

# 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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March 2018



*The Benedictine Sisters at Holy Wisdom Monastery celebrated their 65th anniversary of coming to Middleton, Wisconsin with worship and a potluck brunch on March 11, 2018.*

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Sisters & Sojourners

## Discerning community leadership: with a listening heart

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



*Sister Jeanne Weber (left) blesses Sister Mary David Walgenbach as she is re-elected prioress.*

"I hereby open the Chapter of Election for Holy Wisdom Monastery." These simple words were spoken on March 3, 2018 by Sister Jeanne Weber, OSB, Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota and President of the Federation of St. Gertrude. The election of the future Prioress of Holy Wisdom Monastery began.

The sacred work of choosing our prioress began weeks earlier however. Sisters Mary David Walgenbach, Lynne Smith, Joanne Kollasch, Paz Vital and Novice Denise West gathered to pray, reflect and share in conversation our deepest desires and hopes for the community.

Our desire was to bring to these conversations a listening heart and personal discernment that could lead to wisdom of heart as we move into the future.

We focused on our Benedictine charism, what we hold in common, and our life in community. We reviewed the vision, values, aims and mission of the monastery. We affirmed our calling as an ecumenical community with a diversity of cultures, and the many expressions of our work: receiving

guests, mutual support of co-workers, Sunday Assembly, the Oblate Community and the Friends of Wisdom Prairie.

For Benedictine women there are four elements which nourish and support personal discernment: silence/solitude; *lectio divina* (divine reading); prayer, especially the daily Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist; and stability in the monastic life.

When the community gathers for the Chapter of Election, the previous conversations become the heart of the election. The *Rule of Benedict*, Chapter 64, on the Election of Prioress is read, followed by the President's Reflection to the community. Ballots are distributed and counted.

The announcement of the re-election of Sister Mary David was received with joyful and grateful hearts.

The Installation of Prioress followed at Evening Prayer in the Oratory. After the Oath of Office, Laying of hands, and comments by the Prioress, a closing prayer was given by the President:

May God make us firm in faith,  
May Christ give us grace  
to live out the paschal mystery of baptism  
and may the Holy Spirit cleanse our hearts  
and set them on fire with love.

the prairie blooms  
with your touch  
of healing and hope...  
as you weave holy wisdom  
into the fabric  
of daily life,  
the prairie blooms!  
as you welcome all  
into your warm hospitality,  
the prairie blooms!  
as you work for justice  
in your community and the world,  
the prairie blooms!  
as you pray deeply  
individually and collectively  
for the earth  
in all its beauty, tragedy  
weariness, wonder  
joy, hunger  
mystery, ordinariness  
need, delight  
the prairie blooms!  
the prairie blooms  
bright with the full spectrum  
of God's Great Love.

Benedictine Women  
of Madison...

Blessings  
in abundance  
in celebration  
of 65 years  
of witness and work  
in Madison  
in anticipation  
of your future full  
of renewed commitment,  
compassion,  
caring  
for the earth  
and all its inhabitants.

We celebrate with you, rejoice with you! *Barbara Battin  
Jim Clary*



*Rev. Barbara Battin, friend of the monastery and Ecumenical board member, sent greetings to the sisters for the 65th anniversary of the community.*

## Holy Week Retreat

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

Holy Week Retreat – March 29-April 1

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. [Register by March 22, 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](#)

Sunday Assembly

## Holy Week at Holy Wisdom Monastery

by [Lynn Lemberger](#), director of worship and music



Easter is the highlight of the church year because it is the foundation of our Christian faith. The days before Easter, which we call Holy Week, draw us into the unfolding mystery of Christ's life, death and resurrection. The liturgies of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil bring us face to face with light and dark, fire and water, and life and death.

It's a dramatic time in the worship space. A procession with waving palms starts the parade of days. The triumphal entrance then quickly leads into the reading of the Passion. We hear the ancient stories of Passover and the firstborn struck down, the people of Moses and Aaron marking their doorposts and preparing roasted lamb. Jesus blesses bread and wine, shares it with his friends and tells them to do this in remembrance. With reverence we recall Jesus' betrayal and arrest, his death and crucifixion. The stories of salvation history—the creation of the world, the parting of the Red Sea, the generations of faith coming from Abraham and Sarah, the rainbow gleaming in the sky for Noah, his family and all the animals in the ark, all point us again and again to God's promise of renewal of life.

At the Easter Vigil, in the *Exsultet*, we sing together: "Most holy night, most blessed of lights, when Christ broke the chains of the darkness! God's mighty love is stronger than death. Christ our Light shines forever!"\* This is the hope we carry, the hope which strengthens us through in our grief and despair, our fear and loss. Christ our Light shines forever!



Join us for the special liturgies during Holy Week:

**March 25, Palm Sunday, 9:00 am** The Blessing of Palms & Procession begins our Sunday Assembly Eucharist. Children's Liturgy of the Word is offered during worship.

**March 29, Holy Thursday, 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, Service at 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** 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** 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.

\*Excerpt from *Most Holy Night*, ©1998, Daniel L. Schutte. Published by OCP Publications Inc. Used with permission One License A-703698.

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## Sacred Citizenship: The Connection between Politics and Spirituality

Holy Wisdom Monastery is hosting a series of programs (April 10, May 1, October 9, October 30, 2018) designed to explore the interface between politics and the spiritual convictions that undergird our commitment to peace, justice and equality. Regardless of whether we identify with a particular religious tradition, being a person of faith in today's politically divisive climate means honoring our responsibilities to one another, the environment, our country and our world. Come for one or more sessions.



Each program will begin with prayer and dinner, followed by speakers, resource sharing and opportunities for dialogue and discussion. The programs will promote an understanding of why the most important role in our government—as former President Obama pointed out—is the role of *Citizen*.

**April 10, 2018, 4:30-7:30 pm: The Environment**

Tia Nelson is internationally recognized for her commitment to environmental stewardship and is currently the managing director of the Outrider Foundation. Kathy Heskin is an adjunct professor at

Edgewood College, teaches a course on Native American spirituality and works extensively with tribal communities in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Montana. [Register by April 3, 2018.](#)

**May 1, 2018, 4:30-7:30 pm: Farming**

Kara O'Connor serves as the Government Relations Director for Wisconsin Farmers Union. Sarah Lloyd is the Special Projects Coordinator for the Wisconsin Farmers Union and the Secretary of the Board and Director of Development for the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative. [Register by April 24, 2018.](#)

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Oblates

## Communities—circles of trust

by Sue Bradley, Oblate class of 2002



As oblates, we look forward to coming together as a community through retreats, integration groups and, for some of us, area reflection circles.

What about the other communities in which we belong? At the recent February oblate retreat, fellow oblate Jan Conrady led us in considering the words of Parker Palmer in his book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy* and those of Joan Chittister concerning *The Rule of Benedict, Insights for the Ages*. How do we talk to our fellow citizens? Especially, how do we talk with those with whom we have fundamental disagreements?

Why is this important to oblates? Joan Chittister suggests in her book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily* that "the gift of Benedictine spirituality to the modern world may well be community itself." We may very well see our oblate communities as the "circles of trust" that

Palmer suggests. We hopefully are strengthened by being with other oblates in order to go out to others of the world community. Palmer suggests that we listen to the "stories" of others rather than immediately wanting to win arguments. There is an urgency in our times and such a lack of listening to each other. It is not that we shouldn't take stands about climate change or immigration or whatever our passionate issue is. But, it is the notion that listening to others may help set the tone for them to listen to us. As Benedict said, "Listen ... with the ear of your heart." When there is trust built up, perhaps then we can come up with solutions that build on both of our stories. We will then bridge what Palmer calls "the tragic gap," the area between the current reality and the possibility of a better future for all of us.

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The public is welcome to attend the next oblate retreat:

April 13-15

### **Beholding Beauty: The Art of the Benedictine Heart of God**

Facilitated by Gabriele Uhlein, OSF, Ph.D.

Beauty lures us, holds us and humbles us. The beautiful Heart of God empowers us, transforms us and allows us to be present without exception, in every place and for all time. Come and experience what a Franciscan discovered about the beautiful, Benedictine heart of God. See what is emerging in the contemporary church as the beauty of oblate commitment comes into full flower in the Age of the Laity. [Register by March 30, 2018.](#)



Guests & Retreatants

## Spring retreats at Holy Wisdom Monastery—a time for rebirth

by [Toby Grabs](#), director of operations

Winter is a charming time for a retreat at Holy Wisdom Monastery. The grounds are so peaceful when covered with a blanket of snow and so fun to explore using a pair of the retreat center's snowshoes. Many also find retreating at Holy Wisdom during the winter affords a needed break from the hustle and bustle of the busy holiday season.

Retreating in the spring, on the other hand, is a time for rebirth—of the prairie, lakes and woods, and possibly even one's own post-winter rebirth. Walking the trails or enjoying time on one of the many benches is an opportunity to welcome the return of birds, butterflies and blooms. Time can be spent in gratitude for the gifts of the winter that was, and looking forward to how to use the longer, warmer days ahead to grow in your relationship with yourself, others and God.



The grounds at Holy Wisdom Monastery this spring will be alive with the songs of birds, the greening of the hillsides, and the fresh, pure smell of the outdoors coming back to life. While inside you'll find a peaceful and quiet atmosphere for reading, sleeping, contemplation, and visiting with others. Weekday overnight room availability is excellent April through June; weekend availability is low but some weekend rooms are still available.

To schedule a retreat, please send Monica Jefcoat an [Availability Inquiry](#) or call her

directly at the [608-836-1631, x158](tel:608-836-1631). [Visit our website](#) for further information on what to do on a retreat, rates or to read what *The Washington Post* had to say about retreating at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

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Volunteers and Coworkers

### Welcome Rachel Olson

Rachel Olson joined the Benedictine Life Foundation staff at Holy Wisdom Monastery on February 19, 2018 as Project Manager. Rachel, a former United Methodist minister with a graduate certificate in Nonprofit Finance and Economics from the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management at UW Milwaukee, comes here with 20 years of experience in administration and fundraising for faith based organizations. She's also been attending retreats and events at the monastery since 2001, and joined Sunday Assembly in 2017. Working at the



monastery is a dream come true for Rachel, because she is able to apply her expertise and experience to a mission that she believes in and work with people she admires in a place that is very special and important to her.

Last summer, after living in Milwaukee for eight years, Rachel enthusiastically returned to Madison. She is the mother of two adult children: one librarian, and one Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), both living in the Madison area. In her discretionary time, Rachel enjoys exercising at the YMCA, walking her tiny, nine pound dog, reading, writing, biking, paddling a kayak, and on occasion tackling a DIY/ home improvement project. She serves on the Spiritual Deepening Council at the monastery, is working toward becoming a peacemaker for the Dane County Community Restorative Court, and is interested in Zen Buddhism and the St. Francis Catholic Worker.

"I'm really looking forward to taking part in all the upcoming foundation events and to getting more involved in the life and mission of the monastery," explains Rachel.

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#### Friends & Supporters

### Giving Tuesday impact continues—anonymous donors comes forward

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

Thanks to so many participants, the 2017 Giving Tuesday effort was a big success! A total of \$21,247 was raised to meet the needs of different departments at Holy Wisdom.

But that is only part of the story.

In late December, donors who wish to remain anonymous contacted us saying they wanted to make a gift in 2018 to purchase a particular item that was on the wish list. The item was the Bobcat Utility Vehicle which was listed at \$13,000. We knew it was a stretch to include that item on the wish list and \$500 had been donated towards its purchase.

Needless to say, we were thrilled with this offer!

Greg Armstrong, director of land management and environmental education got busy researching the best price he could find to complete the purchase. "We've recognized for a number of years a need for a Utility Vehicle that could haul tools and materials over rough terrain while being relatively light on the soil. The Bobcat 3600 Utility Vehicle will suit that need exceedingly well," said Greg. "We can use bio-diesel to power this model and be a bit greener in our Care for the Earth. The Bobcat is "the good stuff"."

The land management enterprise at Holy Wisdom Monastery is extensive and complex as we work at restoring open Prairie, Oak Opening Savanna and Oak-Hickory Forest on nearly 200 acres of land.

The donors' gift of \$15,000, the \$500 received from another donor and some funds from the sale of timber allowed us to add on some important features such as a skid plate which protects the undercarriage, a roof and windshield, winch, and crash bar which protects the front end of the vehicle. The Bobcat Utility Vehicle will be delivered in April.



We thank these donors and everyone who supports Holy Wisdom in any way through financial gifts and volunteer time. You are a blessing.

And the lesson learned? It's good to stretch—you never know who is out there who can help make the dream come true!

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### Be positive, be passionate, be proud

by Janet Neurauter



Be Positive. Be Passionate. Be Proud to be an Eagle. This is the motto of Marjory Stoneman High School located in Parkland, Florida.

In response to the tragedy at the school on February 14, 2018, the communities of Holy Wisdom Monastery are supporting the youth-led national demonstration against gun violence in Washington DC on March 24, 2018. The call went out to stand in solidarity with these brave students and their inspiring efforts to promote gun control legislation. As of today, \$5,568.00 has been donated and will be sent to support the **March for Our Lives**.

Thank you to all who made gifts to this effort. May we all Be Positive, Be Passionate and Be Proud to stand with all students who have the right to feel safe in their schools.

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### Memorial gifts—a way to honor and remember loved ones

The death of a loved one is traumatic. When the loss occurs to people close to us, we often don't know what to do. Other than sending a card and attending a memorial service, how can we show the family of the deceased that we recognize their loss in a meaningful way?

It can be difficult to find an appropriate way to offer sympathy and support—especially if the deceased did not have a favorite charity. You can express your compassion and respect with a memorial gift to Holy Wisdom Monastery.

Gifts made to honor or remember a loved one are used where most needed or can be designated for a specific area of the monastery. Donations can be made by a check issued and sent to the Benedictine Life Foundation or through the [Donate button](#) on the website. In addition to providing the name of the person being remembered, please include the name and address of family members that should receive notification of the gift. The amount of the donation is never disclosed.

In addition, we often receive annual gifts from individuals who wish to honor a birthday or anniversary of a loved one who passed away some time ago.

Sometimes words of sympathy do not come easily. A grieving family will find comfort knowing a gift has been made in their loved one's memory to the monastery where it will make a difference for years to come. Flowers will fade; a memorial gift is a beautiful way to honor the life of a special person who has passed from this earth.

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## We remember



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

Ray DiPrete, father of oblate Lori DiPrete Brown, who passed away in February.

Father Larry Heitke, former presider and celebrant of the Eucharist at St. Benedict Center and dear friend of the sisters who passed away in February.

Hayden David Van Dinter, infant great-grandchild of Maureen and John Van Dinter who passed away in March.

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

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## New on our website

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

[We are the Body of Christ](#) by Sister Lynne Smith

[Sisters at Holy Wisdom endorse statement from LCWR on gun violence](#)

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

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



Recent homilies:

- [Al Majkrzak's homily, March 11, 2018](#)
- [Patti LaCross' homily, March 4, 2018](#)
- [Joseph Wiesenfarth's homily, February 25, 2018](#)

Scripture commentaries by Arthur H. Cash:

- [March 18, 2018](#)
  - [March 11, 2018](#)
  - [March 4, 2018](#)
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## 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](http://holywisdommonastery.org/events)

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March 18

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.

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March 21

Lenten Lunch, Ecumenism: The Truth as One, 11:45 am-1:30 pm  
Always Reforming—A Journey of Renewal | Led by Judy Nolde, Lutheran chaplain for Triangle Community Ministry and Ken Smith, retired Lutheran (ELCA) pastor  
**Don't miss our last Lenten Lunch of the year. [Register by March 19, 2018.](#)**

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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

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.

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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.](#)**

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March 29-April 1  
Holy Week: A Time to Retreat  
[Read description above](#)  
[Register by March 22, 2018.](#)

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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April 8  
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am

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April 10  
Sacred Citizenship: The Connection between Politics and Spirituality  
[See description above.](#) [Register by April 3, 2018.](#)

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April 10  
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.

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April 13-15  
Oblate retreat (open to the public)  
Beholding Beauty: The Art of the Benedictine Heart of God  
[See description above.](#) [Register by March 30, 2018.](#)

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April 15  
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am

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April 22  
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am

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April 24

Contemplative Movie Night: With One Voice led by Beth O'Brien

This is a Spiritual Deepening Council Associate program

"With One Voice brings together mystics from fourteen different spiritual traditions to share their perspectives on the unifying truth that transcends all religions. In this documentary, these awakened teachers address profound questions about life and love, the existence of God, the path to spiritual awakening and the way to true peace in the world. Through their words and compelling presence, they ask us to look within our hearts and listen deeply, so we too can join the conversation and speak With One Voice." (Home Page - With One Voice)

[Register by April 17, 2018.](#)

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April 29

Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

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



Holy Wisdom Monastery

4200 County Road M, Middleton, WI 53562 | Phone: 608-836-1631

Website: [www.holywisdommonastery.org](http://www.holywisdommonastery.org) | Email: [info@benedictinewomen.org](mailto:info@benedictinewomen.org)