

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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February 2018



HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY
ROOTED IN FAITH, TRANSFORMING LIVES
People • Land • Spirit

In 2018 we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Benedictine Sisters coming to Middleton, Wisconsin.

Rooted in faith, transforming lives People - Land - Spirit

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

On March 11, 1953 sisters Monica Black, Annunciata Byrne and Martha Glaser of the Sisters of St. Benedict arrived by train from Sioux City, Iowa where their community had been located for 56 years. While the rest of the sisters stayed in Iowa, these three sisters moved north to Madison, Wisconsin, at the invitation of the Bishop, to build a monastery and open a girl's high school.



Much has changed in the 65 years since the sisters stepped off the train and into a new adventure which would transform lives and land.

To celebrate the past, cherish the present and look forward to the future, the communities of Holy Wisdom Monastery will host events throughout the year in honor of the 65th anniversary.

- March 6, 2018, 6:00 - 7:30 pm. Opening reception of the Rooted in Faith, Transforming Lives—65 years in Photos exhibit. View photos of the people and events that made Holy Wisdom what it is today. Join the sisters in the Assembly Room to hear their personal stories.
- March 11, 2018, 9:00 am. Sunday Assembly Worship Service with special homily by Al Majkrzak. Potluck brunch will follow the service.
- Date TBA. Summer on the Prairie. A family-friendly event on monastery grounds.
- July 25, 2018. 65th Anniversary Dinner and concert by pianist Father Robert Koopmann.
- September 27, 2018. Prairie Rhapsody Concert

Watch for further information on 65th anniversary events through emails, the *Benedictine Bridge*, our website and Facebook.

65 Years in Photos



From the earliest black and white images to vibrant color photos of people and the prairie, the new photo exhibit *Rooted in Faith, Transforming Lives—65 Years in Photos*, at Holy Wisdom Monastery portrays the rich history of the Benedictine Women of Madison since their arrival on March 11, 1953.

"It's been a challenge to narrow down the exhibit to only 40 pieces," said Car McGinley, director of communications and IT and one of the staff working on the project. "So much has happened here in 65 years. We worked closely with the sisters to ensure the most important

events are portrayed through the photos and captions. My personal favorites are the old black and white photos. Some are a little grainy but I think that will add a lot to the exhibit."

2018 marks the 65th anniversary of the sisters being in Middleton. "Although we are always looking to the future, we felt it was important to honor the past with this exhibit," said Janet Neurauter, director of mission advancement. "These photographs will bring back memories for some and be enlightening for others."

The opening reception of the exhibit will be Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Gathering Area of the monastery building. At 6:45 pm, attendees will be invited into the Assembly Room to hear the personal stories of the sisters during a 45 minute presentation. Coffee, lemonade and cookies will be served.

The exhibit will be on display through April 30, 2018.

[Although this is a free event, please RSVP here by March 1, 2018.](#)

Sunday Assembly

Youth Ministry learns Benedictine spirituality through yoga

by Leora Weitzman, oblate class of 2000 and yoga teacher (RYT(R)-200)

Stability. Flexibility. Balance.
Zeal. Humility. Are we in a yoga
class? Are we in a Benedictine
monastery? Both!

Last month, I had the honor or
guiding some
of Sunday Assembly's young
people in a yoga-based
exploration of Benedictine
values. We discovered how the
practice of flexibility (St.
Benedict's "constant
conversion") is safer when we
have a stable foundation, and
we considered what this means
in everyday life. We explored
how a stable foundation is
nurtured by holding contrasts in

balance, whether we're engaging contrasting muscles—or balancing contrasting activities, such as the work, prayer, study, and leisure that St. Benedict prescribed for his monastics. We applied the Benedictine virtue of zeal by taking yoga poses far enough to challenge us, while also applying Benedictine humility by being honest and accepting regarding our level of readiness so we would not overdo and injure ourselves.

My hope for the young people who attended is that they left knowing in their bodies that Benedictine values reflect a universal and very practical wisdom.



Lenten Lunches



Lenten Lunches have been a tradition at Holy Wisdom Monastery since 1999 and give attendees a time of reflection during Lent around a specific theme.

This year the theme is Ecumenism: The Truth as One. As we celebrate the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation, we experience and explore the many voices of Christianity, and the call of the monastery to be grounded in (unity) ecumenism.

Each week we will hear about ecumenism from different speakers who belong to a variety of churches. Come for one or more Lenten Lunch from 11:45 am-1:30 pm on Wednesdays during Lent. All are

welcome. \$30/lunch. Register one week or more before the lunch(es) you wish to attend.

Topics and speakers include:

February 28, 2018 | Hearts Strangely Warmed: the Essence of Methodism

Leader: Rachel Olson's vocational path in the United Methodist Church (UMC) began when she took her children to Sunday School and was told there was no teacher available. [Read more...](#)

March 7, 2018 | In Essentials, Unity. In Non-essentials, Liberty. In All Things, Love.

Leader: The Rev. Staci Marrese-Wheeler is a Moravian pastor, celebrating 25 years in pastoral ministry this year. [Read more...](#)

March 14, 2018 | The United Church of Christ: United and Uniting

Leader: Tisha Brown is the Associate Conference Minister for Leadership Development and Faith Formation with the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. [Read more...](#)

March 21, 2018 | Always Reforming—a Journey of Renewal

Judy Nolde, Deacon, works as a chaplain for Triangle Community Ministry.

Ken Smith is a retired Lutheran (ELCA) pastor, most recently serving St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Madison. [Read more...](#)

[Register 2 days or more before the lunch\(es\) you wish to attend](#)

Sisters & Sojourners

Conference of Benedictine Prioresses

Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Alabama

February 1-7, 2018

by [Sister Joanne Kollasch](#), co-director of formation



Whose heart doesn't quicken at the thought of a retreat? "Going on retreat" holds a promise of time away from the everyday patterns of one's life. But if you live in a Benedictine monastery with its balance of prayer and work why would you need to go to another monastery for a retreat?

For Sister Mary David, prioress of Holy Wisdom Monastery, the answer is to gather with 50 prioresses from the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The leaders of these respective monasteries find mutual support and encouragement through common prayer and conversation.

Although monastic communities are very different one from another, they share common challenges as they seek to be faithful to Benedict's Rule and read the signs of the times.

Communities have fewer women entering; all are smaller in number; have aging members and financial concerns. Added to these concerns is the admonition of Saint Benedict to "Seek first the

kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things will be given you as well." (Matt 6:33)

(Let us remember in prayer those who carry the burden of leadership in our Benedictine communities.)

Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Alabama, received and blessed the prioresses' meeting for the second year; they will host the conference again next year. Many communities are unable to accommodate such a large group.

The Holy Wisdom community and coworkers know that I accompanied Sister Mary David and her sister Roleen Walgenbach to Cullman to have my own retreat time. My hide-out was a little over a mile away at St. Bernard Abbey, a Benedictine men's monastery, with a lovely guest department.

Imagine five days all to myself! What to do? Day one: pray, read, eat, and sleep. Day two: pray, read more, eat, sleep and walk. No interruptions; no variations on a theme. Until day four. A knock on my door. On opening it: Roleen greeted me with two peanut-buster parfaits from the local Dairy Queen. We enjoyed them together. And a few days later the three of us motored back to Madison before the snow came.

A Day Away

by [Denise West](#), novice

Sisters Lynne Smith and Paz Vital will lead a retreat entitled **A Day Away: Reconnect with God, Self and Creation** on **Saturday, March 17, 2018** for single women who need some time away from busy lives. When Novice Denise West joined Sister Lynne in facilitating this same retreat in February, six women gathered for prayer, meditation, group sharing, and reflection time both alone and with others. We enjoyed the beautiful snowy day, some of us walking outdoors on the trails, and others from a big sunny window in the warmth of the monastery. Participants said, "I really enjoyed spending time alone in nature." "Thank you for blessing me and opening up my awareness." "What a wonderful and peaceful place." "I see, and experienced, that I belong, I am welcomed, I need only accept the invitations, the hospitality. This retreat truly reflects the monastery's values."

If you know any single women between the ages of 30 and 50 who would benefit from **A Day Away**, please share this information with them.

[Register by March 10, 2018](#)



Guests & Retreatants

Romance at the monastery?

by [Monica Jefcoat](#), event and accounting assistant



February is the month most associated with romance. The reasons are somewhat lost to history but may be due to celebrations for martyred Christian saints with romantic ideals or practices rooted in pagan festivals. Most likely traditions can be attributed to both resulting in our modern Valentine's Day where expressions of adoration and token gifts are shared by those who live in North America, parts of Europe and Australia.

Now, a monastery may not be the first place you think of when you think of romance, but romance lives strongly at Holy Wisdom Monastery in February and throughout the year. Many couples come to the monastery each year to declare their love, exchange their wedding vows and celebrate the beginning of their marriage together. Although each of these beautiful ceremonies differ from one another and uniquely reflect the very special people involved, they all have love, hope and anticipation for the future in common.

Weddings are exciting at Holy Wisdom Monastery. They represent the culmination of an average of 10 months of planning that starts when the bridal couple first contacts the monastery to inquire about a date or requests a tour. A planning meeting occurs a few weeks

before the wedding and the rehearsal is usually conducted the night before the big day. Wedding coordinators, Amanda Conway and Monica Jefcoat, are resources to the bridal couple throughout the planning process and are on-hand to guide both the rehearsal and the ceremony day.

All are welcome to marry at Holy Wisdom Monastery. Weddings are scheduled throughout the year for up to 300 guests and can occur on any day of the week. Most take place in the Assembly Room or on the Lake Lawn overlooking the small glacial lake. When outdoor weddings are scheduled, the Assembly Room is automatically reserved in case of inclement weather making Holy Wisdom an ideal place for an outdoor ceremony. Regardless of the time of year, the monastery grounds provide beautiful backdrops for memorable wedding photos. Rates vary for indoor and outdoor weddings and are based on the time of year.

The holiday season through spring vacation time is when a large percentage of engagements occur. If you know a couple looking to wed, please encourage them to tour and consider Holy Wisdom Monastery. To start the process, all couples need to do is [complete an inquiry](#) on the Holy Wisdom website. Weddings can be scheduled with just a few weeks' notice, a couple of years in advance or anywhere in between. Dates are still available for 2018, 2019 and beyond.

Oblates

God, Beauty and the Benedictine Heart

Oblate retreats throughout 2018 will be open to oblates, oblate candidates and the public. The next oblate retreat is April 13-15, 2018 and is called God, Beauty and the Benedictine Heart led by Sister Gabrielle Uhlein.

Sister Gabriele Uhlein, OSB, PhD, from the Christine Center, will be working with the themes of Beauty, God's Heart and a Benedictine Oblate presence as an evolutionary spiritual art in today's world.

In addition, the April retreat is considered the promise weekend where all oblates can renew their promise to the oblate community. A new class of oblate candidates will start their one year journey to become oblates at this retreat.

[Register by March 30, 2018](#) for the retreat and by March 23, 2018 for lodging at the monastery.



Sister Gabriele Uhlein, OSB

Friends & Supporters

Wisdom Prairie Workdays begin in March

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

Anyone interested in volunteering on the grounds of Holy Wisdom is invited to participate in the Wisdom Prairie Workdays held March-November. Workdays are scheduled on Wednesdays, every other week, from 9:00 am-noon.

Projects vary from clearing and hauling brush, to prairie seed sowing and seed collecting. Restoration and maintenance of nearly 190 acres of prairie, savanna and woods takes many hands.



2018 dates: March 28; April 11, 25; May 9, 23; June 6, 20; July 11, 25; August 8, 22; September 5, 19; October 3, 17, 31; November 14, 2018.

[Register one day before the workday\(s\) you wish to attend](#)



We remember

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

- Clem Kollasch, brother of Sister Joanne Kollasch who passed away in January.
- Dwight Oliver Lohmeyer, father of Oblate Karen Lohmeyer, who passed away in February.

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.

[Serving others and being served](#) by Sister Lynne Smith

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

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

Recent homilies:

- [Colleen Hartung's homily, February 18, 2018](#)
- [Libby Caes' homily, February 4, 2018](#)
- [Paul Knitter's homily, Jan. 21, 2018](#)

Scripture commentaries by Arthur H. Cash:

- [February 25, 2018](#)
- [February 18, 2018](#)
- [February 4, 2018](#)
- [January 28, 2018](#)



Calendar

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

[Daily Prayer](#)

Monastery Oratory

Morning Prayer, Sunday-Saturday, 8:00 am

Midday Prayer, Monday-Friday, 11:45 am

Evening Prayer, Sunday-Saturday, 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

February 25

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

All ages are welcome to participate—little ones with a parent, and older students as readers and helpers with the teachers. Children's Liturgy of the Word is usually scheduled 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. The children return later in the liturgy to receive communion.

Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

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

February 28

Lenten Lunch, Ecumenism: The Truth as One, 11:45 am-1:30 pm

See information above. [Register by February 26, 2018.](#)

March 4

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

We are happy to announce that we will be offering a childcare ministry, typically on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, during the Sunday Assembly liturgy. Adult care takers and teenage helpers will provide care for infants and toddlers in the hospitality room.

March 6

Rooted in faith, transforming lives—65 years in photos

See information above. [RSVP by March 1, 2018.](#)

March 7

Lenten Lunch, Ecumenism: The Truth as One, 11:45 am-1:30 pm

See information above. [Register by March 5, 2018.](#)

March 11

Special commemoration of 65 years

Join us during and after Sunday worship as we commemorate the 65 years the Benedictine Sisters have been in Middleton, WI. March 11, 1953 is the day three Benedictine Sisters arrived by train from their home in Iowa to establish a monastery and girls high school. The worship service begins at 9:00 am and will include a special homily. After worship enjoy food and fellowship during a potluck brunch. Join in the celebration by bringing a dish to share. An anniversary cake will be provided. All are welcome.

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

March 13

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. We serve a vegetarian lasagna dinner, complete with salad, bread, and cookies.

March 14

Lenten Lunch, Ecumenism: The Truth as One, 11:45 am-1:30 pm

[See information above.](#) [Register by March 12, 2018.](#)

March 17

A Day Away: Reconnect with God, Self and Creation

A retreat for single women, ages 30-50. [See description above.](#) [Register by March 10, 2018.](#)

March 18

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

March 21

Lenten Lunch, Ecumenism: The Truth as One, 11:45 am-1:30 pm

[See information above.](#) [Register by March 19, 2018.](#)

March 25

Palm Sunday, 9:00 am

The Blessing of Palms & Procession begins our Sunday Assembly Eucharist.

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

Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

March 28

Wisdom Prairie Workday, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Volunteer on the land and help preserve and protect this important area on the north shore of Lake Mendota. Bring your friends!

[Register one day or more before the workday you wish to attend.](#)

March 29-April 1

[Holy Week Retreat](#)

Give yourself a special gift in the last days of Lent—come to Holy Wisdom for a Holy Week retreat. Consider one of the options below. In both cases, retreatants are invited to join the sisters and members of the Holy Wisdom communities for the Holy Week liturgies.

Holy Week: A Time to Retreat is a retreat program specifically designed for women to share in conversation with the sisters, reflecting on themes of the week and your own life story. Consider the various ways that new life, new imagination, new vision can arise from dead ends, uncertainty and chaos. In addition to the liturgies and meals with the community, the days include ample silence and solitude along with time for individual and group reflection. More information can be found online at Holy Week: A Time to Retreat. [Register by March 15, 2018.](#)

Personal Retreat during Holy Week

Women and men are also welcome to arrange a personal retreat in our retreat and guest house during Holy Week. Join us for liturgies and meals and plan the rest of the time as you wish. Information about arranging a personal retreat can be found on our [Personal Retreats webpage.](#)

March 29

Holy Thursday, 6:00 pm

Social & hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 pm, service begins at 7:00 pm.

We gather to share the Word, serve each other in the washing of feet and share in the Eucharist. Our collection will assist Vera Court food pantry and the food pantry of Saint Vincent DePaul Society. The liturgy concludes with time for silent prayer.

March 30

Good Friday, 3:00 pm

All gather in silence. The liturgy features Four Passages from the Passion of John each followed by a short reflection. With simple chant, the cross is brought into the midst of the community. Through the veneration of the cross and prayers of intercession, we respond to the Passion of Jesus.

March 31

Easter Vigil, 7:30 pm

7:30 pm service, social & hors d'oeuvres follows.

We gather to hear the stories of salvation history. The liturgy continues with the lighting of the new fire and the Easter candle. The Exsultet is sung followed by the Liturgy of the Word, culminating in the great "Alleluia" and the Easter Gospel. The Easter water is blessed, then all join in the profession of faith. The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows.

April 1

Easter Sunday, 9:00 am

9:00 am Eucharist, coffee and conversation follows.

Childcare is available during worship.

The day of resurrection continues the joy of the Vigil. We proclaim the Risen Christ in scripture, song, baptismal renewal and Eucharist.

[Visit our website calendar for all of our upcoming events at holywisdommonastery.org/events/](http://www.holywisdommonastery.org/events/)

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Holy Wisdom Monastery

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