

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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January 2019



*Artist Gary Eldred, right, tells stories about his pen and ink drawings of prairie plants at the opening reception of the art exhibit *The Simple Beauty of Native Plants* on January 11. The exhibit will run January 11-February 28, 2019 in the Holy Wisdom Monastery gallery in the monastery building. Gallery hours are M-F, 8:00 am-4:30 pm and Sun, 10:00-11:00 am, excluding holidays. All are welcome.*

Happy New Year!

by [Carolyn McGinley](#), editor

A new year is often an exciting time. We look forward to all the opportunities that will come our way. And we look for positive change if things in the past year didn't go as we had hoped. I can feel an excitement at Holy Wisdom Monastery as we start 2019. The co-directors of the new Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal started on January 10 (see story below) and they bring energy to this place as they work to create something new. Tergar International brought 90 people here for a week and our chef and volunteers cooked more than 1,600 meals. Nearly 200 people came for the opening reception for Gary Eldred's art exhibit, *The Simple Beauty of Native Plants*, many of them new to the monastery (see photo above). Attendance at Sunday Assembly worship is increasing too.

In 2019 the staff and members of the various communities will work in collaboration to offer many new programs at Holy Wisdom Monastery. Members of the oblate leadership circles will come together at the end of January to plan what the future of the oblate community looks like and in July the oblates will celebrate their 20th anniversary! In June the sisters' community kicks off a new start date for the Benedictine Sojourner program, taking advantage of the warm summer months to teach and practice environmental restoration in addition to an immersion in Benedictine spirituality for women. In July they offer a shorter version of this for younger women, ages 18-35, in a new 10-day program called Summer Stewards. The Friends of Wisdom Prairie turn their focus from prairie restoration to savanna restoration and mark 5 years of offering volunteer and financial support to the monastery, plus throughout the year they will offer great speakers, tours, workdays and an outing in August.

I hope you will be able to visit Holy Wisdom Monastery in the new year because your presence adds to the excitement happening here!

[Get a list of upcoming events](#)

Co-directors for new Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal arrive!

by Pamela Johnson, Sunday Assembly member and Oblate class of 2013

On January 10, 2019 the co-directors for the new Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal (ECCSR) arrived at Holy Wisdom Monastery and began their work! The ECCSR is the newest expression of the monastery's ecumenical ministry weaving prayer, hospitality, justice, and care for the earth into a shared way of life.



Jerry Buss and Nancy Enderle join the staff at Holy Wisdom Monastery as co-directors of the new Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal.

The co-directors arrival culminates the work of more than 16 volunteers, many of them oblates, who served on the Lilly Foundation Inc. grant writing team and the search team to find the co-directors.

The new co-directors are **Reverend Jerry Buss and Reverend Nancy Enderle.**

Jerry Buss is an ordained Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) clergyperson who, across 30 years, pastored three congregations in Washington state and served as a judicatory leader in the NW Washington Synod of the ELCA. While working for the synod he guided the development of 15 new church starts, supervised clergy engaged in new innovative ministries, designed quarterly support gatherings of first-call and multi-cultural

clergy, and collaboratively started a coaching and mentoring ministry for clergy and lay leaders.

Jerry says—

“In my heart-of-hearts, I know how important spiritual renewal is for clergy. My knowledge begins with my own experience and need for renewal. After many years as a pastor, my renewal journey began with a contemplative-based, emotional intelligence intensive. A few years later, my sabbatical included training and practice in both centering prayer and mindfulness. This helped me establish these practices in my daily life and to maintain them as I returned to my work. Trusting that God can bring new life out of impossible situations is a trust that the Holy Spirit has shaped within me. I am energized to start new things, where the Spirit guides and with the skills I've been given.”

Jerry and his wife, Darlene, moved from Seattle, Washington to Madison, Wisconsin in 2018 to be near their new grandson.

Nancy Enderle, an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) clergyperson, pastored congregations in Wisconsin, Illinois, and New York and served as Interim Executive Director of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians where she guided the work of a national movement toward inclusion and ordination of LGBTQ Presbyterians in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She leads retreats and workshops nationally, and in 2018 completed the *Living School program from the Center for Action and Contemplation*, where she was introduced to transformative teachings about contemplation and spiritual practices by Father Richard Rohr, Dr. James Finley, and The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault.

Nancy says—

“In 35 years of ordained ministry, I have witnessed and experienced the exhilarating sense of purpose that grows out of a call to serve God, as well as the sometimes soul-crushing weight of the demands and requirements of religious leadership. Key words of the ECCSR speak to what I value most in my ministry: *Ecumenical* points to the movement of the Spirit to unify us and create a new vision for Christ’s church in an age when so many are leaving organized religion; *Center* indicates that this is a place of gathering—not defined by a particular tradition; *Spiritual* is at the heart of attending to the transforming, indwelling presence of God’s living Spirit; and *Renewal* highlights the ever-present possibility of God’s Spirit breathing life back into us when we have run out of ideas and our activities leave us exhausted.”

Nancy and her husband, Gordon, live in Madison, Wisconsin. They have two children in college.

Please stop by Nancy and Jerry’s office beside the Garden Room in the Retreat & Guest House and introduce yourself!

Sisters & Sojourners

Benedictine Sojourners program to start in June in 2019

by [Sister Lynne Smith](#), Co-director of Formation

In 2019 the Benedictine Sojourner program, a 6-month immersion in Benedictine life, will start in June instead of September. The reason for the change is so women have the opportunity to learn about and practice caring for the earth at Holy Wisdom Monastery during the summer months.

[Benedictine Sojourners](#) are women between ages 24-50 who are not in a committed relationship. They live with the Benedictine sisters, who are Catholic and Protestant, at Holy Wisdom Monastery for six months. During the program the women:

- Learn and share spiritual practices
- Connect care for the earth with their spirituality
- Live a balanced life of prayer, work, learning & leisure

Interested, or know someone who might be?

- Contact: Sister Denise West
 - Text & phone: 608-235-0764
 - Email: <mailto:denisew@benedictinewomen.org>
- Come for a visit

[Learn how to come for a visit](#)





A Weekend Away: Finding Hope in the Midst of Suffering—March 30-31, 2019

At this Lenten retreat for women, we will reflect on our experiences and on the experiences of women at the margins as we seek meaning, hope and healing in the face of suffering. Through group discussion and personal reflection we will explore the sources of suffering for women and the small acts of kindness that open us to new life. We will discover the ways relationships can be a source of empowerment and support.

The retreat begins at 9:00 am on Saturday, March 30, 2019 and ends at 12:30 pm on Sunday, March 31, 2019. The cost is \$120 which includes a private overnight room, lunch and dinner on Saturday and brunch on Sunday. Space is limited.

The retreat will be facilitated by Sisters Lynne Smith, OSB and Denise West, OSB. For more information or scholarship assistance contact Sister Lynne at lwsmith@benedictinewomen.org or 608-831-9305.

[Register here by March 15, 2019](#)

Oblates

Begin again

by Collette Jones, Oblate class of 2015



I stare at the computer screen and the frozen screen. When did I last save this document? The computer ignores whispered prayers, shouts, and violent and repeated keystrokes to save or exit or close. I surrender. I press control+alt+delete.

And we begin again.

Benedict's phrase, "Always we begin again," has always fallen like sweet rain on my parched soul. It echoes with kind acknowledgment of failure and sweet encouragement to do better. But as I write this in Advent, as the days grow dark and short and cold, as John the Baptist

shouts repentance at us from the Biblical texts, and the world of commerce chants buy, buy, buy, I hear Benedict's words in the imperative.

"Begin again!"

And sometimes less kindly, "Begin again, nitwit!"

Like my experience at the computer, I find myself running headlong into brick walls--an unsolvable problem, an overwhelming grief, an unexpected disappointment and suddenly I am caught and lost and wandering in the dark underbelly of Advent. Here there be the dragons of fear and hopelessness and loneliness.

And here Benedict's words pierce the darkness urgently, "Begin again!"

And so I do.

In the early morning darkness, I leave my computer screen dark. I close my appointment calendar, and I

open my dusty prayer book of psalms and sing up the sun at the day's beginning. I sing of a world of signs and wonders, of God's presence and power and the hope of light even in the midst of darkness. And by singing, I both create and inhabit that world.

"Begin again!"

And so I pray centering myself in silence again and again, letting go of the thoughts and dramas that loop through my consciousness and making space for God and God's action within me. Through God's grace, I feel anchored more firmly and better able to withstand tides of despair and longing that are inherent in all beginnings.

Always we begin again. Thanks be to God!

Oblate retreat, *The Spiritual Practice of Friendship*, is open to the public

Oblates and the public are invited to a weekend retreat March 22-24, 2019, led by Oblate Brad Lutz at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

Looking at our experience, Scripture and the Rule, we will consider that friendship is more than being friendly—it is a spiritual practice that opens us to the workings of God's grace. Our sessions will include time for reflection and sharing as well as learning.

Brad Lutz has been an Oblate of Holy Wisdom Monastery since 2000.

[Register here by March 8, 2019](#)

Sunday Assembly

Lenten Lunches—learning about suffering from the major faith traditions

Suffering is a dominant theme in the Christian tradition during Lent. In this Lenten series, we will explore the theme of suffering in the major faith traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam to support our journeys of spiritual understanding and transformation.

Come and learn from these inspirational speakers what the major faith traditions say about suffering and "picking up the shattered pieces and making something holy out of them."



Wednesdays, 11:30 am-1:30 pm, \$30/lunch and program

March 20 Christianity - ELCA Bishop Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld

March 27 Islam - Alder Samba Baldeh

April 3 Buddhism - Paul Knitter

April 10 Judaism - Rabbi Renee Bauer

More information and registration coming soon.

Friends & Supporters

Feeling good

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

It was late afternoon on December 24th. Evelyn (not her real name) had Christmas dinner in the oven. Believe it or not, everything was under control. Her family wouldn't be there until 6:00 pm.

"I sat down at my computer, went online, and made what I call my Christmas gifts to my favorite four charities," Evelyn said. "I support Holy Wisdom all year long, and give mid-year gifts to other non-profits. But I do make special Christmas gifts every December."

Evelyn paused briefly when asked why she supports non-profits. "Frankly, it makes me feel good! I don't do it for any tax benefits, but knowing I have helped a cause that is important to me makes me feel great—like what I do matters."

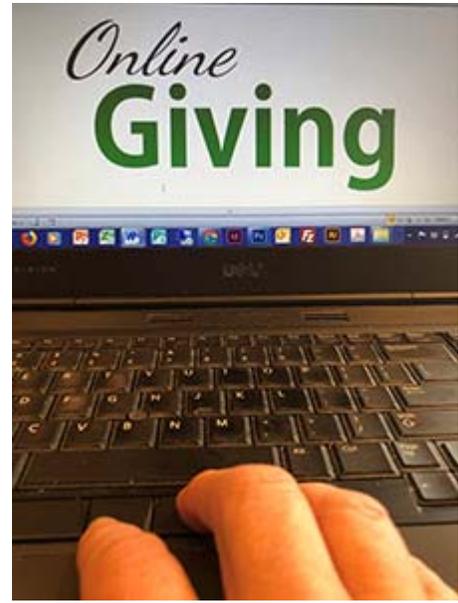
"I support some national organizations but giving locally has more impact," Evelyn explained. "I've always given to causes that reflect my own values. We've talked about this as a family, too. I've tried to be a role model for my kids by showing them the importance of helping others or supporting an organization doing good work."

"I give to Holy Wisdom Monastery on a monthly basis for a lot of reasons. It's important to sustain such a special and sacred place that's right here in Madison. The sisters' inclusivity and care for the earth mean the world to me. I feel like my gift makes a difference."

"I've had my ups and downs—troubles like everyone else. But overall I have been blessed. It's my privilege and duty to give back."

To join Evelyn in making a monthly gift, contact Janet Neurauter at jneurauter@benedictinewomen.org or call 608-836-1631 x 124.

[Click here to make an online gift](#)



What they're saying

Have you considered coming to Holy Wisdom for a personal retreat or arranging a group retreat or meeting? Read what others have said about their stays!

"I enjoyed every minute—I've been coming here for 20 years. I love that the Mary Hermitage is now available for any number of nights—not just a week. I'll probably now visit two times a year!"

"The grounds are so beautiful and peaceful, loved the trails and the benches."

"I appreciated the solitude—time to rest, read, walk, study. Interacting with other folks at mealtimes. Looking out over Lake Mendota from the bench at the hilltop."

"I enjoyed the quiet peacefulness and the warm people that are on staff here. Dinner and lunch were wonderful with the sisters. Everyone was so kind. Excellent company, I felt welcome."

We'd love to see you in 2019!

Learn more about retreat opportunities

Save the date for the next Friends of Wisdom Prairie dinner lecture

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

Join the Friends of Wisdom Prairie for the first dinner lecture of the year, Environmental Ethics of Wisconsin's Indigenous People led by Patty Loew on March 20, 2019. The event starts with beverages and conversation at 5:30 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, then an hour lecture starting at 7:00 pm.



Patty Loew, Ph.D., is Director of Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University and a professor in the Medill School of Journalism. A member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, Dr. Loew is a former broadcast journalist in public and commercial television. She is the author of *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*, now in its second edition, which won the Wisconsin Library Association's 2002 Outstanding Book Award.

More information and registration coming soon.

Benedictine Bridge to be delivered from Infusionsoft in February 2019

by [Jason Huett](#), marketing manager

We are in the process of sending *Benedictine Bridge* from a new email service. Sometimes during this type of transition, emails can end up in spam or junk email folders inadvertently. If you want to ensure receiving *Benedictine Bridge*, please click below on your email system for instructions in getting the newsletter in your inbox.

[Gmail](#)

[Yahoo](#)

[Outlook](#)

If your email system isn't listed, please feel free to email me directly so that I may send you an email confirmation link—a (nearly) sure-fire way to ensure our emails get to your inbox. My email is jhuett@benedictinewomen.org.



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Home & Seasons | Sunday Assembly | Stories | Gifts & Requests
Friends & Supporters | Volunteers & Co-workers | [View our website](#) | Calendar

December 2018

2018 marked the 65th anniversary of the sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery. The sisters (top photo) started the celebration by inviting all to attend an art exhibit displaying photos from the past and present. Caring for Common Ground (photo with trees), a pilot program for those wanting to learn how to do environmental restoration (middle left photo), Native American speaker Robin Wall Kimmerer gave more than 200 people in the monastery for her talk, *What Does the Earth Ask of You*. The next day she joined a volunteer workday at the monastery (photo pictured at the workshop in center). Women meeting in City Square, close to the monastery (top right photo), share, work and relax (photo) (photo above washing dishes). Guests enjoyed themselves at the Supper Series, an evening of dining and music. Women interested in Benedictine spirituality and possibly becoming sisters attended Experience Benedictine Life at the Monastery (bottom, middle).

The season of Advent announces it is time to prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas. The 65th Anniversary year will end. What a difference a year makes.

The Benedictine sisters arrived in Madison, Wisconsin 65 years ago. We celebrate their arrival. Decorations, banners, songs, feasting and a photo display marked our observance of the year. An altogether joyful time.

The many activities reminded the sisters and communities at Holy Wisdom to remember, affirm and celebrate our common story.

New on our website

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

[Sojourner diary—embracing simplicity](#) by Rachel Olson
[Beginning another chapter](#) by Sister Lynne Smith

[January phenology \(monthly nature happenings\)](#) by Sylvia Marek
[January new books in the library](#), by Nancy Sandleback

Recent homilies:

- [Lamont Nance's homily, January 12, 2019](#)
- [Libby Caes' homily, January 6, 2019](#)
- [Patti LaCross' homily, December 30, 2018](#)
- [Joseph Wiesenfarth's homily, December 24, 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

January 18-25
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



January 19 - **TONIGHT**

Snowshoe Under the Moon Tour, 7:00-8:30 pm

Join us for a tour of Holy Wisdom Monastery land on snowshoes, under the moon. Sylvia Marek and Greg Armstrong will be the tour guides. No registration necessary, just come. Bring your own snowshoes or borrow a pair from the monastery on a first come, first served basis. Contact [Greg Armstrong](#) to let him know you are coming and if you'd like to reserve snowshoes.

January 20
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am

Kids on the Prairie, 10:30-11:30
Sunday Assembly Council Meeting, 10:30-11:30 am

January 26
Oblate Convergence of Circles, 8:30 am-3:30 pm

January 27
Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am

Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

February 3
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am

February 4
Evolutionary Consciousness: Deepening Our Understanding of the New Universe Story
led by Mary Ellen Gevelinger, OP,
6 session series, February 4, 11, 18, 25; March 4, 11, 2019, 6:30-8:30 pm, \$80



This series will address the BIG questions participants bring about evolution, evolutionary consciousness, how the universe unfolded and continues to unfold. How do the Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture together inform us? We will read *Making All Things New: Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness* by Ilia Delio. Delio demonstrates that catholicity (small c) is a conscious awareness of how everything, all organisms from the single-celled to homo sapiens, forms one whole; catholicity is whole-making.

[Register here by January 28, 2019](#)

February 10
Solemnity of St. Scholastica

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

February 12
Luke House

February 17
Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am

Kids on the Prairie, 10:30-11:30 am

February 24
Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

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

Complete calendar at holywisdommonastery.org/events

Holy Wisdom Monastery

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