to sangha members who may be in need but have not made an explicit request for help. Training would cover many of the topics described in Option 2 above along with communication and assessment skills to enable cohort team members to proactively anticipate and meet the needs of sangha members. Minimum requirements for training would be established and a certain level of commitment expected.

## **Children, Families, Young Adults**

Dharma Rain Zen Center has been actively supporting the family life of lay practitioners for close to 30 years. The primary focus of the Dharma Garden programs is to support children and families in their spiritual development, well-being and growth; and to encourage and support young people's inherent Buddha nature.

### **Sunday Dharma School**

Bi-weekly classes for children, preschool through high school, aim to cultivate and nurture the emotional intelligence, social skills and spiritual growth of children through the teachings of our Soto Zen Buddhist lineage. Dharma School serves approximately seventy students from ages 3 to high school graduation in six classes.

### **Mandala on the Mountain - Dharma Camp**

Designed for campers ages 8-18 to create a culture of respect and acceptance and to learn about themselves and the dharma through a combination of traditional summer camp activities and Buddhist practice, including morning zazen and classes.

### **Parent/Guardian Support and Education**

The parents' group meets bi-weekly at the same time as Sunday Dharma School classes. The classes focus on parenting as Buddhist practice, discussion of the Zen rituals and ceremonies that are part of Dharma School and some introduction into formal Zen practice.

### **Frog Song Montessori Preschool**

This program began on the Siskiyou campus in 2015 as a non-religious program based on our Buddhist values of compassion, respect, mindfulness and the interconnection of all life, values shared by the Montessori philosophy. The curriculum strongly emphasizes nature and community and primarily serves neighborhood families. Frog Song staff also offer 5 weeks of nature-themed camps in the summer. Classroom achieved provisional certification in September 2018.

### **Recommendations**

Improve documentation and clarification of policies and procedures, such as registration, attendance taking, record keeping of fees charged and enrolled Dharma School students year over year, tuition increases, emergency contact management, teacher/camp counselor selection, development, support and expectations, permission slips, and Dharma School class composition.

Increase Dharma Garden Council's knowledge of and support for the Frog Song program.

Explore feasibility of expanding or developing new programs such as young adult program, childcare, etc... as well as whether we have the resources to provide such offerings.

Examine curriculum, support for volunteers, and policy and procedure through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Develop curriculum for dharma school and parent group classes.

Increase parent involvement and leadership in Dharma Garden programs. To further the support of the spiritual development of the parents, we could explore the possibility of retreats for families and/or parents.

Selection, training, expectations for Dharma School teachers and camp counselors: We would like to have more counselors and teachers with a mature practice and grounding in Dharma Rain culture. We also would like to make our teachers more visible to the wider sangha and develop better mentorship practices for teachers and counselors. These are serious practice positions that are not visible to those not engaged in Dharma Garden.

Once policies/procedures are documented and we have a greater pool of volunteers to draw from, we can catch our breath and research viability of new programs and possible increased Frog Song support from the council. Growth in one direction or another would be determined by the outcome of the councils' research into programs at this time. If/as space becomes

available, the Frog Song program would expand to include an infant and toddler classroom, then a second primary classroom for ages 3-5.

## **Prison Program**

DRZC has had a prison program since 1997, and now encompasses seven correctional institutions in Oregon. (See [Prison Program](#) on the Dharma Rain website). During the past several years, a transition program has begun through Home for Good in Oregon (HGO). The total number of adults in custody served weekly is estimated at 50-70. The number of volunteers has grown to eleven carded volunteers and five interns working toward becoming carded.

### **Recommendations**

Continue programs and procedures already in place.

Recruit more volunteers with an intent to help provide stability over time for this program as volunteers retire from their current level of involvement.

Implement annual training of volunteers to improve cohesion and quality of services offered.

Explore the possibility of adding a web-based resource and record center for volunteers.

Explore mentorship programs within the prison during regular visiting hours. Check with chaplain(s) to see how other religious groups do this. Recruit people to visit on some regular basis (monthly, perhaps).

## **Cohort Groups**

As DRZC has grown, cohort groups, in which members share a certain interest or flavor of practice, have formed within the temple. These groups provide important needs for the sangha, including intimacy and camaraderie; targeted group needs; and opportunities for service and leadership.

Cohort groups have developed naturally as sangha members stepped forward to start them. Cohort groups function as offerings of Dharma Rain, as differentiated from Affiliated groups, which are separate and have various levels of independence from Dharma Rain. Cohort groups arise out of circles of common interest with ongoing group activity and have, at minimum, a coordinator and a teacher liaison. Study groups may be considered cohort groups if they are ongoing. Some cohort groups have become part of regular programming, and some groups have been short-lived as interest has waned; some cohorts operate on campus and some cohorts have members from Dharma Rain and affiliated groups.

## **Recommendations**

Attention to and support of cohort groups are a way to support DRZC's mission while increasing the base of support for DRZC. In all dealings with cohort groups, it is recommended that DRZC exercise the minimum amount of control necessary to ensure basic standards are met and liability concerns addressed. Some of the greatest strengths of these groups are their relative independence, diversity and self-sufficiency, so care should be taken to preserve that.

Allow organic growth of cohort groups as interest in them arises and falls.

Identify cohort groups as an important part of DRZC's mission, and encourage, guide and support their formation and existence while recognizing the rich opportunity for cohort groups to be a critical element of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts.

Update the Teaching Roles document to include Cohort leaders or coordinators and tweak language for current usage.

Raise the profile of existing groups on the website and add a brief description about how the groups are related to DRZC. Long-term more complex cohort groups are listed on the website as programming, a language shift in use that encourages interest in "what" (cohort groups) rather than "when" (schedule). A list of smaller cohort groups needs a place on the website, or to be included in the programming page.

Commit more resources to material support of groups. For reasons stated earlier, these groups tend to benefit DRZC and its core programs directly and indirectly.

Consciously consider DEI when forming and supporting cohort groups.

## **Affiliated Groups**

Over time, affiliated groups have arisen naturally as members of DRZC stepped forward to start them at locations away from the main temple. Although they are more independent in their structure, they still have some commitment to Dharma Rain. Affiliated groups range from small sitting groups led by sangha members to independent Zen Centers led by transmitted teachers.

There are currently two main categories of *affiliated groups* at DRZC, although some groups may be in transition between the two.

- "*Sister Sanghas*" are Zen Centers that are part of the Dharma Cloud lineage but are independent of DRZC, with their own dedicated teachers and property, nonprofit status, and ethics and mission statements.
- "*Sitting groups*" are part of DRZC's Mandala Model organizational structure and are overseen by the Dharma Council. They operate more or less as "branch offices" of the main temple and are led by DRZC teachers, monastics or senior students.

Affiliated groups serve an important purpose in that they support Zen practice in communities beyond DRZCs central campus. They are formed when teachers and/or seniors are inspired to start them in response to local needs.

## **Recommendations**

Reinstate the position of Affiliated Groups Liaison to facilitate connection, communication, and mutual support as well as assess ongoing needs of the affiliated groups and monitor and mentor development of new DRZC sitting groups.

Encourage peer support among affiliated groups. The form this takes is to be determined in consultation with group leaders.

Facilitate clarification of our lineage tradition and how it can be expressed, both dharmically and practically.

Provide an annual report to the Dharma Council and affiliated groups to provide consistent, structured visibility to relevant activity and needs within the Dharma Cloud lineage.

Continue to provide oversight and guidance for formation and coordination of DRZC sitting groups.

Ensure guidelines for starting a sitting group are up-to-date and available as needed.

The Dharma Council to continue to exercise the minimum amount of control of DRZC sitting groups necessary to ensure basic standards are met and liability concerns addressed. Care should be taken to preserve the relative independence, diversity and self-sufficiency of the groups.

The Board of Directors to determine what, if any, legal and ethical agreements would be beneficial, and at what point in the development of the group they should be put into effect.

## **Communications**

The temple is made up of many individuals and cohorts with different levels of involvement, interest in and access to information. The temple has a relatively broad leadership structure, with a variety of different bodies making decisions and needing to communicate them. The overall strategic goal of our communications is to give those who are interested in the Dharma the support they need (information, encouragement, sense of belonging, context) to engage in practice, and secondarily to give the temple the visibility and reach necessary to thrive.

Dharma Rain is consistent about letting regular participants know about upcoming events, but is less consistent in its communication outside the existing sangha. The development of the Siskiyou campus and extensive collaborations with other groups have raised the temple's profile both outside and within Buddhist circles. Dharma Rain prioritizes transparency and accessibility in its communications about organizational governance and news.



## **Recommendations**

Maintain current staff and focus on existing strategies

Increase utilization of existing opportunities for sangha communication. Eg., increasing member presented concerns at regular board and Dharma Council meetings; participation at Sangha forums and Disciple gatherings; and diversifying the tone and interests represented in the e-bulletin.

When feasible, assess, overhaul and update communications procedures so they are more effective, accessible and reliable.

Establish pathways between parts of the sangha for responsibility, information flow, consultation and accountability.

Depending on the results of the communications overhaul, consider increasing the budget for communications.

Depending on the results of the communications overhaul, consider increased investment in other groups and collaborations as a way of increase DRZC's exposure. This could be site-focused, educational, interfaith, or Buddhist. This could involve having guest speakers come who bring an audience; interviews with sangha leaders on local podcasts; and expanding collaborations with local schools and environmental groups.

## **Leadership**

The 2011 Strategic Plan section on Leadership focused heavily on the Mandala Model of organization that was then new. As of 2018 the organizational model is established, and while it still undergoes adjustment, the basic outlines are stable.

### **Practice**

We have a wealth of senior practitioners (both Dharma Teachers and senior members) providing leadership in many areas, including teaching classes (both adult programs and Dharma Garden), offering dharma talks and sanzen, leading workshops, serving as guest masters, cooking, gardening/landscaping, and leading other work practice areas. These Teachers provide a diverse spectrum of voices and teaching styles. Authority is distributed beyond the abbot/s, and is seen to reside in the role, not the person. There is a culture of openness, with Teachers sometimes asking for input from seniors on issues. Our practice with authority is developed and nuanced, recognizing many kinds of seniority.

There is a lack of clarity about where decision-making and oversight lies for dharma-related matters. On the Board/Kanin side, Staff, Team leaders, and the Board of Directors all play a role in making decisions, and clear and established norms are in place for making decisions that allow for transparency, good communication and accountability. On the Dharma/Godo side, there is a wider array of relevant groups and more nebulous and sensitive criteria, so it is more difficult. For instance, the Dharma Council, Elder's Council, Leadership Development Team,

Dharma Cloud Teachers, DRATT, Staff, Disciples, and Temple Officers might all have a role in a given decision about a class series. A committee is working to improve clarity in this area.

### **Corporate/Administrative Leadership**

We recognize the need for expertise and skills in running what amounts to a small business, irrespective of Dharma practice, while still recognizing that a religious organization differs in significant ways from a typical small business. The Board of Directors seeks to include certain skill sets for its members in order to enhance the health of the organization

### **Broader Community**

In addition, DRZC maintains many partnerships we have entered into in the local community. These include Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, the Muslim Educational Trust, Great Vow Zen Monastery, Maitreya College, Ecology in Classrooms and Outdoors, Peace in Schools, Madison High School, Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center, Portland Community College, Portland State University, Friends of Trees, Blueprint Foundation, NE Food Pantry, and Madison South Neighborhood Association. There is also national influence due to Teachers' involvement and leadership with American Zen Teachers Association, Lay Zen Teachers Association, and Soto Zen Buddhist Association.

### **Recommendations**

Clarify decision-making about Dharmic affairs by:

Acknowledge and make better use of the role that the Temple Officers have grown into: a rapid response and troubleshooting body that hears input and finds consensus about how to resolve difficulties.

Acknowledge and make better use of the role that DRATT has moved toward, including regular meetings to discuss issues related to individual practice relationships, role of Teachers, and formal teaching. Clarify, compare and contrast, the role of the Dharma Council versus DRATT.

Simplify the organizational chart by moving towards disbanding the Leadership Development Team and considering disbanding the Elder's Council. DRATT would absorb the majority of these functions.

Consider elevating the role of the Disciples group in temple affairs.

Coordinate efforts of publicity, marketing, membership, in order to get the word out about our programs. Create a task force to evaluate our marketing efforts and develop a plan to implement changes.

Continue and strengthen ongoing participation in various community partnerships.

## **Succession**

Ten years ago, our founding abbots were hoping to retire as abbots by 2020. Kyogen died in 2014, and Gyokuko has been stepping back in a fairly orderly fashion as outlined by the plan we created and as modified by the Succession Committee that began work after the last Strategic Plan. Gyokuko is on track to retire as abbot in 2019. Kakumyo has been trained and installed as co-abbot and is increasingly taking on full responsibility for temple direction. This process has been successful in being straightforward, transparent, and preserving our sense of continuity, as hoped for in the 2011 strategic plan. Since 2011, the Board has implemented an abbot review process, a job description (available in the *Documents* section on the DRZC website), retirement funds, and a compensation package.

## **Recommendations**

No real need for new action at this time.

## **Staffing**

DRZC staff serves over 200 adults and 100 children on site. The center operates about fifty weeks a year, six days a week. Members can generally reach a staff member in person or by phone at least 40 hours a week, during the temple's Tuesday-Saturday business hours. DRZC has a well-maintained extensive website, a weekly e-bulletin, regular events emails, and a Buddhist library. It also offers numerous programs and events that are tailored to different populations, including children, parents, newcomers, senior students, prison inmates, and the community at large. This chapter addresses strategic planning aspects of providing and supporting staff (paid and volunteer) and fundraising and management of finances to support these services. DRZC currently serves the community with five full-time ordained (including the two co-abbots), four active lay teachers, 4 hired staff (one full-time bookkeeper, one full time and two ¾-time pre-school teachers), and over 120 lay volunteers, many of whom serve the temple in more than one way.

Additional labor may be provided at times via the 1) oblate program, in which residents participate in the full schedule, including all work periods, in exchange for room and board. 2) An expanded volunteer model that seeks and makes use of project-based, skilled volunteers to engage in specified, capacity-building activities. 3) Collaborations with other groups or programs.

## **Recommendations**

Continue to rely on ordained and on lay volunteers, with the Mandala Council encouraging participation in volunteering based on a volunteer's personal practice interests. At the same time, explore a strategy in which lay sangha members commit to being available at regular times for particular types of work such as office work.

Strengthen the residential program by increasing flexibility so there is broader participation. Improve visibility of residential program to the rest of the sangha.

The Board should assess needs vs. funds available when developing the annual budget each year as well as monitor needs for paid help on an ongoing basis. When skills are needed, an attempt should be made to meet those needs through volunteer labor before hiring, while recognizing the necessity at times to fill skilled positions by hiring staff or consultants.

Continue identifying roles and projects that could be filled by volunteers with professional-level skills and training. Investigate the potential for using interns for some projects. May require a small stipend.

Establish a process for reviewing proposed special events to ensure a balance of priorities and resources and provide a means of oversight for facilitating successful events

The Board of Directors should conduct an annual review of compensation for the Abbots, other ordained, and hired staff, including salaries, stipends, cost of living raises, and retirement benefits.

## **Finances**

DRZC has an annual budget of \$330,000 (FY2018-2019) including \$33,000 net income from Frog Song Montessori Preschool. DRZC's annual budget in FY2010-11 was \$210,000. In the 2017-18 fiscal year (Sept 1-Aug 31), DRZC's income was \$412,000 and expenses were \$329,000 (not including payment toward loan principals. Compared to seven years ago, income has gradually increased by 48% and expenses by 41%. Primary sources of income include membership pledges, fee activities (retreats and Frog Song, primarily) and donations (end of year appeal, annual fundraiser, other gifts).

## **Recommendations**

In general, the recommendation is to focus on increasing revenues for operating costs and on debt reduction in the immediate future.

Increase giving through the annual fundraiser end of year appeal.

Make the option to join Dharma Rain and the benefits of membership more visible.

Continue to develop fee-generating workshops with topics of interest to the general community, while ensuring that these events are consistent with our mission, do not overshadow Dharmic events offered to those engaged in Dharma Rain, and do not unduly strain existing resources (see Chapter 11: *Staffing*, Option 5 for a related recommendation).

Actively seek out groups to rent space on a regular basis, taking into account compatibility with our mission along with space and resource availability.

Encourage participating in the Branching Stream Society Planned Giving program by making it more visible through such means as periodic mailings and announcements and selective approaches to members of the Sangha.

Planning for debt reduction is a Board responsibility. The Board will need to investigate refinancing options before the SEMBLE loan comes due in 2021. The Board should also keep in mind a stated objective of having three years of audited financial records in place by the time the SEMBLE loan comes due.

## **Facilities**

Over the last six years, we have made a transition to our sangha's new home, which serves as a flagship location for the broader Dharma Rain sangha. The acquisition and development of the Siskiyou campus was an arduous and fairly momentous undertaking that has had significant impact on the life of the sangha in the interim. The sangha has weathered the storm with grace and is putting down roots in this new location. This growth came with considerable risk and has left the sangha with significant liabilities in terms of debt owed to members.

## **Recommendations**

Focus on paying down debt, while putting off other projects. Reup the Semble/Blade of Grass loan for as low an interest rate as possible, for an additional 7-year term. Increase the amount of our loan payments by a variety of strategies, including increasing membership and planned giving in order to bring the debt down faster.

Construct one or two small structures to supplement short-term residential, private meeting, and retreat space.

Create a set of priorities for guiding allocation of space for events and programs.

Increase engagement of temple volunteers and partnerships with outside groups to assist with upkeep and maintenance of temple buildings and grounds.