



Call

Celebrating Monastic Life

Sisters of the
Order of Saint Benedict®



Fall 2026

From the *Prioress*

Karen Rose, OSB, Prioress

St. Benedict doesn't give any direct advice about building a new monastery, but he has some very firm ideas about the vice of avarice. In Chapter 57, "The Artisans of the Monastery," he clearly states a policy for setting the price of goods: "The evil of avarice should have no part in establishing prices which should, therefore, always be a little lower than people outside the monastery are able to set." Our sisters have taken St. Benedict's teaching seriously and prayerfully determined that through good stewardship in the past, a significant Benedictine value, we would not *need* a capital campaign. That doesn't mean that we aren't very grateful for the gifts we have received to help build the new organ, for special projects and for in-kind gifts from some of the people with whom we are working. Many thanks are due for these blessings.

Our good stewardship undoubtedly includes having good partners, and we are deeply grateful for your generosity and support. You donated over \$2 million in this past fiscal year to partner with us in mission and ministries (p. 24). We would feel very blessed to continue that partnership as we move forward with the new monastery, focusing on how our outreach will look. That's where we genuinely *need* support to continue ministries such as liturgy, the Spirituality Center, social justice

and God, Girls and Good Times (3G) summer camps. At the back of the magazine, you'll see a "Save the Date" notice for this year's Give to the Max Day on **Thursday, November 19, 2026**. We are hoping you will join us in supporting new monastery-related projects which will benefit not just the sisters, but also the people with whom we connect and serve. We'd be very grateful for your continued partnership so that together we can carry on making a difference in the world.

With deepest gratitude for you,



Karen Rose, OSB, Prioress

P.S. Unless you request otherwise, any donations received through this magazine will be used for the projects which Give to the Max will support.

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On the Cover:
Sisters joyfully break ground for their new monastery at the groundbreaking ceremony. Taken by McGough.

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Our Mission

We, the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn., are a monastic community of women who seek God in our daily lives according to the Gospel and the *Rule of Benedict*. Through our ministry of prayer, work and community living, we listen and respond to the needs of the Church and the world.

Call is published annually by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minn., and celebrates the sisters' call and commitment to monastic life.

Sister Janine Mettling (left), 25th Jubilarian, and Sister Jeanne Marie Lust (right), 50th Jubilarian, with Sister Karen Rose, prioress, during their celebratory Jubilee service with the monastic community on July 10, 2026.



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Breaking Ground

Amanda Hackett



After years of community discernment, reflection and trusting the Holy Spirit, our community celebrated a historic milestone on June 17, 2026: the groundbreaking of our new monastery. What began as a rainy morning turned into a beautiful afternoon for the monastic community and more than 100 invited guests to come together and celebrate the occasion. The ceremony included a land acknowledgment, prayer, blessing of the ground with holy water, recognition, groundbreaking and the sisters' traditional blessing song sung over the team who will build the monastery.

Our guests in attendance represented the building and design teams, oblates, community partners and monastery supporters. We wish we could've invited each of you to join us, but we are blessed to have so many supporters that it just was not possible to do so. What a gift you are from God!

The official decision to build a new monastery was made in June 2022. We have partnered with Hammel, Green and Abrahamson (HGA) for architectural design and McGough for construction. Construction is expected to be completed in winter 2027.

As we journey through the process of building our new monastery, we know that our friends and supporters want to walk the path with us. To keep you updated as building progresses, we've created a page on our website dedicated to the new monastery. Right now, you can find answers to frequently asked questions and enjoy the highlight reel and full ceremony videos from the groundbreaking ceremony. As we build, we'll keep you updated with news, updates and photos. Visit www.sbm.osb.org/community/new-monastery/ to learn more.

Thank you for supporting us on this journey. We're excited to watch the building of our new home and even more excited to welcome you to visit when it's ready!

Learn More



A rendering of our new monastery





Sisters Kerry O'Reilly, director of planning (second from left), Karen Rose, prioress (third from right), and Jeanne Marie Lust, treasurer (right), with our architectural team at HGA.



Different groups of supporters, including our friends at Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., had a chance to help break ground!



Sister Karen Rose, prioress, used a custom-made commemorative shovel to mark the occasion!



Sisters and guests enjoyed celebrating this joyful day with one another!

As Sister Karen Rose, prioress, began the prayer service with our community's land acknowledgment statement, Sister Josue Behnen spotted two eagles soaring and circling above the trees in the woods. Moved by the Holy Spirit, she wrote this poem:

Groundbreaking

*The rain stayed its purpose
and for a short while the sky
turned a fresh blue. The sun
showed its face.*

*Such blessings on our blessing
prayer was noticed with thankful
gladness. But the marvel came
when two eagles soared as though*

*answering our recognition of the land
on which we will build is land of Lakota
and Anishinaabe where eagles gather
prayers, and bring them to the Creator.*

"The Eagle (Migizi) is one of our most revered and respected Beings in Creation. These beautiful birds represent our link to our Creator (Gchi Manidoo) and our connection to all that is Spiritual for our people. It is taught that when we lay our tobacco (sema), the Eagle (Migizi) comes down to gather our prayers and then will soar high up into Ishpeming (Above) to bring them to Creator (Gchi Manidoo)."

Read a full description of Anishinaabe teachings of the Eagle at www.saultribe.com/images/Anishinaabe_Teachings_of_the_Eagle.pdf.

Land Acknowledgment Statement

Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minn., stands on land which was the ancestral homeland of the Dakhóta and Anishinaabe peoples. The sisters acknowledge with reverence and respect the Indigenous Peoples who dwelt here.

Jubilee Classes 2026



Left: Sisters Jeanne Marie Lust, 50th Jubilarian (left), and Janine Mettling, 25th Jubilarian

Right: Sister Karen Rose, prioress (center), with 75th Jubilarians Sisters Dennis Frandrup, Renée Domeier, Lois Wedl and Marie Reisinger (left to right). Taken by Dianne Towalski, The Central Minnesota Catholic.

In Memoriam

In loving memory of our sisters who would have celebrated significant anniversaries in monastic life with this year's jubilee classes.

Class of 1951

Columba (Mary) Hawkes, OSB
Edna (Priscilla) Otte, OSB
Ellen (Phyllis) Cotone, OSB
Joyce Williams, OSB
Leona (Rosemary) Caspers, OSB
Margaret (Leo) Schweiss, OSB

Marguerite Meyers, OSB
Mary Jo (Robert) Donaldson, OSB
Michelle (Irma) Schumacher, OSB
Sheila (Shirley) Rausch, OSB
Vivia (Doris) Theisen, OSB

Class of 1966

Mary (Jeanette) Maves, OSB



25th Jubilee: Janine Mettling, OSB

Jeanne Marie Lust, OSB



S. Janine directing the monastic Schola



Sister Janine Mettling is well known to those who attend the monastery's Sunday liturgies as the Schola director with the fabulous voice — but there's a lot more to S. Janine than her undoubted musical gifts.

The youngest of Paul and Mavis Mettling's seven children, S. Janine grew up in a loving family on a farm near Pine City, Minn. An avid student, she attended St. Mary's Catholic Grade School in Pine City and graduated as salutatorian from Pine City High School in 1989. She then graduated summa cum laude from the College of Saint Benedict (CSB), St. Joseph, Minn., in 1993 with a major in music education. As any Schola member will attest, S. Janine is an amazing music and voice teacher, but in her college days, other gifts also came to the fore. She was a member of the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University Chamber Choir, performed in opera productions and played on the CSB basketball team which made it to Division III Final Four.

Following graduation, S. Janine taught briefly at the St. Joseph Lab School in St. Joseph and then for 11 years at John XXIII Middle School and Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, Minn. As well as teaching music and directing choirs, she coached varsity girls basketball, taking them to the state tournament. It was a full

and satisfying life, but there was a voice which kept asking something more from S. Janine ... it was God's voice calling her to monastic life. She said "Yes!" and entered the monastery in 1999, making first monastic profession in 2001 and perpetual monastic profession in 2004.

During her time at the monastery, S. Janine has used her teaching and musical gifts to serve the community. She is currently the music and Schola director, where her deep and searching faith enables her to help members project not just the correct notes, but the underlying meaning of what they are singing. There have been opportunities for her to share her glorious voice and musical talent with a wider audience, including concerts in Sacred Heart Chapel. Of special note are her role in directing the Schola for the world premiere of "Quia Ergo Femina" by Turkish composer Yiğit Kolat and a heart-stopping rendition of "O Domina Nostra" by Henryk Gorecki. She also served as liturgy director for a Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum meeting, an organization that unites Benedictine women throughout the world, in Rome.

In typical Benedictine fashion, S. Janine has been called to a variety of other ministries, including as a member of the Monastic Council, the St. Cloud Diocesan Synod Team and Deacon Advisory Board, and the St. Cloud Hospital Board. S. Janine has a very inquiring mind which leads to a broad range of interests, from sharing her skill in healing touch with community members, through dedicated support of her grandnieces' and nephews' athletics, to learning new languages and active involvement with the monastery's social justice ministries, a tangible expression of her deep commitment to the Gospel: "That in all things God may be glorified."



S. Janine (second from left) on the CSB Basketball team

50th Jubilee: Jeanne Marie Lust, OSB

Julie Schleper, OSB

S. Jeanne teaching at CSB



Entering Chapel Lane at Saint Benedict's Monastery during the months of July and August, an immediate left glimpse will reveal a magnificent view of colorful flowers. This

flower garden is the work of

Sister Jeanne Marie Lust. From her early growing-up years as a small-town child, S. Jeanne was implanted with the love of beauty found in God's creation. Living in the southern Minnesota town of Matawan and then moving to New Richland, Minn., at the age of 10, she loved exploring the outdoors.

After high school graduation, S. Jeanne chose a rural college and arrived at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University (CSB+SJU) in 1969 to major in biology. She graduated in May 1973 and entered Saint Benedict's Monastery in the fall. After her formation years, S. Jeanne taught seventh and 10th graders at John XXIII/Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, Minn., devising meaningful lesson plans to keep her students engaged in the study of biology.

After eight years, S. Jeanne was invited to prepare to teach at CSB+SJU. She completed her doctorate degree in zoology from the University of Minnesota in 1990 and taught courses in introductory biology, development and invertebrate zoology for 33 years. During all of

her teaching years, her care for each student and her teaching style earned her the reputation of a favorite teacher!

After retiring from teaching, S. Jeanne was asked to be the monastery treasurer. Her teaching skills are now evident when she shares with the monastic community our financial situation. Keenly aware of how people learn, she continues to use visuals effectively and explores the content with creativity that results in community members understanding complex issues.

S. Jeanne enjoys God's creation in her summertime sport of golfing at Rich Spring Golf Course in Cold Spring, Minn. As a focused golfer, she has been the women's club champion 14 times, and on a beautiful evening in June 2025, she achieved her first hole-in-one!

A gift and love for music finds S. Jeanne singing in the monastic Schola, cantoring for Liturgy of the Hours and playing her guitar on occasion. In addition, she enjoys watching sports games, occasionally putting together a puzzle and spending precious quality time celebrating birthdays and vacations with her siblings.

Through all of this, S. Jeanne maintains the flower garden just off Chapel Lane, delighting in the variety of flowers and allowing the weeds to have a bit of space as well. This is a great metaphor for her personality and relational skills: loving a variety of people (flowers), accepting differences (weeds) and seeing the goodness in everyone. Her kindness is apparent in all her relationships. Her 50 years of monastic living and praying are now needing celebration!



S. Jeanne's hole-in-one!

75th Jubilee: Dennis (Olivia Blanche) Frandrup, OSB

Ephrem Hollermann, OSB



*W*ho knew? For the first 18 years of her life, Sister Dennis Frandrup was known to her family as “Blanche.” When her birth certificate was reviewed at the time of her entrance into the Benedictine

community, her first name was discovered to be Olivia, with Blanche recorded as her middle name.

Olivia Blanche Frandrup was born on July 12, 1932, on a farm near Hampton, Minn., the eighth of 11 children born to Frank and Bertha (Freiermuth) Frandrup. She grew up working on the family farm with her father and brothers and attended the Catholic elementary school in Hampton, staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She once remarked: “There were lots of siblings older than me, and when that happens the older ones tend to give you orders, but I had ways of getting around that!” This comment may account for the lifelong mischievous twinkle in her eyes and the happy jokester aspects of her personality.

S. Dennis learned about the Benedictine sisters in St. Joseph, Minn., through her parish priest in Hampton and family members already in the community, including her cousin, Sister Marjory Freiermuth, and her older sister, Sister Shirley Frandrup. Blanche followed suit and entered the novitiate as S. Dennis. She made her final profession in 1954, the same year her younger sister Cleo, then Sister Benet Frandrup, celebrated her first profession as a Benedictine sister.

After S. Dennis finished high school at Saint Benedict’s High School in St. Joseph, she was missioned to study education at the Diocesan

Teachers’ College in St. Paul, Minn. She then received her bachelor’s degree from the College of Saint Benedict (CSB) in history with minors in psychology and philosophy. Although not her preferred work, S. Dennis served as a teacher and principal in diocesan schools for 17 years.

In 1970, S. Dennis was missioned to study art, beginning what would become her life’s work and cherished dream. After studying both at Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee, Wis., and Sienna Heights University (SHU) in Adrian, Mich., she earned a master’s degree from SHU. She joined the CSB faculty in 1973, where she taught art for more than 35 years. Known as a gifted artist and beloved teacher, she not only taught technique but values as well: “Pottery is a form of worship” she believed and taught. Upon her retirement in 2005, S. Dennis became a CSB “Artist in Residence” where she continued her art for a number of years.

As a renowned artist locally and beyond, S. Dennis’ work as a ceramicist, potter and sculptor has been widely exhibited and admired, notably in “A Ceramic Celebration” (2013) at the Benedicta Arts Center at CSB and “By the Work of Her Hands” (2022) at the Haehn Museum at the Art and Heritage Place, Saint Benedict’s Monastery.

Deeply rooted in Benedictine spirituality, S. Dennis cites the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist as central to her Benedictine monastic life. “Consecration of Virgins” in 1973 was a peak experience in her life of faith — a “re-dedication for me,” she humbly claimed. Thank you, S. Dennis, for your faithful witness, creative spirit and lasting influence among us!



One of S. Dennis’ favorite childhood photos. She was proud to prove how strong she was!

75th Jubilee: Lois (Isabelle) Wedl, OSB

Nancy Bauer, OSB



Isabelle Wedl decided to become a Benedictine sister one day when she was ... No, that's not right. Isabelle Wedl did not have a whole day to ponder her vocation. She had about a minute. She was a senior

rushing to class at St. Boniface High School (SBHS) in Cold Spring, Minn., when Sister Martin Fiedler caught her on the stairway. S. Martin explained that the St. Cloud Hospital was offering a scholarship in medical technology and the faculty decided it should go to Miss Wedl. "Well, do you want it?" S. Martin wanted to know immediately, "Or do you plan to join the convent?"

S. Martin and SBHS have now gone the way of the mimeograph machine, but at age 95, Sister Lois Wedl is still with us. When someone asks her if she prayed a lot before deciding to enter religious life, she recalls that moment on the steps of SBHS and responds, "No, I didn't pray at all about it." She didn't have time.

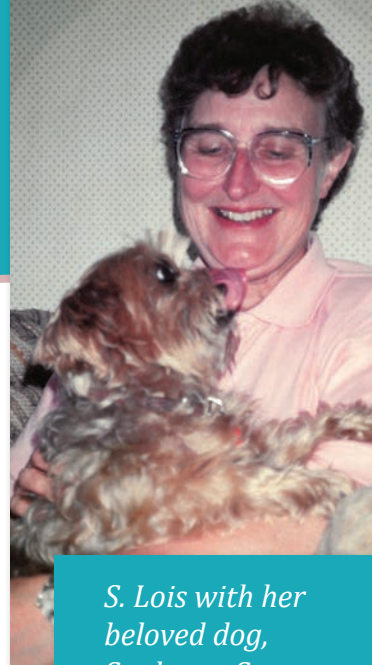
S. Lois entered Saint Benedict's Monastery after high school graduation and made her first profession on July 11, 1951. In the 75 years since then, she has planted her heart in many places, beginning as a teacher and principal

at Catholic schools in Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud and Long Prairie, all in Minnesota. In 1964, she went to Humacao, Puerto Rico, where she was a teacher, principal and superior of a developing Benedictine community. She returned to Minnesota in 1974 but still wears a Puerto Rico T-shirt now and then.

In 1986, having earned a doctoral degree in educational counseling and psychology, S. Lois began teaching at the College of Saint Benedict (CSB). On her first day at CSB, a student raised her hand and asked, "Sister, are you coming to our volleyball game tonight?" That invitation began a never-ending love affair between S. Lois and the sports teams at the college. She attended games, home and away, as often as possible. Now, in retirement, she either attends games or catches them on livestream. In 2021, the college named an athletic complex in her honor: The Sister Lois Wedl Athletic Center.

It would not be right to write about S. Lois without mentioning her fascination with Charlie Brown. She sends the daily Peanuts cartoon via email to numerous friends, and, in turn, her friends have peppered her with Peanuts paraphernalia.

Finally, it is time to identify S. Lois' primary love: God, of course. When asked what she likes most about Benedictine life, she said that it fosters in her a "nearness to God," but as she celebrates 75 years of faithfulness to monastic life, she said she thinks more and more about God's faithfulness to her.



S. Lois with her beloved dog, Sunbeam Supreme



S. Lois (left) with her friend, Arthur, an Iraq War veteran. After writing a letter to soldiers serving in the Iraq War, she was amazed to receive a letter back! This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

75th Jubilee: Marie (Elmer) Reisinger, OSB

Katherine Kraft, OSB



Capturing what made Sister Marie Reisinger who she is begins with her early years. She grew up on a farm in the shadow of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., amid lakes, forests, fields and sky, a kind of Garden of Eden.

As a child, she was in awe of the beauty all around her. She was shaped by her parents' care of the land, farm animals, anyone in need, as well as their appreciation for music, art, literature and their deep faith in God. The Reisingers were members of Saint John the Baptist Parish, attending Eucharist in the Abbey church and singing Gregorian chant. Evening prayer with the entire family, including Grandpa, ended every day.

An attraction to monastic life emerged during her years attending Saint Benedict's High School on our campus in St. Joseph, Minn. The dome with its cross reaching skyward spoke to an inner longing for God. She entered the community in 1948, beginning 75 years of prayer, work, seeking God and serving others.

The scope and variety of S. Marie's ministry in Minnesota and Alaska are a testimony to her many talents. She served as principal and teacher of intermediate grades and in summer school religious formation programs over a 27-year span. She expressed gratitude for her time with the Anishinaabe of Red Lake and White Earth in Minnesota and with the diverse Native peoples of Alaska. Building the Trans-Alaska Pipeline brought people from many countries and resulted in ecumenical cooperation and community. That experience enriched and expanded her respect for

racial and cultural diversity.

In 1982, S. Marie was appointed pastoral administrator in Wasilla, Alaska. She lived in a trailer house near the church and parish offices, and the long, dark winter nights meant time to view the galaxies. She said a dark night can calm an unsettled mind, quoting Psalm 16: "Even at night you instruct me."

S. Marie returned to the monastery in 1985 for a deserved respite from work. She enrolled in theology classes at Saint John's School of Theology in Collegeville and was certified in Feldenkrais, physical therapy which uses gentle movement and directs attention to improve bodily coordination and reduce pain. Sisters benefited from her skill.

For years, S. Marie helped with hospitality: assisting with retreats, setting tables, serving special meals and cleaning up afterward. Her generous service continues. She helps sisters moving to Saint Scholastica Convent, our retirement community in St. Cloud, Minn., and responds to many requests to "fix" things. In 2013, S. Marie began working with Sister Ingrid Anderson, Sister Baulu Kuan and Elizabeth Roberts, a faithful volunteer, collecting and cataloging the monastery's permanent art collection. She cleans, repairs, frames and displays artwork of our sisters and other artists, and her love of beauty in all its forms is a gift she shares generously.

A quote from Audrey Hepburn says, "The beauty of a woman grows with the passing of years." This is clearly true of you, S. Marie, and we are deeply grateful.



S. Marie operating a shrimp boat in Alaska

75th Jubilee: Renée (Mary Catherine) Domeier, OSB

Kathleen Rademacher, OSB



A Benedictine monastic for 75 years, Sister Renée Domeier continues to be a woman of the Word who models faithfulness to the *Rule of Benedict* and our lived tradition.

God-seeds were planted in her young heart by her devoted parents, Charles and Rose, as well as by the Benedictine sisters who taught her in grade school, high school and college. Coming from a farm near the small town of Fairfax, Minn., she learned the value of hard work. Her sense of **wonder** grew as she observed the trees, plants and crops bursting forth in the spring as well as the formation of the moving clouds in the sky. She seemed to know that she, too, was a child of the universe no less than the budding flowers and trees. Her keen sense of beauty could not stop her young mind from **wondering** beneath the surface of God's creation.

S. Renée enjoying a relaxing afternoon at Fish Trap Lake



S. Renée's love for solitude and her search for deeper meanings continued through her years at Saint Benedict's High School and the College of Saint Benedict (CSB), both in St. Joseph, Minn., as well as at St. Catherine's College in

St. Paul, Minn., where she earned a master's degree in Spanish studies. Further studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich., earned her a master's and doctorate degree. In between those years, she taught grade and high school students whom she dearly loved. Those years were followed by 25 years of teaching Spanish at CSB. After a total of almost 35 years of teaching, she retired but did not stop there. Being the risk-taker that she is, she ventured forth and founded Casa Guadalupe which was a center of hospitality and safe place for Hispanic immigrants in the Cold Spring, Minn., area. There she served as an interpreter, translator and helping in whatever ways she could to protect the immigrants from real or apparent injustices.

After 12 years of service to the Hispanic community, S. Renée retired. She now resides at Saint Scholastica Convent, our home for the retired, aging and sick sisters, in St. Cloud, Minn. There she continues to give witness by her gentle demeanor, her strong sense of **wonder**, her love for solitude and her involvement in the daily work and prayer of the sisters living there. It is there that she is a warm and welcoming presence, giving a multitude of hugs to the many visiting friends she amassed from all over the country and world over the past 75 years. Her calm approach to life and listening skills give hope to those who interact with her. She, no doubt, would agree with theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said that if one cannot listen to others, one cannot listen to God.

Congratulations, S. Renée, as you celebrate your 75th Jubilee. May you always be awake to the joys of the present moment, and may God fill your kind and compassionate heart with deep peace as you continue to **wonder** at the beauty of God's marvelous creations be they human, animal or cosmic.

Ministry Moments

Lucinda Mareck, OSB

Serving as a pastoral minister in various parishes was part of my life for years. Now that I am retired, people continue to come to me in their need.

In late winter 2026, a young married couple from the Twin Cities called me. They said they were coming to Krewe, a local restaurant here in St. Joseph, Minn., for a birthday party. Before going to the party, they wanted to meet with me at the monastery to talk about their situation in life and pray with them. They came, we talked, I listened a lot and we went to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to pray together.

In March 2026, my cousin died in Santa Barbara, Calif. His wife called me asking for help with preparing the liturgy for the funeral Mass which would be held at Saint John's Abbey Church in Collegeville, Minn. The cremated remains came from Santa Barbara and were inurned in the Abbey Columbarium. Many of my cousins attended the funeral. Cousins in my family stick together — we are there for one another.

In May 2026, I was invited to give the closing prayer at a retirement ceremony honoring a lieutenant colonel observing 22 years of military service in the United States Army. The ceremony was held at Saint John's University in Collegeville where he was first commissioned when he was a university student. I learned to know him through his wife, who is my Benedictine Friend of 26 years. She has kept in touch with me ever since she was a first-year student at the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph in 2000. Now they live in Iowa, and

each year they bring their two daughters to God, Girls and Good Times (3G) Camp, our Catholic Benedictine camp for girls in grades 4-11 here at Saint Benedict's Monastery.

Also in May, a woman was staying in one of our hermitages for a short time. She asked to talk with a sister about Project Rachel, which is the Catholic Church's post-abortion healing ministry. It operates as a support group for people who are seeking confidential and nonjudgmental support as they grieve the loss of a child by abortion. This woman was about to help facilitate a Project Rachel group and wanted extra help with the process of support group facilitation. It was a good experience for me to listen to her as I had many years of experience in leading grief support groups of all kinds.

In addition to ministering for specific events, there are special requests for prayer. Through my sister, I came to know of a married couple in Toledo, Ohio. They were in their mid-30s with a one-year-old daughter. Both were medical doctors working by night in emergency rooms in two different hospitals in Toledo. Recently they were both at home when she passed out. For 20 minutes, he tried to bring her back to life but could not. She died right before his eyes. His mother is a friend of my sister and asked me to pray for the family.

When I pray for people in need, I pray that the Life, Love and Healing of God would flow through me. I don't do the healing — God does. I want to be the open channel through which God's love flows out to people in need.

A New Pilgrimage

Nina Lasceski, OSB



S. Nina in between "The Stacks"

*I*t started like a typical day. I was sitting in my development office, going over emails, filing pending documents, returning phone calls and checking things off my to-do list.

As I was focusing on a task, I heard a knock on my door. It was the prioress. She asked if I could come to her office for a moment. I said yes and followed her down the hall. It was not uncommon to have meetings from time to time with her, as she often wanted updates on projects I was working on, but those meetings were usually scheduled — this one was not. And so, the walk down the hall to her office seemed much longer than normal.

I got to her office, sat down and she asked me how my day was and what projects I was working on. I answered her, she shared affirming words, and I thanked her. Then there was a pause in the conversation.

The next few moments are a bit of a blur to me now, but I do remember this: She asked me to begin work in the Archives as the archivist. She went on to say that she felt the gifts I had would fit well

with the role, and there would be time to be trained before I took on the position full-time.

For me, this conversation came as a complete surprise. I had been working in development for many years, first as a development associate, then the added responsibility of planned gift specialist, and for the past few years, director of development. I was using the skills I had been trained in before joining the community and growing them each day.

Now, I needed to prepare for a real change. Was I ready? After a few tears flowed down my cheeks, knowing I would be saying goodbye to a job I loved, I began to get ready for a new challenge. Yet, I grieved. And then I remembered, I had at one point said in a survey we did at the monastery that the Archives was an area I would be interested in. I love detail-oriented work and love to research, and guess what? That is just what I was going to begin to do.

As I now walk down the steps to the Archives, I realize that this journey each day is like a pilgrimage. It's not the straight hallway I was used to in my old job, yet a new destination to travel to. When I open the door to the Archives each day, I have the privilege of helping people research family history or monastic community history and use many of the skills I had in my development role.

There is not a day that goes by that I don't learn something new. Each day is like a new gift, being unwrapped, for others and for me, a little at a time. And, for that, I am grateful.



Reviewing archival photos

A Change of Pace

Morgan Terning



Morgan (left) baking bread with Sister Geraldine Zierden

The summer between ending high school and starting college — what a big summer! While deciding how I wanted to spend this summer, I came across the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict and found their Benedictine Live-In Experience program.

It was exactly what I wanted: a chance to breathe after the chaos of graduating high school and before the craziness of starting college. I'd be attending the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn., in the fall, so it just felt perfect. I applied and soon decided that the month of June would be when I would spend time with the sisters. I would be able to spend the month volunteering and focusing on my relationship with God, putting God before everything else and using the hands He's given me to help others.

June soon came, and I became nervous of how this month would go. It was all so foreign to me as I am not Catholic and had minimal exposure to the Catholic faith before. However, I knew God was calling me to do this. He opened all the doors to this program, and all I needed to do was trust Him and walk through those doors.

I arrived on June 1, and I will always remember that day as it was the day my life changed. I was greeted by so many open arms and kind hearts. Even three weeks in, I have yet to meet a sister I do not adore. While I was so out of my comfort zone and didn't know anyone here, I soon became so comfortable. I feel right at home and at peace here. I feel satisfied after a day of volunteering and praying. I have so many amazing conversations every day with the sisters, both humorous and deeply spiritual. I have learned things about life,

myself and my relationship with the Lord. I love starting, breaking from and ending my day with prayer. One of my favorite parts of the days are meals when we come together, find people to sit with and chat.

Days here start with Morning Prayer at 7 a.m. We have the option to either eat at the silent breakfast before prayer, or if you like to chat, you can go after and have breakfast then. I have my first block of volunteer work from 8:30-11 a.m. I have done a little bit of everything around here, from raking leaves to going through paperwork. We have Midday Prayer and lunch after that. At 1 p.m., I start my afternoon volunteer block and again do all kinds of things to help around the monastery — there's no getting bored with what you are doing! At 3:30 p.m., I am done for the day and can go for walks, read, take a nap, journal, etc. Evening Prayer takes place at 5 p.m., and then we eat dinner. Evenings are free to spend as you wish. Often, I watch a movie or show with the sisters I live with. I also go on evening walks with the sisters occasionally. I love the rhythm of the days here!

This has been such a meaningful and moving month, and I've met sisters I hope to stay in touch with for a long time. I've also spent lots of time walking around this beautiful campus, and it already feels like home. While it saddens me to think of leaving this wonderful place and these wonderful sisters, I'm grateful for this experience and will carry it with me for the rest of my life.

I feel refreshed, connected to God and changed in the best ways!

Morgan Terning wrote this reflection while participating in the Benedictine Live-In Experience program in June 2026. This residential volunteer program provides women the opportunity to refresh their lives by sharing in the prayer and work of our monastic community. Learn more at www.sbm.osb.org/ministry/live-in/.



Ministry in Community

“To their fellow [sisters] they show the pure love of [sisters].”

Rule of Benedict 72:8

Living in community, sisters minister to one another in many ways. Enjoy reflections from two sisters living at Saint Benedict's Monastery about the ways they minister to their fellow sisters. Reflections from sisters living at Saint Scholastica Convent, our retirement center in St. Cloud, Minn., are found on pages 30-31.

Lisa Rose, OSB



"I fell in love with massage after receiving my first massage shortly after I entered the community. As I came away from the experience feeling calm, refreshed and relaxed, I kept saying to myself I hope to do this ministry for the community in the future."

In 2003, the opportunity to pursue this ministry became a reality. I was asked to look for a massage school to attend because the sisters who were currently ministering in massage were no longer able to continue. As I researched massage schools, I contacted a friend who received her training at Sister Rosalind's School of Massage. I was fortunate to find that Sister Rosalind Schools had opened a clinic in Sauk Rapids, Minn., so I registered for an eight-week introductory course titled Swedish Massage. I was thrilled that on my first evening of class, I met S. Rosalind.

My training included both classroom learning and opportunities to practice the skills of massage

therapy. I had many sisters, family and friends willing to be my clients during the eight weeks; all I asked of them was to evaluate my massage technique by giving me feedback after our session. Because I was only going to minister to sisters, the introductory training I received gave me the skills needed to give a complete massage to community members.

Massage is beneficial both physically and spiritually. The atmosphere in the slightly darkened room is quiet and calm, with soft music playing. I begin with a silent prayer because for me, this time together is a healing prayer. I use gently scented cream to moisturize the skin during the massage. The technique I use consists of a variety of long strokes on the back and legs and kneading of the shoulders and arms. I learn the importance of listening to the sister who is receiving the massage and the type of pressure she may ask for.

Since I began my massage ministry in 2003, I have given over 5,000 massages in the community. Massage continues to be a rewarding ministry for me."

Iris Beckwith, OSB



“When I first entered Saint Benedict’s Monastery here in St. Joseph, Minn., I had already completed my registered nurse training and state boards. That was a long time ago! My first mentor in this community was Sister Giovanni Bieniek who

was then the director of our sisters’ infirmary here on second floor of the Main Building. She took me under her wing and trained me on how to care for the elderly sisters’ feet.

Her solemn belief was that ‘These are the feet of Christ.’ Her wholehearted belief in this became my motto as well, and she told me a story that changed my whole perspective on care of the feet. She was taking care of Sister Methodia Drajna, who had her feet in S. Giovanni’s lap. S. Giovanni told me she was feeling sorry for herself in believing she had been moved from a prestigious position as director of nursing at St. Benedict’s Hospital in Ogden, Utah, to ‘this — an infirmary nurse’ here at Saint Benedict’s Monastery.

When she looked down into her lap at S. Methodia’s feet, she saw the feet of Christ: bloody, dirty, spike holes. She wept buckets that day because she knew why she was called to come home: ‘These truly are the feet of Christ, and I am privileged to care for them.’

During my tenure as a hospital nurse, I was able to work for many years in the operating room, and it was there that I met and worked with five different podiatrists, each with different and unique ways of doing things. They taught me a variety of practices which I am currently using today. I have been a full-time foot care clinician for 15 years now and care for about 90 sisters in our community. I love my job, and I truly believe that when your feet feel good, you feel good all over, and when they hurt, they rule your life!

Dear S. Giovanni, you blessed me by training me and sharing your knowledge and joy in a job that I believe is needed and appreciated by so many

of our sisters. Thank you for sharing your time, talent, wisdom and stories with me so long ago. I continue to hold all of them in my heart!”



S. Iris performing foot care



Discernment isn't a word most of us use on a regular basis — it's a word we typically reserve for someone thinking about religious life or priesthood.

When someone thinks they might have a call to religious life or priesthood, sometimes we say “discerning a vocation” as though there is only one type of “vocation” that could be discerned. As if one wouldn't discern a vocation to single life, and especially not marriage!

Discernment is really a process of seeking, reflecting and evaluating before we make any decision. Often it stems from a restlessness within us, a longing for something more, something different. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine tells us “...our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” Our baptismal call is to live a holy life, a life in relationship with God, a life where

we experience God's love, hear the voice of God in a variety of ways, and with guidance of the Holy Spirit and a lot of grace, trust God enough to act on whatever has surfaced from prayer, whatever will bring us peace and take away the restlessness, because we know it's resting in the Lord. Even when it's hard.

So, maybe part of our baptismal call is a call to discernment — a call that is not a once-and-done process, but rather a continual evaluation and seeking of how God is acting in our lives and how we can be the best disciples, sharing our faith through our words and actions.

While discernment is ongoing, it's also about making a choice. The restlessness we feel won't go away if we only “think” we might be called to religious life but never act on it. Someone recently said to me that the younger generations are afraid of lifelong commitments because they think “something better might come along.” There is always that risk, but discernment is a process to help us find peace, a peace that will exist even if another opportunity presents itself. Discernment is a process to help us know when to move and when to stay put. It's a process we should engage in each

time we feel that restlessness and discomfort arise in us.

We live in a world full of busyness and distractions. Smartphones and other technology allow us to do more mundane tasks quickly, so we have time for “more” (more of what — I’m not quite sure). But technologies — perhaps social media — which allow us to escape for just a moment sometimes consume much longer than that “moment” we intended.

Fewer mundane tasks and more screen time lead to less time for quiet and more discomfort with silence than previous generations. It can feel easier to leave discernment to those “seeking a vocation” rather than creating a regular time and place to listen to God and trust the direction given, even when it may seem contradictory to common sense, or sometimes, it just feels too hard!

For me, I like talking, and people enjoy engaging with me in conversation — why do I need to talk less? Holding back so others can share, even when I receive positive feedback from others about my storytelling — surely that’s not what you’re asking of me, God?

Perhaps discernment feels daunting because we think it’s only about these really big, life-altering decisions (which, let’s be honest, they often are), but what if we made it a regular part of our prayer life, and learned to really listen and trust God?

If we trust God in the small things, then, when we do need to “discern the big questions,” we can be ready to place that greater trust in the Lord. We can learn to listen to God through scripture, through others, through silence. And that elusive silence can be found in many places — journaling, sitting in front of the Blessed Sacrament or walking in nature. We experience and recognize moments of deep inner peace — moments we know God is with us.

Taking time for silent prayer allows us to be more aware of the way the Holy Spirit is acting throughout our day. Reflecting on our day helps us to see the many graces and blessings each of us receives.

By fostering a relationship with God, we can open ourselves up and follow God’s lead, even when it’s hard. Even though there might be discomfort, ultimately, the greater sense of peace and ability to rest our hearts in the Lord will help us persevere in following whatever God asks of us. Taking a leap of faith after a time of discernment is necessary for our own growth and maturing as disciples.

So, don’t be afraid of the word “discernment” — it’s a part of our baptismal call. It’s not scary — it’s simply about listening, relationship and deep inner peace!

Courage and Clarity

Liz Brannan



Liz as a Benedictine sister

I joined Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., after graduating from Cathedral High School, taught by Benedictine sisters, in St. Cloud, Minn. There was something about religious life that strongly attracted me, but I was not sure if this life would be for me — it was so different than what I was used to, and I worried that I wouldn't be qualified for what I was asked to do. Yet, I wanted to try it. At that time, my pastor

and my parents were my support and guidance in making this decision.

During my first five years of formation in the way of Benedictine life, I questioned continuing several times. These were down times for me. With guidance from my superiors, I continued and made perpetual monastic profession.

Ministry is an important element of Benedictine life, as is prayer, community living and service to others. Over the years, my ministry took me into teaching, music, religious education, chaplaincy work, working among those who were poor or unhoused in the Twin Cities, and a variety of other experiences. During these years of ministry, there were times again when I would wrestle with

my call to this way of life. I was beginning to feel restrained and isolated — I wasn't getting any "life" out of this lifestyle anymore.

I finally got the courage to speak to the prioress about my personal dilemma. Together we decided that I would take a leave of absence for three years, which meant that I would continue with my work and continue to pray and trust that the Spirit would give me peace in whatever decision I made.

My spirituality changed over the years, especially during and after my graduate work in pastoral ministry at Seattle University in Seattle, Wash. I found that I began relating to God differently. God became a loving, personal God. The judging God, the God of fear and punishment, the God of distance, no longer existed for me. This was a very freeing experience — I no longer worried about disappointing other people or failing God. This spiritual change within me finally gave me the courage to leave religious life more than 25 years after I entered.

Since the day I left the Benedictine community, "Once a Benedictine, always a Benedictine" is a thought I have carried in my heart. My journey as a religious sister, over many years, felt like a transformational journey. I have not regretted my decision. I realize how all that went into my decision to leave has made me a better person in ways that could not have happened if I had left during my early years. What



Liz volunteering

Following God's Call



Liz (left) with her husband, Ken

riches might I have missed that came from the opportunity of living in a religious community? I think of friendships, prayer life, a good education, a love for church ministry and stewardship, modeled so well by the community, to name only a few.

In all of my struggles with this decision, I came to strongly believe that God would love me no matter what decision I made. I learned from all my doubts, unsettling times and unmet expectations that when things come together, a positive response comes with new clarity. For me, that is peace within.

The monastic community I left many years ago is different now. The lifestyle has changed as the sisters have looked ahead to their future and their role in the work of the Church and world. My life has changed, too. I moved forward and began considering a decision to marry. When making serious decisions, trusting the work of the Spirit is important but not easy. This time of decision making was not a time when I wanted to use

only my personal guiding force — I needed the influence and experiences of others to help my decision become clear and complete. I again sought counseling, along with spiritual direction, a time of retreat and the wisdom of trusted friends. After a series of events that cleared the path for me, I was ready to follow the call to marriage.

After being away from my life as a monastic for 40 years, it has been important for me to stay connected to my Benedictine roots. My husband, Ken, and I have remained connected with the community through volunteering and attending Sunday Mass, special liturgical events and events sponsored by the sisters.

I also stay connected with friends in the community. Recently, I visited my classmates who are now at Saint Scholastica Convent, the sisters' retirement community in St. Cloud. We still enjoy seeing each other, and it is a bond that will not be lost — that is what community life can do. Even though we are all aging, I experience the same personalities I came to know so long ago.

My time living in a monastic community gave me tools to live the Christian life founded in Benedictine values including the habit of personal prayer, appreciation of times of quiet and reflection, awareness of God in so many places, and a spirit of outreach to those in need. I hold a heart filled with gratitude to my Benedictine community and an awareness of an abundance of blessings because of my call to religious life and later to the call to married life. My advice to a young woman discerning where God is calling her to be is this:

“Listen to your heart and where your heart is drawn. Whenever you experience inner peace, that is the decision to make.”

Home Away From Home

Amanda Hackett

For several years, a unique partnership between Saint Benedict's Monastery and Saint John's School of Theology (SOT) in Collegeville, Minn., has been growing. When Catholic sisters from religious communities in Vietnam arrive to study at SOT, the monastery welcomes them to live as a member among them.

Two of our resident Vietnamese sisters, Sisters My Nguyen and My Tran, recently graduated from SOT with master's degrees in theology. S. My N. is a member of Our Lady of Unity of Bac Ninh, Vietnam, and S. My T. is a Dominican sister from southern Vietnam. They both began their education living in SOT's on-campus dorms. They enjoyed the convenience but longed for the community life they experienced at home. That longing was an answered prayer in Saint Benedict's Monastery. While praying one day in the monastery's Blessed Sacrament Chapel, S. My N. heard God tell her that "This is her place." She asked Sister Karen Rose, prioress of Saint Benedict's Monastery, if she could live here while continuing her studies. Permission was granted, and she moved into the monastery.

Both sisters agree that the Benedictine value of hospitality is evident here, and they're excited to bring new practices of hospitality with them to share with their home communities. Here, they feel safe, comfortable and supported, and the spirit of this lifestyle reminds them of the community life they live back home. Neither feels that she is an

outsider living among strangers — rather, they are additional members of one large, diverse family.

S. My T.'s (center) graduation ceremony with Sisters Jeanne Marie Lust (left), Karen Rose, prioress (third from right), and Nina Lasceski (right)



A daily rhythm of community prayer is a hallmark of monastic life everywhere, and Ss. My N. and My T. enjoy praying the Liturgy of the Hours with the sisters here.

S. My N. shared that Liturgy of the Hours is prayed slowly here in comparison to her home community. She appreciates the slower pace of prayer and the opportunity to reflect in silence between the Psalms. In addition to daily prayer, S. My T. shared that she loves participating in the inspiring liturgical events during Holy Week and other feast days, especially experiencing how our culture intertwines with the liturgy.

A wonderful bonus in this partnership between SOT and the monastery is that there is often more than one Vietnamese sister living here at any given time. Together they enjoy common language, culture and support, easing the pangs of homesickness that may arise from time to time. They've also enjoyed sharing their culture with us, such as hosting Lunar New Year celebrations complete with vibrant decorations and delicious food. We've delighted in the cultural sharing, too!

S. My N. returned home in August and will miss the sisters' joy, the peaceful environment and the snow and changing colors of fall. S. My T. will live here for another year as she continues her studies. When she returns home, she'll miss the sisters here and the hospitality they share. However, she experiences peace in knowing that they have developed a lifelong friendship and will continue to be in relationship together through prayer.



Ss. My T. (left) and My N. (right) with Sisters Philip Zimmer (back) and Dorothy Manuel

"Everyone Needs a Hobby"

Julie Schleper, OSB

*M*y love of quilting and sewing began as a hobby! When I was granted a brief sabbatical from teaching and parish ministry in 1998, I heard, "Everyone needs a hobby." My mother loved to sew and quilt — she created so many necessary items from fabric and always felt happy and satisfied with a completed item. Therefore, I registered for three sessions at a small quilt shop in Avon, Minn. Here I learned the basics of quilting — how to choose and piece fabric, the use of batting, the need of an appropriate backing to sandwich a quilt, and the importance of small hand-stitches. I experienced the beautiful and artistic designs of cotton fabric! To begin this hobby, all I needed was a small "retreat-style" sewing machine, a rotary cutter, mat and ruler, as well as a table. With these in hand, I created my first quilted wall hanging. My creative spirit was renewed!

The following year, I began my 13-year ministry in faith formation at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Becker, Minn. The seven small classrooms were very bleak with stark white walls. With the help of two catechists, we created a wall hanging for each room representing the seven colors of the rainbow. The children and catechists were pleased with the color and the acoustic difference it added to the room. Again my creative spirit was renewed, and it was the beginning of my awareness of what difference the use

of fabric makes in any environment.

At about the same time, I received a large box filled with a variety of sizes and designs of fabrics from my sister who was living in an apartment complex. Another resident wondered whether I could use some leftover cotton fabric and handed the box to my sister. From that box of donated fabric, I made two reversible bedspreads, one for my sister and one for myself. These beginnings helped me to feel confident in creating items for our gift shops.

Presently, I listen to various tutorials and gain ideas for making seasonal items from the internet. In July, tutorials are available for Christmas items — how to make a Christmas tree skirt, Christmas stockings, tree ornaments and napkins sewed and folded to look like a tree. In December, there are ideas about spring and summer mug rugs, table runners, place mats, hot pads, potholders, candle mats, wall hangings, etc.

I create these items using fabric and thread which I have received from several generous donors. I can select and piece a variety of complimentary fabrics together to create beautiful and useful items. An hour spent in my fabric room relieves my stress and renews my creative spirit. It continues to be a worthwhile hobby for me!



S. Julie hard at work on her sewing machine

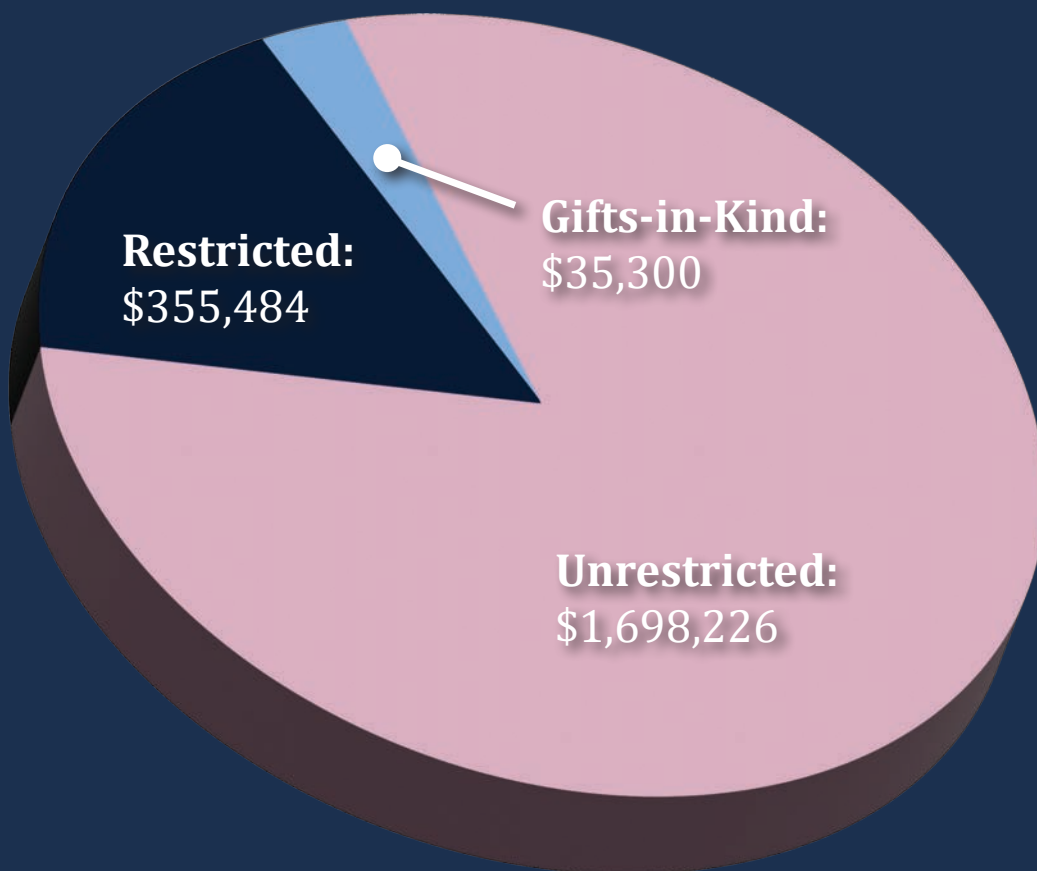


S. Julie ironing her quilt

Gratitude By the Numbers

July 1, 2025 -
June 30, 2026

We are thrilled to share with you the impact that your generosity has made throughout this past fiscal year. Between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, we received donations totaling \$2,131,426! It is thanks to our many generous and faithful supporters that we are able to fulfill our mission and minister to those in need within and beyond our monastery. We are incredibly grateful and humbled for the trust you put into us to share God's love with others. Thank you!



\$2,131,426

**Total Amount
in Donations**

4,750

Total Gifts

2,504

Total Donors

273

**Total
First-Time
Donors**



We are immensely grateful for your generosity and support! If you'd like to donate or learn more about opportunities to partner with us, visit www.sbm.osb.org/partnership/mission-advancement/.

A Word From Our Supporters



Lynn (third from left) with Sisters Judy Huber, Grace Donovan+, Ione Jesh+, Phyllis Plantenberg+, Patricia Ruether and Nancy Bauer (left to right)

Lynn Newman

“My first encounter with the sisters of Saint Benedict’s Monastery occurred when I was a student at the College of Saint Benedict (CSB). Sisters were my faculty residents in the residence halls, and they were also some of my professors. They were role models and a source of inspiration — smart women of faith who loved learning and teaching. They helped nurture and foster my own intellectual curiosity and spiritual growth.

Years later, I was honored to serve on the Board of Trustees at CSB both as a trustee and as chair of the board. I shared governance responsibilities with many different sisters during this time. While a trustee, I had the opportunity to reflect upon and see what a tremendous legacy the sisters left when they founded the college. It was because of their vision, their perseverance, their strength and their faith that a thriving college community steeped in Benedictine values exists. The reality of their legacy is that every year, hundreds of young women graduate from CSB and go forth to shine their Benedictine-infused light in the world. Now that is hope and something to celebrate!”

Lisa Wersal

“I have been blessed through my affiliation with the Sisters of Saint Benedict since I was a student at the College of Saint Benedict (CSB) in the mid-1970s. We students admired the sisters as strong women role models — strong in more ways than one. Some sisters advocated for women in the priesthood. Some modeled healthy bodies as well as healthy minds, and if you were up early enough, you might spot them running on campus trails. All lived out their values in exemplary fashion.

Sister Brian Spain was my advisor when I was a student, and she continued to be my mentor and friend later in life. I remained in contact with S. Brian, exchanging cards and letters, and visiting her periodically at the monastery and later at Saint Scholastica Convent until her death. My husband and I were privileged to sit with her in prayer just days before her passing.

Additionally, I was a frequent visitor at the Spirituality Center•Studium for a number of years, enjoying the hospitality extended to me and the availability of quiet space for prayer and meditation.

The Benedictine values that I learned while at CSB continue to guide my life, most especially extending hospitality, working for social justice and peace, respecting others, being a good steward of resources, and living in moderation. My gratitude overflows.”



Lisa (right) with Sister Brian Spain+

During Catholic Sisters Week, which took place March 8-14, 2026, we asked several of our faithful benefactors to reflect on why they choose to give to the sisters. You can read more reflections at www.sbm.osb.org/community/vocations/catholic-sisters-week/.

Choosing the *Oblate Way of Life*

*O*n September 20, 2025, eight women made their perpetual oblation, offering themselves to God as oblates of Saint Benedict's Monastery and promising to dedicate themselves to the service of God and all people according to the Rule of Benedict.

Joanna Padden, OblSB

"The choice to seek an oblate way of life began as a response to the calling to listen and connect more closely with God while seeking community with the sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery (whom I continue to be inspired by), and I discovered the journey was much more fruitful than I could have imagined. Seeking God's love and lessons in the little moments by taking time to pause, reflect, notice and respond to the quiet callings God places in my heart has brought new dimension to my relationships and spiritual journey. When I experience the swirl of life, the grounding in the *Rule of St. Benedict* brings stability and a sense of peace, and I'm full of gratitude for the opportunity to continue the path with this incredible oblate community."

Jane Tomaine, OblSB

"Although I live in New Jersey, repeated trips to the monastery ultimately drew me into this community of sisters and the sacredness of this place. I realized that Saint Benedict's Monastery is my spiritual home, a community rooted in Christ and the *Rule of St. Benedict*. It was time to put down roots in Benedictine soil, to deepen my practice of its wisdom and to be with pilgrims on the same journey. I wanted to formalize my desire to continue to study and follow the *Rule of St. Benedict* by taking the commitment of oblation. I value deeply learning from the sisters and the oblates in my cohort as well as oblates that I meet in person and online."

Lindsay McGlynn, OblSB

"I felt awash in hospitality at Saint Benedict's Monastery long before I knew anything about Benedictine spirituality. The warmth and generosity of spirit I received brought me back to a hermitage every year. It is this sense of hospitality, this welcome, that drew me to becoming an oblate. Having felt called to live a slow and deep life with God, I was attracted to the stability of living this way with a specific tradition and community. My years in oblate formation confirmed my attraction as I discovered resonance with Benedictine values, prayer practices and the practicality of the *Rule*. Making my perpetual commitment last September was a meaningful and moving rite, one that affirmed my place in the heart of a beautiful tradition and community."



Prioress Sister Karen Rose (center) with new oblates Lindsay McGlynn, Deb Klaverkamp, Krista Elsenpeter, Kathy Frank, Joanna Padden, Anne Cahill, Mary Jo Kozarek and Jane Tomaine (left to right) at Oblate Renewal Day 2025

Mary Jo Kozarek, OblSB

“On my first visit to the monastery, a sister at the reception desk handed me a bookmark with their prayer schedule that read ‘Welcome Home.’ I thought it was sweet — I didn’t know it was also prophetic.

The Benedictine path has been a surprising journey and an absolute blessing. I am where I am supposed to be. I learn much from interactions with the sisters and other oblates. I thought I could just study some spiritual works and cruise along, but actually making my perpetual oblation has been an important step. It has rocked my world in a good way. And, I get to connect with others who are having their world rocked regularly — we compare notes. Immersing myself in the Benedictine path, the rhythm of prayer, study, work and play is essential to me now. I want to live in harmony, seeing God all days, all ways.”

Anne Cahill, OblSB

“‘Who is it who desires life and longs to see prosperous days?’ (*Rule of Benedict*, Prologue 15). These words of Benedict jumped off the page as I read them. At the time, I was a student in the Spiritual Direction program at Saint John’s School of Theology in Collegeville, Minn. Through attending classes and assigned reading, I learned about the Benedictine charisms of listening, hospitality, humility, *lectio* and lifelong learning. I saw these charisms embodied in the monks and sisters. I felt strangely ‘at home’ and felt an inner call to seek further.

Being an oblate means I am connected to a prayerful community who is committed to living the *Rule* in everyday life. Through the stability of my daily prayer practice, I grow in interior freedom and peace, despite the challenges of daily life. The *Rule of Benedict* has become a thread weaving through my life. As long as I hold on to this thread, I can find my way home.”

Continued on page 28

Choosing the *Oblate Way of Life*

Continued from page 27

Krista Elsenpeter, OblSB

"I've been a part of our parish music ministry at St. Timothy's Parish for many years, and I attribute my longevity and love for the music of the church to Sister Norita Lanners, one of the many sisters of this monastery who taught us. S. Norita served at St. Timothy's for 11 years, and I was able to take piano and organ lessons from her the entire time she was with us. She taught me so much more than music and was the person who started my love for the Benedictines and their way of life. I'm excited about the oblate journey ahead as I strive to live out the *Rule* in my daily life and prayer. The spirit of Benedict has always been with me, and now in my later years I have the opportunity to let it grow. I feel so very blessed."

Deb Klaverkamp, OblSB

"Four years ago, I learned about the oblate way of life from a childhood neighbor. Despite having attended the College of Saint Benedict and returning to campus regularly, I had never heard of this path. Choosing to pursue this was an easy decision for me.

The Benedictine sisters have had a significant impact on my life. Benedictine values significantly influenced and guided my career path, and it has been an incredible blessing to continue to learn and grow with the *Rule of Benedict* as an oblate. I am honored to walk alongside women and men who have a shared desire to more fully incorporate the *Rule* into their everyday lives. I continue to begin again each day and am challenged to quiet myself and listen with the ear of my heart. I cannot begin to express my appreciation for the love, acceptance and encouragement I have found as an oblate!"

Kathy Frank, OblSB

"My parents instilled the importance of prayer in my life. This has led me to listen to the voice of God and eventually become an oblate of Saint Benedict's Monastery. I feel the presence of God in several ways, including being blessed with a wonderful family and friends, knowing several of the Benedictine sisters, finding God in all things and developing meaningful relationships with people who share my same spiritual beliefs.

After learning about the *Rule*, I have been following it, praying, listening and learning. I believe that God had my becoming an oblate in His plan for me. I am very blessed to be able to grow closer to God by serving others, through daily prayer and following the *Rule*. My hope is that I am living my life so that others can be closer to God through me."



To learn more about the oblate way of life, visit www.sbm.osb.org/partnership/oblates/ or contact Mary Stommes, OblSB, oblate director, at oblatesbm@csbsju.edu or (320) 363-7053.

Faith in Housing

Elizabeth Reum, Director of Social Justice Ministries



Photograph provided by Pexels.com

On a blistering hot Monday in July, a group of people gathered at Atonement Lutheran Church in St. Cloud, Minn., to discuss plans for the coming winter. They are volunteers from different walks of life and religious/spiritual beliefs who meet every Monday to talk about the needs of one of the most vulnerable populations in our community: people who are unhoused. This group, known as Faith in Housing (FIH), works to educate the community and end homelessness by organizing temporary overflow shelter programs, offering educational community summits, fundraising and hosting volunteer drives.

FIH's mission statement says it works to "Unite faith communities to address and alleviate the surge of homelessness in Central Minnesota." These words on a page seem simple and clear, but they don't do justice to this group that meets weekly to discuss the needs of local shelters, organizes meetings with local city councils to advocate for more affordable housing, collaborates with agencies on city, county and state levels, organizes letter writing campaigns, provides education to the community on homelessness, and even chases fast-moving state representatives and senators through the Minnesota State Capitol to discuss concerns regarding homelessness.

FIH members are constantly looking for resources to ease the difficulty of people who are unhoused, such as bug spray and sunscreen in the

summer and blankets, handwarmers and warm clothing in winter for people living outside in tents or in abandoned buildings. FIH tackles hard questions such as: How do you assist people who have no bathroom facilities or the ability to wash their laundry or shower? How do you arrange transportation to appointments for folks who are simply trying to survive from day to day and may sleep in a different location every night or have spent all night walking the streets and are too exhausted by morning to attend appointments?

FIH meetings always include prayer, usually include laughter, sometimes tears and the sharing of fear for not only people directly impacted by homelessness but the tireless people who work to end this scourge every day. These meetings also include the very important opportunity for people to come together in hope. A very wise man said hope is not blind optimism, but rather the choice and belief that something better is possible through hard work and action. That is an echo of James 2:14-17, verses that talk about the importance of accompanying our faith with deeds.

In retrospect, maybe Faith in Housing can also be called Faith in Hope — hope that we will continue to resist division and come together to make tomorrow just a little bit better for our neighbors and fellow human beings. That we as individuals and groups can share that hope with others with simple deeds like holding the door open for someone, helping a neighbor carry groceries or sharing a smile with someone that tells them:

"I see you. You are not invisible."

Here's the Scoop!

Enjoy reflections from four sisters living at Saint Scholastica Convent (SSC), our retirement center in St. Cloud, Minn., about the many ways they minister to their fellow sisters. Reflections from sisters living at Saint Benedict's Monastery are found on pages 16-17.

Lucy Revering, OSB



"My ministries are considered a 'little part' of our entire community, yet my 'little part' is vast. Spanning 64 years of service, each of these 'small parts' lead up to a meaningful whole.

For 20 years, I mainly ministered in cooking and environmental services, serving up to 150 people at meals and teaching the many skills immigrants needed. I was also 'called' to help in health services, physical therapy and being on-call for 12 years. Being on-call is a very special ministry. Benedict

tells us to 'rise without delay' (*Rule of Benedict* 22:6). I forget myself and respond immediately — no comments or questions!

For six years, I have served in transportation, scheduling rides, driving sisters to appointments and servicing vehicles. I also arrange budgets for the sisters in ministry and try very intentionally not to miss our primary ministry, Liturgy of the Hours.

Whether helping immigrants, listening to clients at their bedsides or handling transportation and budgets, I am modeling our Benedictine motto, 'Ora et Labora' (prayer and work), and so I pray, thank you, God, for helping me to continue to be a worthy Benedictine minister as I journey the path to glory."

Marius Hiltner, OSB



"I began taking piano lessons in fourth grade, along with my twin brother. Our teacher, Sister Wilma Escher, was the parish organist, and I also took lessons with Sister Urban Gertken at Saint Benedict's Monastery.

S. Wilma took my friend and me to the CSB Pageant, and that made such an

impression on me that I wanted to be at Saint Ben's.

Shortly after my novitiate, I was sent out on mission where I really played. I was also parish organist for one year at the St. Joseph Parish and taught middle school for 59 years.

I still play organ at Liturgy of the Hours on a regular basis. Music enriches the liturgy, and the music of the organ is so valuable at LOH and Mass. I'm grateful that I can still make a meaningful contribution to the sisters, even at 90+ years old."

Bernadette Weber, OSB



"I became involved in ministry with the sisters at SSC during the COVID pandemic in 2020. The sisters were all confined to their rooms. Help was needed, so I volunteered to help.

I carried meal trays to their rooms. During that time, we sisters who were helping stayed in the Guest Quarters. After COVID was over and sisters resumed normal life, I asked to stay at SSC. I then helped serve meals on the Memory Unit of Louise Hall, assisted the sisters at Eucharist and prayers, took sisters with memory impairments outdoors for walks, played Scrabble with sisters, and reminisced with them. The sisters were very grateful and appreciative.

I was also assigned to manage the SSC Gift Shop. The sisters enjoy browsing through items in the Gift Shop and especially admire the beauty of items made by sisters. The Gift Shop offers them the opportunity to shop for gifts for family and friends without leaving their home. They bring their guests to shop and love visiting.

I have learned that all of us need and enjoy meaningful relationships with God, with others and with nature. To be available and to assist with these encounters is a gift and a privilege. Being with the sisters helps me to get to know them and to recognize the contributions they have made to the Church, the world and in our community.

Community life is a precious vocation. The stage of retirement offers the best of it — being with one another and accepting our real selves makes life pleasant."

Marlene Meierhofer, OSB



"Tuesday afternoon is a special time for the sisters living in Louise South and East halls. This area of our retirement center is for sisters with various levels of declining health and those needing easy access to the nurses' station. We

gather in Louise Hall Lounge for a session I teach called 'Community Updates.' It's a time to hear about events at SSC or Saint Benedict's Monastery. There is always so much happening at both places!

The sisters are kept up to date regarding communications from the prioress, monastery department activities and special events, and they are always invited to share their responses. Hearing their comments is always interesting and insightful — they are especially interested in agenda items for upcoming community meetings and readily offer their opinions on decisions that need to be made.

Our sessions always include hearing about people in need of our prayers. We then spend time praying together for them. Sometimes, we prepare for liturgical feasts or seasons. Often, memories are shared of the ways these events were celebrated in the past. Former Schola members present in the group help us sing songs related to the occasion.

As the sisters gather on Tuesday afternoons, it is obvious there is great interest in community events. Frequently, we end the session by expressing gratitude to God for calling us to be members of this, our beloved community!"



Planting Seeds

Girls, God and Good Times (3G) Camp is a Catholic Benedictine summer camp for girls in grades 4-11. During each camp, girls explore Benedictine prayer forms, spend time with the sisters and participate in classic camp activities. This year celebrates the 25th anniversary of 3G Camp!

Some of our campers return to 3G Camp years later as counselors, forever changed by their experiences at 3G. Enjoy reflections from three of our campers-turned-counselors below.

Liz Hamak

“From a very young age, I knew I was destined to be a Bennie. My childhood consisted of Johnnie football games, walks around Lake Sag, the Maple Syrup Festival and Mass at Sacred Heart Chapel with Sister Katherine Kraft. As a professor and mentor for my parents, and as the homilist at their wedding, our connection with the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict was anything but transactional. I remember running around the monastery with my brothers, dreaming about the day I would finally get to call Saint Ben’s ‘home.’

That time came sooner than I expected. As an elementary schooler, my mom told me about 3G Camp, a Catholic Benedictine summer camp run by the sisters for girls. This was music to my ears. A whole week without my brothers *and* at Saint Ben’s? Sign me up.

Camp became a tradition for me every summer as a young girl, and I eventually returned as a counselor during my undergraduate years at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University (CSB+SJU). When I think back to my time at

3G Camp, I don’t remember every game we played or every activity we did. And if I’m honest, those weren’t my favorite parts. What I remember most is how I felt — and the foundation that was being planted. I felt welcomed, seen and like I belonged — that there was a place for me here. As a young camper, I didn’t have the language to describe it, but looking back now, I realize I was experiencing something deeply Benedictine. The sisters created a space where every person mattered, where faith was woven naturally into each day, and where joy and community went hand in hand.

Years later, when I had the opportunity to return as a counselor, saying ‘Yes’ felt like the natural next step. I wanted to help create the same experience for other campers. I wanted another young girl to know what it feels like to be encouraged, listened to and accepted exactly as they are. I wanted campers to discover that faith does not have to exist in a silo — it can be alive, real and even fun when lived out in community.

Being a counselor quickly became about much more than leading activities. It became an opportunity to practice the same hospitality that had been shown to me. Some of the smallest moments — sharing a meal, sitting with a homesick camper, celebrating a new friendship or praying



Liz and her brother exploring campus

25 Years of Girls, God and Good Times (3G) Camp

together before the day began — often became the most meaningful. In those moments, I was not only receiving Benedictine hospitality; I was learning how to give it, too.

These experiences stayed with me long after camp ended. When I began my education at CSB in fall 2020, I started to recognize the same Benedictine values that had quietly shaped me for years: hospitality, community, listening and more.

Transformational experiences like mine don't happen by accident. They are the result of a community choosing, again and again, to live for the common good. Having the monastic communities at CSB+SJU as a living example of that commitment is a gift I continue to carry with me and cherish.

Looking back now, I can trace many of the other 'yeses' in my life to those early experiences. I recently completed my service as volunteer

coordinator for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, am involved with the Central Minnesota Together Encountering Christ retreat program and am currently pursuing my Master of Divinity in the *Conversatio* program at Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary. While these opportunities may look very different from a week at summer camp, they share the same foundation: a desire to accompany others, build authentic community and help people encounter God's unconditional love.

Looking back, I don't think 3G Camp simply gave me a wonderful week each summer. It gave me a glimpse of the kind of person I wanted to become. It taught me that faith is lived daily, that community is intentionally built and that even the smallest acts of hospitality can change a life. And now, whenever I have the chance to offer that same welcome to someone else, I hope I am planting seeds that will continue to grow in them too."

Deanna Harper

"My favorite Benedictine value is hospitality. In 2006, when I heard about a summer camp starting with the sisters, I knew I wanted to help campers feel welcomed at Saint Benedict's Monastery and the College of Saint Benedict (CSB). Little did I know that the connections and memories I made at 3G Camp would continue to impact me 20 years later!

Watching the sisters welcome each



camper and share meals, prayer, games, crafts, music and their love of God is so beautiful. In return, seeing the girls ask questions, share their faith and just have fun with the sisters made me understand the true value of hospitality. 3G Camp, for me, was practicing seeing Christ in those we meet every day, whether we know them for the three days they're at camp with us or we've known them for a lifetime.

Planting Seeds

Continued from page 33

As a camp counselor, growing together in community with my fellow CSB students was a highlight of camp. Being mentored and loved by the sisters was invaluable. I still carry the Benedictine values I learned at camp into my personal and professional life. I chose to attend CSB because

when I visited, it felt like home. I kept coming back to help with 3G even after I graduated because it felt like coming back to visit home. I hope that the 3G campers and counselors continue to feel the love of God through the hospitality, joy and peace they see with the sisters."

Sabrina Ehrmantraut

"I started attending 3G Camp the summer after fifth grade and looked forward to it every year. However, my love of 3G goes far beyond the campfires, group games and meals at the dining center at the College of Saint Benedict (CSB). It was the first time someone had given a name to the things I loved: community, prayer, awareness of God, and more. As I grew up, the Benedictine values kept returning to me in the clearest ways, guiding me on the path God had for me.

I vividly remember leaving 3G for the last time as a camper, and I started tearing up as my dad and I drove out of the CSB campus. I had just finished ninth grade and expressed how sad I was that, in my own words, I was 'too old for camp.' He jokingly replied, 'You'll just have to go to college here and be a counselor.'

So I did. 3G helped bring me back to campus in 2016, this time as a student. It certainly wasn't the only reason I came back, but 3G had laid the foundation of the values that did. I actively sought out Sister Lisa Kittock, the previous 3G Camp director, and basically begged to be a counselor. Thankfully, she took me on. I continued to live out my love of the Benedictine values, passing them on.

When I graduated, I was thrilled that Sister Laura

Suhr, current 3G Camp director, wanted me to come back as a lead counselor, even after COVID. The value of community lived on: 'Once a Bennie, always a Bennie.' I always said I would be back next year, and it always felt like returning home, not just to campus, but to camp.

When looking for a job after college, I found a little Catholic school in Mound, Minn.: Our Lady of the Lake. In addition to other obvious signs that this was God's path for me, Matthew 5:16 was already painted on the wall of what would become my classroom: 'Let your light shine.' God once again used my foundation in the Benedictine values to guide me where He led. I have 3G to thank for that foundation.

Today, I am proud to say that I have been a part of 15 summers of 3G as either a camper or a counselor. I am overjoyed to keep returning. I look forward to leading more young ladies to the values that have come to define me.

As our camp song says, I sure am 'glad I'm a triple G.'"

Sabrina calling
Bingo



Learn more about 3G Camp at
www.sbm.osb.org/ministry/3g-camp.

Empty Bowls: A Gathering of Hope



Join Saint Benedict's Monastery on **Saturday, October 10, 2026**, for our second-annual Empty Bowls: A Gathering of Hope. This community event will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot across from The House Food and Tap in St. Joseph, Minn.

An Empty Bowls celebration provides attendees the opportunity to "purchase" a bowl handcrafted by local potters and artists and enjoy a shared meal of locally made soups and breads. There are no set prices; attendees are asked to donate what they can. All proceeds will benefit the St. Joseph Community Food Shelf.

Last year's inaugural Empty Bowls event attracted more than 300 people and raised a grand total of \$6,452.81!

If you're interested in supporting the St. Joseph Community Food Shelf but unable to attend the event, there are additional ways to donate:

- » Donate on their website at www.st-joseph-community-food-shelf.square.site/.
- » Checks and cash can be mailed to:

St. Joseph Community Food Shelf
18 E. Birch Street,
St. Joseph, MN 56374
- » Make checks payable to St. Joseph Community Food Shelf. Indicate "Empty Bowls" in the memo line.



**Support
Empty Bowls**



**Learn More
About the
Event**





The Office of Mission Advancement
104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374-0220
(320) 363-7100 • www.sbm.osb.org



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Mark your calendars for **Thursday, November 19, 2026.**

We are excited to, once again, participate in Give to the Max Day, Minnesota's annual online giving day. Every year, we are reminded over and over again of the abundant generosity and support of you, our friends.

For this year's campaign, we are raising funds to support our transition and preparations for moving out of our current monastery and into our new one, with an anticipated completion date in winter 2027. Projects include:

- » Purchasing pews to be used for worship by sisters and guests
- » Reducing the number of books in our library and sharing them with other Benedictine monasteries around the world
- » Funding the building of our new organ for our new chapel
- » Landscaping to beautify our home and create a welcoming place for guests



Please visit www.sbm.osb.org
for more details. Thank you for
your support!

