



March 2019



Sister Denise West (left) is all smiles at her Clinical Pastoral Education internship at Meriter Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. Sister Denise is pictured above with the other interns and supervisor. Pictured from left to right, Sister Denise West, Laurie Jorgensen, Rabbi Yonason Meadows (internship supervisor), Laura Jasiczek and Pat Chritton.

CPE internship completed

by [Sister Denise West](#), Benedictine experience coordinator

I recently completed one six-month unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Meriter Hospital. From the official accrediting body's website: *"CPE is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings [people] of all faiths into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need, and the feedback from peers and teachers, students develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister."* We were an ecumenical bunch of chaplain interns – a Methodist who grew up Catholic, a future Lutheran seminarian, and a feminist Evangelical. To top it off, an Orthodox

Jewish rabbi who'd been raised as Episcopal supervised our group. I felt right at home. The experience of CPE was one of challenge, growth, connection and revelation. The challenge began with leaving the comfort of the monastery with its predictable rhythms and entering a large hospital surrounded by too many people to meet, never knowing what spiritual crisis might be coming my way.

The clinical method is one of encounter and reflection, so after a week or two of orientation and shadowing other chaplains, we were set loose to walk into a hospital room and offer spiritual care to patients and families (or doctors and nurses) in distress. Later we would reflect on the interaction to see not how we could have done things better, but how we could have done things *differently*. This framing freed me to scrutinize how I encountered those in need. I had to learn to let go of my agenda when I walked into a patient's room and let the patient's needs unfold before me. In my best moments, I was a companion on a path we co-created.

In my final reflection paper, I chose two quotes to highlight my experiences at the hospital. From Thich Nhat Hanh, "True love is possible only with real understanding," and, from Carl Rogers, "What is most personal is most universal." Care for another human being whose physical ailments you cannot cure or fix is a mystery. It seems that in a time of distress what we need most is not to be alone in our suffering, and to feel that someone understands what we're going through. We want someone to choose to remain with us as a witness to our suffering. In essence these two gifts – presence and understanding – are at the heart of spiritual care as I understand it. At least for now.

Sisters & Sojourners



Help us find sojourners

The deadline is coming fast and we are still looking for a couple women who are interested in becoming [Benedictine Sojourners](#) starting in June 2019. Please click on the link below to share the information via Facebook for us. We've created the post, all you have to do is write a comment on the post and share. Click below to see how it works. Thanks!

[Share info about Benedictine Sojourners on Facebook](#)

Summer Stewards

**For women 18-35
July 19-28, 2019**

Spend ten days immersing yourself in Benedictine spirituality and caring for the earth at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

You will:

- Learn from local experts about prairie and oak savanna restoration.
- Practice garden to table living as you grow, harvest, and prepare vegetables.
- Explore spiritual practices of mindfulness, meditation and contemplative art.
- Discover the connection between spirituality and care for the earth



Registration fee: \$50 (scholarship available). Room and meals are provided. Apply by June 21, 2019. For more information and to apply, click on the button below or contact Sister Denise West at denisew@benedictineowmen.org, 608-235-0764.

Apply for Summer Stewards

Sunday Assembly



Join us for the special liturgies during Holy Week

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.

Photo by Sandy Wojtal Weber

- **April 14, 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.
- **April 18, Holy Thursday, social & hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 pm, service 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.
- **April 19, 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.
- **April 20, 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 21, 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.

Learn about racism and civil rights from Rev. Joan Crawford



Join us for an important look at racism and civil rights from the perspective of African American retreat leader and Benedictine oblate, Rev. Joan Crawford, as she presents two opportunities at Holy Wisdom which are open to the public. Come for one or both.

Sacred Citizenship: Becoming a Better Ally to the African American Community

May 2, 2019; 9:00 am-4:00 pm; \$75; register by 4/18/19

"Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will." –Martin Luther King, Jr.

Are you ready to collaborate with others to dismantle systemic racism? Do you have the skills to be an effective ally to people of color? Are your well-intentioned comments sometimes perceived as insults to black folks? Join Rev. Joan Crawford for this day-long retreat that will not only increase your awareness of racism but also deepen your understanding of the African American perspective on race in the United States.

Oblate Retreat: Howard Thurman, African American Mystic and Prophet

Friday, May 3, 3:30 pm-Sunday, May 5, 2019, 1:00 pm; \$135; register by 4/19/19

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs are people who have come alive.” –Howard Thurman

Learn about Howard Thurman, one of the great spiritual leaders of the 20th century. As a spiritual mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. he advised him during a critical time in his life and he greatly influenced King to incorporate nonviolent resistance with the civil rights movement.

Leader Rev. Joan Crawford is a retreat facilitator and Benedictine oblate. Joan strives for a better understanding between the African American and Anglo American communities.

[Register for Sacred Citizenship](#)

[Register for the May Oblate Retreat](#)

Oblates

Being Benedictine

by Holly Prince, Oblate class of 2012

When I first became an Oblate, I joined a regional reflection circle. We met monthly and read from *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* by Joan Chittister. I also read from this book daily during my own contemplation time. My interest in trying to understand the Psalms grew. Eventually, I asked members of the reflection circle if anyone would be interested in forming a second group focusing on the Psalms, and the Psalm group was born. We gather monthly, usually have a meal together, share joys and sorrows, and read one to three Psalms. We read from Robert Alter, Walter Brueggemann, Nan Merrill, Stephen Miller, and others. We always end with The Book of Psalms from *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson. We have been gathering for approximately five years.



From this experience I have learned that The Psalms tell the story of God's people, teach that God's people have always suffered, that some days will be difficult, and change does not always come quickly; we must trust in God even in the midst of our suffering, and God promises redemption. I have also come to understand this through my deepening friendships, sharing of life experiences and shared struggle to live and deepen spiritual beliefs and lived faith. Regular reading of The Rule and The Psalms by myself and with others has become an important part of my own journey.

Psalm 133: The Book of Psalms, *The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson

How wonderful, how beautiful,
When brothers and sisters get along!
It's like costly anointing oil
Flowing down head and beard,
Flowing down Aaron's beard,
Flowing down the collar of his priestly robes.
It's like the dew on Mount Hermon
Flowing down the slopes of Zion.
Yes, that's where GOD commands the blessing,
Ordains eternal life.

Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal

News from the ECCSR

by Nancy Enderle, co-director, Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal



The Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal (ECCSR) has been receiving applications from clergy across the United States and from a variety of denominations. Pastors are describing the very issues the grant writing team had hoped this ministry would address.

One pastor wrote:

“The demands of being a pastoral leader and caregiver can sometimes feel more like a duty than a joy. Preaching almost weekly can be a drain both spiritually and creatively. And yet I know that the Holy Spirit has called me to do all of this and more. How can this be sustainable, I wonder? With a deep trust in the work of the Holy Spirit, which surprises and challenges me regularly, I consider this opportunity for spiritual renewal to be an answer to my prayers (quite literally). How, I have prayed, can I continue to be a voice of hope for my people? From where can I draw wisdom and strength—not just for today but for the years ahead? Without being spiritually grounded, it is easy to feel tossed about by the tides of busyness and change. I am someone who needs Christian community and also a grounding, quiet practice to fuel my own spirit as well as my leadership. This opportunity appears to be just the sort of environment I need to develop a deeper practice toward both of these needs.”

As we plan our immersion and set up the technology that will help pastors stay connected through a “monastery without walls,” it is gratifying to know that there are individuals seeking the resources we believe the ECCSR is uniquely positioned to provide. Thank you for keeping in your prayers those pastors who will be coming to the ECCSR. We will be receiving applications until the end of March. If you know someone who would be drawn to this wonderful opportunity, please forward the information to him or her:

<https://benedictinewomen.org/eccsr/eccsr-program>. We believe the beautiful rhythms and spiritual practices of this monastery will help them thrive in ministry and serve Christ’s church with renewed energy and commitment.

Friends & Supporters

Friends of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and the Friends of Wisdom Prairie collaborate on upcoming dinner lecture

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 | 5:30-8:00 pm \$40 | register by April 9

In an effort to bring people together who are interested in land management, the Friends of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and the Friends of Wisdom Prairie will host a dinner lecture at Holy Wisdom Monastery called *The Virtues of Natural Land Management*. The evening will include time for beverages and conversation, dinner and a panel of three speakers.



Jeffrey Sledge will discuss the issues related to the health benefits of Natural Lands for volunteers and visitors who experience being in an ecological community. He is the Research Scientist and Director of the Health and Built Environment Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Susan Carpenter will address the benefits of restoring a whole ecological community for sustaining biological diversity and restoring ecological services to an area. She is the Native Plant Gardener at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum.

Randy Hunt will address the benefits of managing natural lands for the health and functioning of a watershed and its waters. He is the Chief Science Officer, Research Hydrologist for USGS Upper Midwest Water Science Center, in Middleton, Wisconsin.

[Register now](#)



Overview of Estate Planning and Planned Giving seminar

Presented by Melinda Gustafson Gervasi
April 25, 2019
1:00-3:00 pm
at Holy Wisdom Monastery
No charge!

High net worth or strictly middle class? It doesn't matter. Everyone needs a plan.

Contrary to what many believe, estate planning is not just for millionaires. If someone passes without a will or living trust, the state typically decides how their assets are distributed. Proper documentation can save family members time and frustration. It also ensures that the estate is dispersed according to the person's wishes.

Whether you already have a will in place or are just beginning to think about it, join us for an informative afternoon with Madison attorney Melinda Gustafson Gervasi. Her current practice focuses on estate planning and probate, where she guides clients through the process of creating an estate plan as well as administering probate or trust matters. She is a member of the Legal Association for Women, the former chairperson of the Dane County Ethics Board, and author of the book *Middle Class Philanthropist: How Anyone Can Leave a Legacy* (released in 2013).

Registration is required. Sign up for the seminar by contacting Janet Neurauter at JNeurauter@benedictnewomen.org, 608-836-1631, x124 or by clicking the RSVP today button below. The registration deadline is Monday, April 22, 2019.

The event is free and each household will receive a complimentary copy of Melinda's book. Coffee and cookies will be served.

[Click here to send an email RSVP](#)

Donation from Clean Lakes Alliance

Recently we received a donation from the [Clean Lakes Alliance](#) thanking us for the commitment to improving and protecting water quality in the Yahara Watershed. It felt good to be validated by this organization that is also doing important environmental work in the Madison area.

"Thank you for being a force in the community and taking the lead in making positive change. Clean Lakes Alliance values your organization's commitment and we are grateful for the opportunity to show our support!"

If you'd like to support our work of caring for the earth, join the Friends of Wisdom Prairie, make a donation or volunteer at Holy Wisdom Monastery.



[Join the Friends in 2019](#)

How many volunteers does it take to get \$1 million?

by Rachel Olson, foundation project manager



Sister Mary David Walgenbach (l-r), volunteer Pamela Johnson and coworker Rachel Olson are three of the 32 people who helped make the dream, a reality with the birth of the Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

**Learn how to become a volunteer
at Holy Wisdom Monastery**

The answer: 22

That is how many Holy Wisdom Monastery volunteers, along with 10 staff and monastic community members, it took in 2018 to apply for, and receive, a \$1 million dollar grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. These funds were awarded to help start an Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal (ECCSR) here at Holy Wisdom, which, along with more volunteer effort, opened its doors in January of this year.

The entire process of envisioning the ECCSR, getting the right people involved, writing the grant proposal, and getting the center staffed and housed was accomplished in only nine months. A herculean task that would not have been possible without the more than 600 hours that were generously donated by the diversely talented and wonderfully committed team that came together to make this vision a reality.

These volunteer hours, valued at \$24.96 each, (*the national average for volunteer labor in 2018, and a conservative number considering the impressive skills and experience that were present among our 22 workers*) brings the total gift of time and talent that was given for this project to nearly \$15,000!

As with nearly everything that happens at Holy Wisdom, once again, our amazing volunteers were at the very heart and soul of this project from the beginning. A huge thank you to all our volunteers, and an encouraging word to anyone who might be considering getting involved in one of our many volunteer opportunities. There are no limits to what volunteers can accomplish here—including getting a million dollars that will benefit clergy from around the country and enrich the lives of more people that we can predict.

Calling All Volunteer Handy-Persons and DIY-ers

Are you experienced in building maintenance or enjoy fixing and maintaining your own home and yard? If so, please consider volunteering some of your time and skill at Holy Wisdom. We are currently seeking volunteer handy-persons to work with our maintenance staff and help keep the monastery facilities in tip-top shape. If you are interested please contact Rachel Olson at rolson@benedictinewomen.org or 608-836-1631, x120.



We remember

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

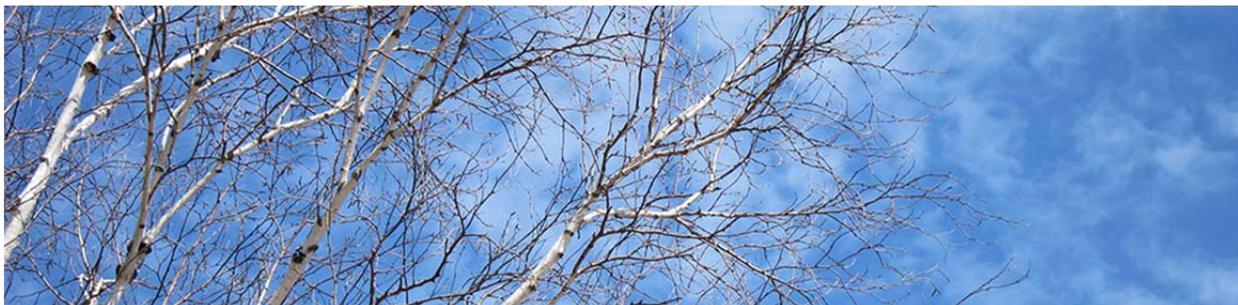
Helen Duffy, Sunday Assembly member and wife of Jack Duffy. Helen passed away on February 27, 2019.

Irene Nesper, mother of Sunday Assembly member, Larry Nesper. Irene passed away on March 12, 2019.

Daniel Wojtal, brother of Sunday Assembly member Sandy Wojtal-Weber. Daniel passed away on March 6, 2019.

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

New on our website



Living in community blog

How justice can start from joy
by Sister Lynne Smith

Sojourner diary

Discernment
by Rachel Olson

Read the latest homilies

March 17 by Leora Weitzman
March 10 by Wayne Sigelko
March 3 by Libby Caes

New books in the library

March new books in the library
by Nancy Sandleback

Nature happenings

March phenology (nature happenings)
by Sylvia Marek

Calendar

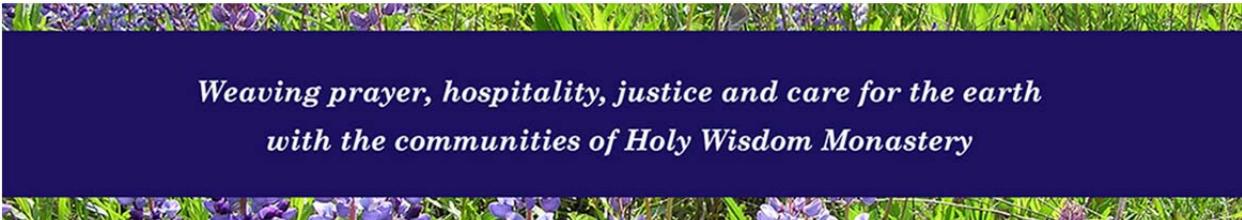
For a listing of events taking place at Holy Wisdom Monastery,
visit <https://holywisdommonastery.org/events>

March

- 24: Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am
- 24: Anointing of the Sick, 10:30-11:15 am in the oratory
- 27: [Wisdom Prairie Workday](#), 9:00 am-12:00 pm; register by 3/26/19
- 27: [Lenten Lunches](#): Islam, led by Samba Baldeh; register by 3/20/19
- 28: [Sacred Citizenship: Odyssey Going Behind Bars](#); register by 3/21/19
- 30-31: [A Weekend Away](#) retreat for women; **retreat full**
- 31: Hospitality and Car Pool Sunday

April

- 3: [Lenten Lunches](#): Buddhism led by Paul Knitter; register by 3/27/19
- 7: Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am
- 9: Luke House
- 10: [Wisdom Prairie Workday](#), 9:00 am-12:00 pm; register by 4/9/19
- 10: [Lenten Lunches](#): Judaism led by Rabbi Renee Bauer; register by 4/3/19
- 14: Palm Sunday, 9:00 am
- 14: Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am
- 18: Holy Thursday, social & hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 pm, service at 7:00 pm
- 19: Good Friday, service at 3:00 pm
- 20: Easter Vigil, 7:30 pm service, social & hors d'oeuvres follows
- 21: Easter Sunday, 9:00 am Eucharist, coffee and conversation follows
- 21: Sunday Assembly Childcare Ministry, 9:00-10:00 am
- 23: [Dinner Lecture: The Virtues of Natural Land Management](#), 5:30-8:00 pm; register by 4/9/19
- 24: [Wisdom Prairie Workday](#), 9:00 am-12:00 pm; register by 4/34/19
- 25: [Overview of Estate Planning and Planned Giving](#), 1:00-3:00 pm; register by 4/22/19
- 27: Grounds Tour: The Sights and Sounds of Spring, 9:00-10:30 am; no charge and no need to register, just come, and bring your friends
- 28: Earth Day Sunday
- 28: Hospitality Sunday and Carpool Sunday
- 28: Blessing of new Sunday Assembly members
- 28: Children's Liturgy of the Word, 9:00-10:00 am
- 28: Kids on the Prairie, 10:30-11:30 am



*Weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth
with the communities of Holy Wisdom Monastery*