

Cascadia North Insight Dialogue Retreat

September 14-18, 2026 Bethlehem Centre, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

Dear Fellow Practitioners,

Thank you for registering for the Cascadia North Insight Dialogue Retreat. We warmly welcome returning Cascadia friends as well as those joining us for the first time.

We are grateful to gather for this first ever Cascadia North Retreat at Bethlehem Centre in Nanaimo, British Columbia. We'll be guests on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, one of the Coast Salish peoples.

This retreat is intended for practitioners with experience in Insight Dialogue contemplation and Noble Silence. We kindly request that registrants have completed an Introduction to Insight Dialogue and attended a residential meditation retreat in any tradition.

This letter includes important information to help you prepare, arrive, and settle into retreat. Please read it carefully, and direct any questions or concerns to Shurli Chan at shurlichen@gmail.com.

We wish you ease and wellbeing, and look forward to sitting and dialoguing together in practice.

Warmly,

The Cascadia Retreat Team Volunteers: Anne, Connie, Elle, Kym, Leslie, Marianne, Micê, Nancy, Shurli, and Suzanne

REGISTRATION FEE

Private room with shared bathroom: \$1000 CDN

Shared double room with shared bathroom: \$800 CDN

Limited number of private rooms with ensuite private bath: please enquire

The registration fee includes four nights of accommodation and all meals from Monday dinner through Friday lunch.

SCHOLARSHIPS

A limited number of scholarships may be available on a first-come, first-served basis for:

- Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC): up to \$250
- Monastics, Insight Dialogue teachers, and those serving on Insight Dialogue Community (IDC) teams

For more information please contact Shurli Chan at shurlichen@gmail.com.

OPENING AND CLOSING DAY LOGISTICS

Opening Day: Monday, September 14, 2026

On-site registration and check-in will take place from 3:00–4:00 pm in the Main House foyer of the Centre. Please arrive during this time so there is time to complete registration and settle into your room before dinner.

Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm.

Retreatants who arrive early are welcome to wander around the Centre grounds or Westwood Lake until check-in time. Personal items may be stored before check-in with support from the Guest Services team.

The full retreat orientation and opening session will take place on Monday evening. Noble Silence will begin during the opening session. The detailed retreat schedule will be shared during the retreat.

Retreat Closing: Friday, September 18, 2026

Room check-out is at 10:00 am. Please place used bed linens and towels in the pillowcase by 10:00 am and leave them in the hallway.

After room check-out, belongings may be stored in the Guest House lounge, in the Main House foyer, or in personal vehicles until departure.

The retreat will include a closing morning practice session with the teachers, with the formal closing anticipated at 11:30 am and lunch served from 12:00–1:00 pm.

ACCOMMODATIONS & ACCESSIBILITY

Accommodations for our retreat will be in Nazareth Guest House, which has been reserved for our group. Room assignments will be made according to the room type selected during registration, subject to availability. Options include shared rooms with shared bathrooms, private rooms with shared bathrooms, and a limited number of rooms with ensuite bathrooms.

Bed linens and bath towels are provided.

[Nazareth Guest House](#) has accessible side access and six rooms on the lower level. Please note that the entrance is gravel, which may not be suitable for everyone. The lower level has two shared washrooms with stand-up showers, one of which has a grab bar. A shower chair is available upon request.

Certified service animals are welcome in Nazareth Guest House room 10, upon request and subject to availability.

Please contact the retreat team in advance if you have health, mobility, dietary, or accessibility needs that were not included with your registration, or if placement in a specific room would be helpful. We will do our best to consider arrangements in advance.

YOGI JOBS

Bethlehem Centre is staffed, so there will not be regular or daily yogi jobs on this retreat. If light community care is needed during the retreat, the retreat team may invite participation.

RETREAT LOCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

[Bethlehem Centre](#)

2371 Arbot Road, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada

Phone: 250.754.3254 or toll-free 1.877.889.0517

Nanaimo is on the east coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. For retreatants travelling from the United States or elsewhere outside Vancouver Island, Nanaimo is accessible by ferry or plane, often via Vancouver or Victoria.

Retreatants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the retreat. If you indicated that you could offer a ride or would like to request one, you will receive a separate email with further information closer to the retreat date.

Ferries and Travel Planning

BC Ferries serves Vancouver Island. Nanaimo has two ferry terminals: Departure Bay and Duke Point. Either is approximately a 20–30 minute drive from the Centre. **Ferry reservations are strongly recommended for all routes**, particularly when travelling with a vehicle, **and are required on some routes**. Booking early is advised, as reserved sailings can fill up quickly. Travellers may walk on or travel with a vehicle. For schedules, fares, and reservations, visit [BC Ferries](#).

For further information from Bethlehem Centre about getting to the site, visit [Bethlehem Centre - Visit / Getting Here](#).

Those travelling by air may wish to look at flights into Nanaimo, Vancouver, or Victoria, and then plan ground transportation and/or ferry travel from there.

Arrival and Parking

Check-in will take place in the Main House foyer between 3:00 and 4:00 pm.

The Garden Parking Lot is to the left of the main driveway when entering the grounds. Please park close to other vehicles where possible. Reserved parking is available near the front of the Main Building for those with mobility restrictions.

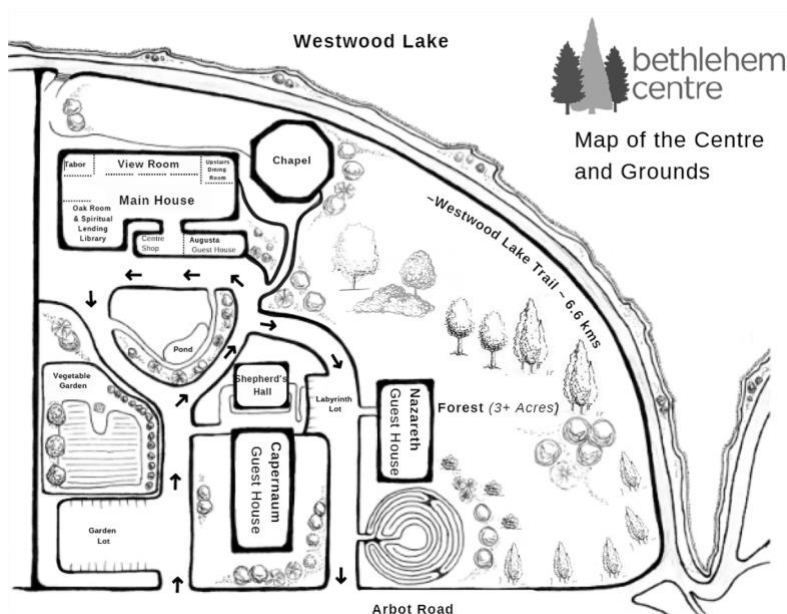
The carport may be used as a drop-off area for luggage during check-in. After unloading, vehicles can be moved to the Garden Parking Lot. Overflow parking is available in the Labyrinth Parking Lot, north of Shepherd's Hall.

Retreat Grounds

Bethlehem Centre is set on 8 acres with gardens, a reflective pond, wooded areas, and a walking labyrinth. Nearby Westwood Lake offers a walking loop of over 6.7 km, a public beach, and lake access in favourable weather.

For more information about the grounds and site map, visit [Bethlehem Centre - Grounds](#)

Site map:



ITEMS TO BRING

Bed linens and bath towels are provided. Please bring any additional bedding or supports needed for your comfort, and a separate beach towel if you plan to swim.

- Meditation sitting gear needed for your comfort, such as a zafu, zabuton, bench, or other supports. Chairs will be available.
- Comfortable clothing suitable for layering, indoor practice, outdoor walking, and variable September weather
- Rain gear and comfortable outdoor footwear
- Swimwear and a beach towel if you want to swim in Westwood Lake
- Personal toiletries, medications, earplugs, hearing-aid batteries, sunscreen, and any other personal health supplies
- Water bottle or thermos
- An alarm clock, so that your phone can remain turned off and put away during the retreat
- Flashlight
- Any additional food or medically necessary supplies you require beyond the meal arrangements confirmed during registration
- A fan to help keep your room cool and comfortable during the summer months

Fragrance-free request: As an expression of care for those with scent sensitivities, please bring fragrance-free toiletries and personal products whenever possible.

Items to Leave Behind

- Laptops, tablets, recreational reading, music, and other materials that may draw attention away from retreat practice.
- Intoxicants and recreational drugs.

Please turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices upon arrival, except where an accessibility, caregiving, or emergency arrangement has been made with the retreat team.

MEALS

The retreat fee includes all meals from Monday dinner through Friday lunch. Meals will be vegetarian, with gluten-free and dairy-free options available as requested on your registration form.

Breakfast will be served from 8:00–9:00 am, lunch from 12:00–1:00 pm, and dinner from 5:30–6:30 pm.

If you have allergies or very specific dietary needs, please bring supplemental food and store it in the fridge provided in your guest house lounge. Microwaves and kettles are available in the guest houses, and snacks will be available outside of meal times.

There is a coffee/tea station in the Main Lobby and a small tea station in the guest house lounge.

HEALTH AND RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

We acknowledge anicca — the changing and impermanent nature of conditions — and will adjust health guidance if circumstances require.

Masks will be optional. If you choose to wear a mask, we encourage you to bring N95 masks for increased efficacy. Disposable masks will also be available for those who would like them.

As an expression of dana, or generosity, we encourage anyone who develops symptoms of a respiratory illness, such as COVID, influenza, or Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), to wear a mask around others when indoors.

Please do not attend if you are acutely ill or have symptoms of a contagious illness. Contact the retreat team as soon as possible to discuss your situation.

RETREAT COSTS AND TEACHER DANA

This retreat is offered by the Cascadia North Retreat Team, an all-volunteer group of Insight Dialogue practitioners. The team contributes 100% of the labour involved in organizing the retreat, as well as nearly all incidental expenses, such as printing, decorations, snacks, and supplies.

The retreat fee includes four nights of accommodation, all meals from Monday dinner through Friday lunch, and the teachers' accommodations, meals, and travel.

Dana is an additional consideration. Our teachers offer the Buddha's teachings in the spirit of dana — generosity. Retreatants will have an opportunity to support Anna-Brown Griswold and Sandra Ramos Amézquita through an additional offering arising from the heart of their own practice.

Dana to teachers may also be offered in the form of U.S. or Canadian cash at the end of the retreat.

We are unable to accept credit cards onsite, but dana can be offered to the teachers using credit cards via Anna-Brown's PayPal account ([PayPal link](#) or with Venmo (@Anna-Griswold-2). AB will share dana with Sandra.

NOBLE SILENCE

Our retreat will be held within what is traditionally called Noble Silence, creating a supportive container for meditative stillness, concentration, and relational practice. Together, we will interrupt familiar habits of social engagement and unnecessary verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as the pull toward reading, writing, texting, and online activity.

We invite you to make room for the possibility that purposeful silence - so rarely available in daily life - may become a precious support for practice. Please offer this gift to fellow retreatants, including roommates. Noble Silence is not an injunction to follow but a practice we cultivate together.

There will be opportunities to bring questions and concerns to the teachers and retreat managers. In the meditation hall, the teachers will guide periods of Insight Dialogue. Outside formal practice, kindness and consideration can continue to be expressed through our movements, shared spaces, and care for one another.

FIVE PRECEPTS FOR THE RETREAT

We ask everyone in the retreat community to undertake the five precepts as a practice of loving-kindness and as a commitment to co-create a safe and supportive container:

- Non-harming: exercising compassion and care for the safety and wellbeing of ourselves, one another, and surrounding life forms, like plants and animals.
- Taking only what has been freely offered and using natural and communal resources with care.
- Holding sexual energy responsibly, including maintaining celibacy during the retreat and respecting the integrity and practice of fellow retreatants by not projecting our sexual energy onto them, whether inside or outside the meditation hall.
- Speaking what is true, listening deeply, and communicating mindfully and with respect. This includes honouring Noble Silence and being deliberate in employing speech to convey only what is necessary.

- Refraining from items or activities that hamper clarity of mind in the development of mental, physical, and spiritual health. This would include putting aside recreational reading, drugs, electronic devices, intoxicants, and other distractions in order to support the deepening of our meditative practice.

RETREAT SUPPORT

If you need support related to the practice, including difficulty or discomfort in Insight Dialogue or silent meditation, please reach out to one of the teachers. For concerns related to health, comfort, accommodations, or meals, please contact the designated retreat manager.

If you experience an emergency or distress, either physically or emotionally, do not hesitate to seek direct and immediate support from our teachers or Retreat Manager.

For administrative questions prior the retreat, please contact Shurli Chan at shurlichen@gmail.com.