

Benedictine Bridge

connecting with the communities at Holy Wisdom Monastery
weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life

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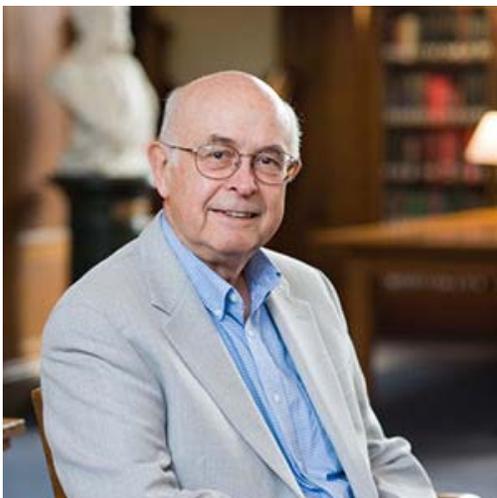
August 2018



Historic record rainfall (11+ inches) flooded much of Dane County, Wisconsin on August 20, 2018. More than a week later part of the trail around Lost Lake at Holy Wisdom remains covered with water. Deep-rooted prairie plants absorb water and help control run-off into Lake Mendota which reached nearly 100-year flood levels before city officials opened the Tenney Dam so the dam wasn't damaged by the pressure of the water.

Oblates

Spiritual fellow-travelers



by Paul Knitter, Sunday Assembly member

My dear friend and mentor, Raimon Panikkar (now a blessed memory) used to tell us: "In order to answer the question 'Who is my God?' we have to ask the question 'Who is your God?'" To explore the spirituality of other religious paths is one of the best ways to more deeply understand our own.

That's what we'll be doing at our Benedictine Retreat at Holy Wisdom September 21-23, 2018: **Hospitality and Compassion: An Exploration of Tibetan Buddhist Compassion Practices and Benedictine Hospitality.** Tibetan Buddhist teacher John Makransky will join Sister Lynne Smith and me in exploring, through teaching and meditation, what

Tibetan Buddhists and Benedictine Christians might learn from each other.

In these brief and personal reflections, I'd like to try to describe one small, but for me meaningful, example of how my study and practice of Buddhism has clarified and, I think, deepened my understanding and experience of Jesus' message.

In the practice that John Makransky teaches (he is my wife Cathy's and my teacher), we begin our daily meditation, as do many Buddhists, by reciting the "Triple Refuge." This is a practice by which Buddhists recognize that **they need help**, that they have to look or reach **beyond** themselves or their present understanding of themselves. The traditional Triple Refuge is: "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma (Buddha's teachings), I take refuge in the Sangha (the community of practitioners)."

John has composed a different version of the Triple Refuge—one that points to (all you can do is point, never define) the Reality to which Buddhists take refuge. This Ultimate Reality or this Ground of Being or this universal Energy (terms that Makransky uses to point to it) has three qualities. This is his prayer of refuge:

**I take refuge in the expanse of Space,
I take refuge in primal Awareness,
I take refuge in unconfined Compassion,
Which is the nature of everyone's mind, for the sake of all.**

This, I would suggest, is how a Tibetan Buddhist might answer my question: "Who or what is your God?" This prayer of refuge lets us know that when Buddhists take refuge through meditation, they come to realize that the Reality to which they take refuge has three characteristics, which they try to describe through the metaphors of Space, Awareness, and Compassion.

- Space expresses the way the Ultimate is an inclusive presence, containing all that exists, just as space contains the universe.
- But this spacious Presence is aware; it is conscious. It is aware of itself and of all that it contains. It is the consciousness in which we all participate.
- And this spacious, conscious Presence is and acts through Compassion. It is the energy that interlinks all that exists, that holds each of us in compassion, and so enables us to hold all other beings in compassion.
- And finally, this Triple Refuge prayer reminds us that this Spacious, Conscious, Compassionate Mystery is present in and as each of us. It makes up our very nature, the "nature of our mind."
- And through meditation and mindful living we want to realize and wake up to this Presence not only for ourselves but also, and especially, "for the sake of all others." For Buddhists, one never "wakes up" just for oneself.

I have found over the years that as I have tried to understand this Tibetan Buddhist answer to my question "Who is your God," I think I have come to understand—and to feel or experience—more deeply the God I have met in Jesus.

More specifically, Buddhism has helped me appreciate and enter into the central Mystery of Christianity—the Trinity.

Marvelously, this three-fold way in which Tibetan Buddhists speak of their Ultimate reflects the threefold way in which Christians speak of their God. And for me, this Buddhist way of speaking has been a help in **feeling**—not just understanding—what the Trinity means. This is hard to put into words, but let me try:

- By linking “Spaciousness” to what Christians call Father/Mother, I have come to sense more clearly that the divine creator or source of life is not an entity located in heaven, but an all-including energy pervading all the space of the universe, holding and nurturing me and every living being. Always present, no matter what happens.
- What Tibetan Buddhists refer to as “primal Awareness” is analogous to our Christian description of the “second person of the Trinity” as Word. The divine Awareness is communicated to us in the divine Word. And we can hear this Awareness/Word speaking to us through the beauty and complexity of nature. Christians find it in a particularly powerful form in Jesus the Christ, Buddhists in Gautama the Buddha.
- “Unconfined Compassion” has become for me a moving symbol for what I have been taught is the Holy Spirit—a spirit or energy of love that pervades and enables us to love ourselves and then all other sentient beings who are the recipients and vehicles of this Spirit-Love.

This, then, is how I begin my morning meditations:

“I take refuge in the expanse of Space/Abba.
I take refuge in primal Awareness/Christ.
I take refuge in unconfined Compassion/Spirit.”

Paul Knitter is a member of Sunday Assembly and a retired teacher of theology at Xavier University in Cincinnati and Union Theological Seminary in New York.

[Learn more about the retreat](#)

Register by September 7, 2018

Sisters & Sojourners

Agridulce or bittersweet

by [Sister Paz Vital, OSB](#), Benedictine Women of Madison

My experience at the Hispanic Summer program (HSP) in Dallas was agridulce or bitter-sweet.

It was dulce-sweet because I was able to be around people who look like me. My teachers and most of my fellow students looked like me and spoke Spanish like me. I was able to speak Spanish. I was able to worship in my native language. It was very natural for all of us to go back and forth speaking Spanglish. We shared common stories and experiences. The topics of our classes were all about Latino* theology and the way Latinos* express our religiosity. It was very refreshing to talk with people who share the same cosmovision, weltanschauung or philosophy of life. (*Or Latinas)



Sister Paz Vital, center, pictured with other participants from the Hispanic Summer Program at the Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas, June 16-30, 2018.

However, it was also agrio, a lot of bitter taste. Because we all were very aware of what was happening nearby in southern Texas. We watched the news at breakfast and heard that the Trump administration was forcefully taking babies and kids away from their parents and locking them up in cages. I was shocked. I could not believe what I was hearing and seeing—the images of many babies, who also looked like me, in cages without their mothers. What is happening in this country? These are not Hitler’s concentration camps but Trump’s immigration detention centers.

Have you ever thought what it would take to leave your work, your family, your home town, and move with your babies and toddlers to a different country where people do not speak or look like you? How desperate you must be to abandon everything and escape with your baby in your arms just to step into another trap? These thoughts accompanied me during my stay in Dallas and they have not left me. What can I do to change this horror, or to wake up from this nightmare?

When Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus fled to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill Jesus, they found a lot of good Egyptians that helped them become established in this foreign country. When the danger was over in Israel the sacred family was able to return home. Thanks to a lot of good Egyptians that helped them, Jesus was able to carry out his ministry and we can celebrate Easter. I wish everyone would feel safe at home and not need to migrate. But if they do need to migrate, I wish a lot of good people would help them as the Egyptians helped Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus.

Sisters redesign Benedictine Sojourner experience

by [Sister Lynne Smith](#), co-director of formation

In our redesign we have added a stronger ecological restoration component. Beginning in June 2019, single women participating in the six-month live-in experience will:

- Experience community building among the Sojourners and sisters
- Learn about ecological restoration of native prairie and oak savanna at Holy Wisdom Monastery
- Explore the gifts of diversity of cultures and the earth community at the monastery
- Learn Benedictine spirituality and prayer practices



Watch for more information in September. For questions, contact Lynne Smith, OSB at lwsmith@benedictinewomen.org or 608-831-9305.

Retreats for women

by [Sister Lynne Smith, OSB](#), co-director of formation

The sisters at Holy Wisdom Monastery offer two opportunities this fall for women to experience a weekend at the monastery.

[A Weekend Away](#) - October 13-14, 2018

This facilitated retreat for women offers participants time and space to connect with themselves, with God and others in the peaceful setting of the monastery. The weekend will include faith sharing, prayer, journaling, contemplative walking in the prairie, meals, worship with our ecumenical Sunday Assembly and conversation. If you have never been on a retreat or have not visited the monastery, this retreat is a good introduction to a contemplative retreat. Those who are familiar with the monastery are also invited to attend.

[Experience Benedictine Life at the Monastery retreat](#) - November 3-4, 2018

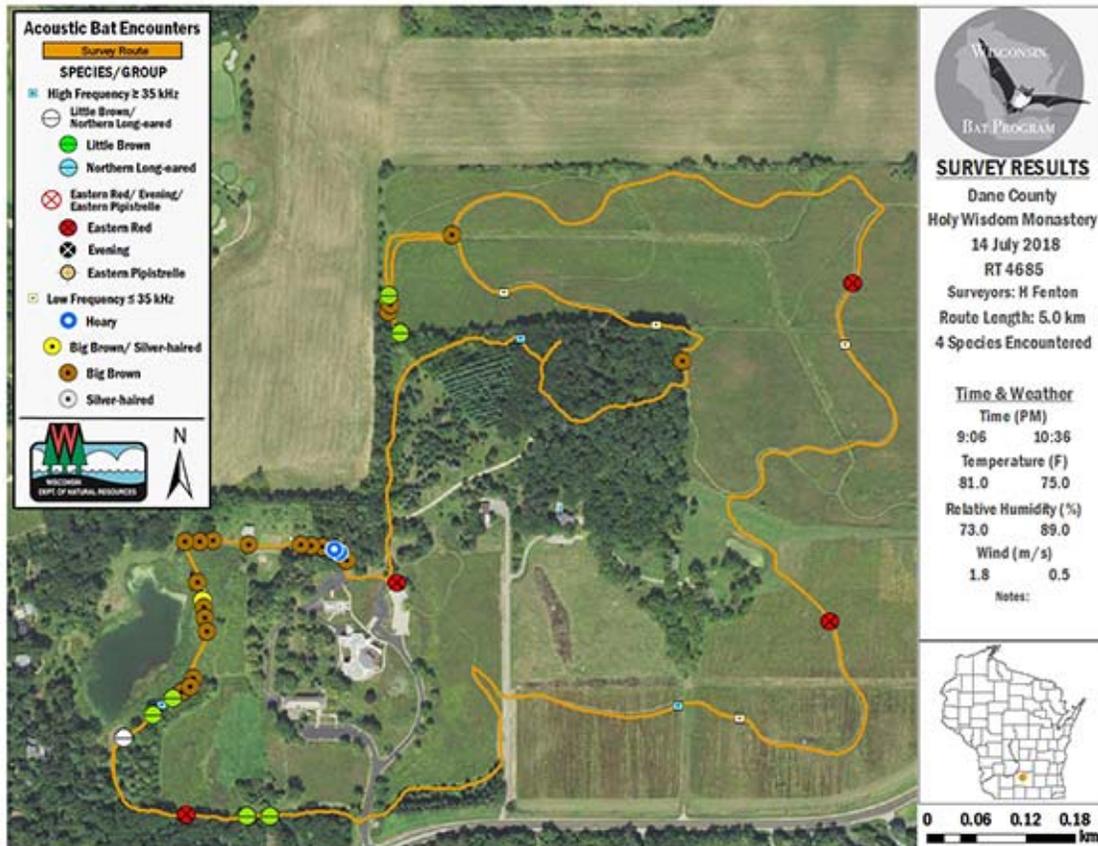
For single women 24-50 years old, this retreat offers women who are interested in the Benedictine Sojourner program an experience of the rhythm of life at the monastery. Participants will share prayer, meals, conversation with the sisters and other retreatants. They will learn about Benedictine life and share their spiritual journeys with other like-minded women.

For more information contact Sister Lynne at 608-831-9305 or lwsmith@benedictinewomen.org.

Friends & Supporters

Bat survey at the monastery

By Howard Fenton, Friends of Wisdom Prairie Council



On the evening of July 14, 2018, Paul Slota, Mike Shinnars and I conducted a bat survey on the grounds of Holy Wisdom Monastery.

The map indicates the route we walked and the bat species detected at specific locations along our route. Our route started at the north end of the large parking lot by the monastery. From there we proceeded down past the gardens and continued in a counter-clockwise direction.

Four species of bats were detected: big brown, little brown, hoary, and Eastern red bats.

Big and little brown bats are cave bats in that they hibernate in caves and mines during the colder winter months, while the hoary and Eastern red bats are tree bats and migrate south in the winter.

The hoary bat is a Special Concern species in Wisconsin. It typically roosts in coniferous and mixed hardwood-conifer forests.

The Eastern red bat is also a Special Concern species in Wisconsin. They are found in various forested habitats including deciduous woodlands.

The little brown bat is a Threatened species in Wisconsin. This species may be found roosting in warm microclimates provided by tree snags, bat houses, and buildings. Bat houses properly located can play an important role in the continued survival of this species.

The big brown bat is a Threatened species in Wisconsin. Big brown bats are found in various

habitats including mixed landscapes of deciduous woodlands, farmlands, edges near water and urban areas.

I think the proportionally large numbers of big and little brown bats detected at Holy Wisdom Monastery is great. As we learn more about these different bat species utilizing Wisdom Prairie we can begin to develop plans for encouraging their presence. A large roosting bat house at the north end of Lost Lake and another perhaps on the east or south exterior wall of the old barn ought to be considered.

A celebration marking 65 years of faith and service

by [Janet Neurauter](#), director of mission advancement



Kathleen Wessels (l-r), Eileen Smith and Phyllis Lobdell enjoy the Sapphire Soirée reception on July 25, 2018.

The evening was warm. Smiling people greeted one another and mingled. There was laughter and hugs and comments on how beautiful everything looked. The Sapphire Soirée dinner and concert on July 25, 2018 was underway.

After months of planning and preparation, the dinner to celebrate the Benedictine Women of Madison's 65th anniversary was attended by 162 guests. As the reception ended, guests were escorted to their tables and served dinner by volunteer waiters. Chef Robert Kauper and his helpers had prepared salad with a raspberry vinaigrette dressing, chicken glazed with cranberry sauce and leek and lentil stuffed portabella mushrooms,

green beans and carrots, rolls, and cheesecake with three berry sauce.

Following the dinner, guests moved into the Assembly Room for a short program. The audience was moved to both laughter and tears as Sisters Mary David Walgenbach, Joanne Kollasch, and Lynne Smith reflected on the past and the future, leaps of faith, hospitality to all, and their love for the people and the land. Tom Zanzig spoke of his appreciation of the monastery and how so many have found their 'home' here among the sisters. [Click here to read the reflections from the sisters and Tom.](#)



Guests filled the dining room and gathering area in the monastery at beautifully adorned tables with linens, roses, balloons and crystal, while waiters served the guests delicious meals prepared by chef Robert Kauper and a multitude of volunteers.

The sisters had two surprises in store for them before the concert. Each received a booklet filled with photos and thoughts, thanks, and congratulations from those who responded to the secret email that was sent to the mailing list with an invitation to make a submission for the booklet.

The biggest surprise came when Janet Neurauter, director of mission advancement, presented

the sisters with an over-sized check. A secret fund raiser had been initiated with the goal of raising \$65,000 in honor of the anniversary. As Neurauter asked for "forgiveness for keeping a secret" the check revealed pledges and gifts totaling \$83,285!



Father Bob Koopmann, OSB, long-time friend of the sisters, performed a piano concert to celebrate the 65th anniversary.

The evening concluded with a piano concert by Father Bob Koopmann, OSB, a long-time friend of Holy Wisdom and the sisters. Father Bob played a variety of pieces and provided commentary on his selections.

Table sponsors including the Atalla Family, John Thompson Investment Services, Hoffman Planning Design & Construction, and Donna Carnes. There was also a display of sapphire gems identifying donors who

made a special gift in recognition of their favorite year between 1953 and 2018.

It took many people to make the evening a success. From cooking to set-up to serving to clean-up, 51 volunteers and monastery staff worked to ensure a great time was had by the guests!

Stepping up to the plate

by [Janet Neurauter](#), director of mission advancement

Most likely, everyone has heard the phrase. In baseball, the player waits on deck until it's his turn to step up to the plate. The challenge is to hit the ball out of the park for a home run—or at least get a base hit.

But this phrase is used more widely than just baseball. Stepping up to the plate means showing initiative, taking responsibility, and doing what needs to be done.

So many of you rose to the occasion and accepted the challenge of raising \$65,000 for our "SSSHHH!" quiet campaign in honor of the 65th anniversary of the sisters being in Madison. Latest figures show we hit it out of the park with more than \$85,700 in gifts and pledges!



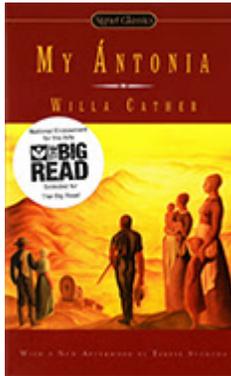
Thank you for not hesitating to step up to the plate, take a swing and connect with the goal!

If you were on deck and intended to make a gift in honor of the 65th anniversary but never got around to it, we'd be happy to go into extra innings so you too, can join the team. [Just click here to make a gift online](#) or send a check to Benedictine Life Foundation, [4200 County Road M, Middleton, WI 53562](#). Be sure to write "65th anniversary" in the memo line.

Thank you for stepping up to the plate! In this game, everyone won big!

Holy Wisdom's BIG READ

by [Rachel Olson](#), foundation project manager



In preparation for September 27th's **Prairie Rhapsody** concert, featuring a special musical tribute to the work of Pulitzer prize winning author, Willa Cather, Holy Wisdom is conducting a BIG READ of her novel *My Antonia*. The book, which is celebrating its centennial in print, is inspired by Willa's childhood on the Nebraska prairie at the end of the 19th century.

We will hold six BIG READ discussion groups every Wednesday evening from August 15-September 19, 2018, 6:00-7:30 pm. This group will meet at Common Ground—[2644 Branch St, Middleton, WI 53562](#)—and is led by Kenny Kohberger and Rachel Olson. No registration needed. Come to one, come to all. Food and beverages are available for purchase. The group will be reading and discussing 40 pages each week.

Wine for a good cause

by [Rachel Olson](#), foundation project manager

The next time you purchase a bottle of wine, would you consider purchasing an extra one for the Benedictine Life Foundation? We plan on having a "wine pull" at this year's **Prairie Rhapsody** concert, *Prairie Songs: Remembering Antonia* scheduled for Thursday, September 27, 2018. At a wine pull, individuals purchase a numbered cork that corresponds with a specific bottle of wine that is theirs to keep. Wines will vary from inexpensive, medium range to top quality bottles. Everyone wins! Last year the wine pull brought in \$1,040!



Bottles with a value of around \$10 or higher cheerfully accepted. Wine can be dropped off at the monastery on or before September 24, 2018. If you prefer to make a monetary donation and have us purchase the wine, just send or drop off a check to the Benedictine Life Foundation and write "Wine Pull" in the memo line. Questions? Call Rachel Olson at 608-836-1631, x120 or email rolson@benedictinewomen.org. **Prairie Rhapsody** is our biggest fund raiser every year and proceeds support the work of the monastery.

[Register for Prairie Rhapsody
by September 13, 2018](#)

Outing to Dells of the Eau Claire and Birds in Art show

By [Greg Armstrong](#), director of land management and environmental education

October 2, 2018
8:00 am-5:30 pm

Naturalist Sylvia Marek will lead us through the Dells of the Eau Claire County Park, where we hope to see some spectacular fall color and bold geologic features along the river. We will have a picnic lunch at the park, then drive to the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau to see the Birds in Art show. This may be the best bird art show anywhere. Limit 50 people.



[Register by
September 18, 2018](#)

Age 70 ½? Read this!

by [Janet Neurauter](#), director of mission advancement

Do you need to take a required minimum distribution from an IRA by the end of 2018? A qualifying IRA rollover gift to Holy Wisdom Monastery can easily fulfill that obligation.

The **IRA Charitable Rollover** provision allows individuals who have reached age 70½ to donate up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations directly from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA), without treating the qualifying charitable distribution as taxable income.

The requirements are relatively simple. The charitable distribution must be:

- From a traditional or Roth IRA;
- Direct from the IRA trustee to the charitable organization—with no intervening possession or ownership by the IRA owner;
- On or after the IRA owner has reached age 70 ½; and
- The contribution is to an organization that qualifies as a charitable organization

Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift. Your IRA funds will be transferred directly to the Benedictine Life Foundation to support Holy Wisdom Monastery. Those who are interested in making this type of gift should also contact Janet Neurauter at 608-836-1631, x124. As with any gift planning considerations, donors should consult their tax professionals for specific advice.

Sunday Assembly

Sacred Citizenship at Holy Wisdom Monastery

by Sue and Charles Bradley, Sunday Assembly members



Sunday Assembly members, Charles and Sue Bradley serve on the Sacred Citizenship planning committee which brings speakers on current social justice and spirituality topics to Holy Wisdom.

Holy Wisdom Monastery hosts a series of programs to explore politics and spirited convictions for peace, justice and equality. The series is called Sacred Citizenship and is in its second year.

Following a meal, speakers present topics. The ideas are discussed in groups, then the speakers answer questions. It is important that everyone leave with ideas on what they can do.

The first of the programs on April 10, 2018 featured **Tia Nelson**, managing director of the Outrider Foundation, who spoke on the role of her father, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson who encouraged and strengthened the environmental movement in the United States and organized the first Earth Day. She emphasized that he wanted local communities to design their own observances

rather than activities being organized from the top. She suggested that that is why Earth Day has continued to flourish. Sunday Assembly member **Kathy Heskin**, a Native American as well as an instructor in the Religious Studies Department at Edgewood College, also spoke on women's special role as keepers of the water in Native communities. She spoke of the Women and Water Symposium sponsored by Abiinooji Aki, a nonprofit located on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation where the symposium was held from July 29-August 2.

For the second program on May 1, **Kara O'Connor** and **Sarah Lloyd** of the Wisconsin Farmers' Union gave a history of the American labor movement and farmers' roles in it as well as current issues facing farm families. The Farm Bill before the U.S. Congress was a major concern. The Farmers' Union is encouraging producers and workers to cooperate on their shared interests, the perspectives of both sides being important. They also talked about the Union's work to form cooperatives for selling to local grocers and the need for legislation on labelling that allows consumers to know where their products are coming from. Kara and Sarah shared farmers' concerns about international trade and the looming trade war arising from the U.S. placing tariffs on foreign products. In addition, **Trudy Jenny**, representing Food, Faith and Farming Network, shared information about the organization, including listening sessions they conducted in rural communities earlier this year.

This fall, Holy Wisdom is offering two more Sacred Citizenship programs. On October 9, immigration attorney **Erin Barbato** will speak about Immigration Justice and her experiences at the US/Mexican border in August. On October 30, **Stephanie Rearick**, founder of the Dane County Time Bank will discuss the topics of Youth Court & Restorative Justice and how the Dane County Time Bank works. Look for more details and registration coming soon.

We remember



Our thoughts and prayers are extended to the families and friends of the following:

Caroline Bormann (Mrs. Clarence Bormann), sister of Sister Joanne Kollasch. Caroline passed away on August 25, 2018.

Beverly Duckwitz, mother of Sunday Assembly member and Friends of Wisdom Prairie member, Julie Melton. Beverly passed away on July 30, 2018.

Laurie Lemberger, niece of Holy Wisdom coworker and Sunday Assembly member, Lynn Lemberger. Laurie passed away on August 15, 2018.

Harry Jean Woll, father of Sunday Assembly member and Friends of Wisdom Prairie member, Alice Erickson. Harry passed away on July 25, 2018

We celebrate the gifts they shared and rejoice in the promise of eternal life.

New on our website

Follow the links below to see what's new on our website.

[Agridulce or bittersweet](#) by Sister Paz Vital

[Practicing kinship at the monastery and Pathways to wisdom](#) by Kate Stel

[Hospitality and a safe space](#) by Sister Lynne Smith

[August phenology \(monthly nature happenings\)](#) by Sylvia Marek

[August new books in the library](#), by Nancy Sandleback



Recent homilies:

- [Kate Stel's homily, August 12, 2018](#)
- [Colleen Hartung's homily, July 29, 2018](#)

Calendar

[Sunday Worship](#), 9:00 am
Monastery Assembly Room

[Daily Prayer](#)

Monastery Oratory

Morning Prayer, Sunday-Saturday, 8:00 am

Midday Prayer, Tuesday-Friday, 11:45 am

Evening Prayer, Tuesday-Sunday, 4:30 pm

[Centering Prayer](#)
Monastery Oratory
Morning Centering Prayer, Tuesday-Saturday, 7:35 am
Evening Centering Prayer, Tuesday-Friday, 4:55 pm

Retreat & Guest House Room 10
Centering Prayer Group, Wednesdays, 7:00 pm

Follow the links below to learn more or register for upcoming events at Holy Wisdom Monastery

For the complete calendar visit holywisdommonastery.org/events

September 2
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am
Childcare available during worship on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

Anointing of the Sick, 10:20-11:00 am, oratory
All are welcome to join us for this special prayer for and with those who are sick.

September 5
Wisdom Prairie Workday, 9:00 am-12:00 pm
Volunteer on the grounds and help care for the earth. [Register one or more days before the workday.](#)

September 9
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am
Children of all ages welcome on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Students are dismissed from worship to hear and learn about the scripture readings at their level, then return later in the liturgy to receive communion.

Social Justice Group, 10:30-11:30 am
Learn about social justice issues important to Sunday Assembly members.

September 11
Luke House
On the second Tuesday of each month members of Holy Wisdom Monastery participate in preparing, serving and sharing a meal at Luke House.

September 16
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am

Friends of Wisdom Prairie Autumn Tour, 10:30-11:30 am
Enjoy the beauty of Holy Wisdom's natural lands in the autumn on a guided tour. No registration necessary, just show up. All are welcome.

September 19
Wisdom Prairie Workday, 9:00 am-12:00 pm
[Register one or more days before the workday.](#)

September 21-13
Benedictine Retreat, Hospitality and Compassion: An Exploration of Tibetan Compassion Practices and Benedictine Hospitality. [See article above.](#) [Register by September 7, 2018.](#)

September 23
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am

September 27

Prairie Rhapsody benefit concert, 5:30-8:00 pm

A classic of American literature, *My Ántonia* by novelist Willa Cather was first published in 1918. To celebrate the anniversary, award-winning composer Brent Edstrom created a song-cycle based on the novel which follows two pioneer children coming of age on the Nebraskan prairie. The performance will feature Brent Edstrom on piano, tenor Scott Miller and violinist Tana Bachman-Bland. Join us for an evening of music, literature, and history. [Register by September 13, 2018.](#)

September 30

Friendship Sunday and Blessing of New Members

Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

Hospitality Sunday is the last Sunday of the month. All are encouraged to bring food to share and meet and get to know other members and visitors. Carpool Sunday: gift your neighbors and Mother Earth by sharing a ride.

Complete calendar at holywisdommonastery.org/events

Holy Wisdom Monastery

[4200 County Road M, Middleton, WI 53562](http://4200CountyRoadM,Middleton,WI53562) | Phone: 608-836-1631

Website: www.holywisdommonastery.org | Email: info@benedictinewomen.org