CSJ Congregational Chapter 2019, “Called Together for the Life of the World,” urged us to “deepen awareness of our complicity and work toward dismantling systems of oppression.” How are we complicit in systems of oppression? What is it that we don’t understand and need to know about ourselves, our community and our connections with the dear neighbor? How can we help ourselves become aware of implicit bias?

At this time some religious communities of women and men are publicly acknowledging and asking for forgiveness that they have in history said no to people of color who asked for entrance or themselves held slaves. We in the St. Paul Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph with Consociates, Friends and Partners passed a “Proposal for Intentional Action on Racial Justice” at the Community Assembly in November 2019 to assess our present living of racial justice.

The Province Leadership Team is calling us to respond to the Community Assembly recommendation and the Chapter call “to bold conversation and prophetic action” by gathering a representative group of people aware of the community desire to deepen our awareness. That group will review possible people who might offer us action steps for deepening awareness of our complicity in systems of oppression and help us work toward change. We will all be invited into whatever process will help us assess (and change if needed) the dimensions of community culture that affect our ability to practice authentic inclusion.

May we move with peace into this challenge and “go deeper, journey farther and respond boldly.”

Susan, Suzanne and Cathy
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 7, 2020

We pray for peace and nonviolence

As we begin 2020 faced with the United States’ targeted killing of Qasem Soleimani of Iran, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet are praying for peace and nonviolence, and we remain committed to promoting it in every way we can. The precipitating actions are complex, yet we fear escalating violence leads to more violence and indescribable suffering for our dear neighbors without distinction.

Pope Francis, in his 2020 World Day of Peace Message, shared that peace is “the object of our hope and the aspiration of the entire human family.” Our entire community is committed to Catholic social principles of peace and active nonviolence as a way of life. We turn to the God of peace and compassion to give us the strength and wisdom needed to be instruments for change and messengers of unity and reconciliation.

We invite all people of good will to contact their elected members of Congress to promote peace-building efforts with Iran and not an escalation towards war. We must join together in seeking ways to promote peace, to build a culture of nonviolence that begins with each and every one of us, and to pray together for peace and nonviolence especially at this time.
On January 1, 2020, Sister Maryellen Kane, CSJ, from the Sisters of St. Joseph’s Brentwood community in New York, assumed the role of executive director of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Sr. Maryellen has worked with the United Farm Workers (the union originally started by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta) and co-founded houses of hospitality that have spread throughout New York City and the surrounding area. Patty Johnson, the organization’s former executive director, resigned to assume her new position on the CSJ Congregational Team.
CSJs Thank Minnesota’s Lutheran and Catholic Bishops

The Province Leadership Team recently sent individual letters to Minnesota’s Bishops on behalf of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Consociates, Partners and Friends. The letter thanks them for their open letter, “Resettlement policy: Create a welcoming society, not more barriers, for refugees” that appeared in the December 23, 2019 Star Tribune Opinion Exchange.

The letter also shared a list of CSJ ministries that are working with immigrants and refugees, and highlighted the Province’s efforts to “create a welcoming society for those most in need,” saying, “We have for 25 years supported Sarah’s...an Oasis for Women as a home dedicated to safety and dignity for a diverse community of women where they can begin new and productive lives. All of the 30 women housed there currently are refugees or asylum seekers. Our ministries also include Learning In Style — education for adult new immigrants, and St. Mary’s Health Clinics — which provides free medical care, outreach and education to low-income, uninsured families and individuals who are not eligible for government programs. We stand with you spiritually and practically in supporting refugees and in asking that we as a nation do better.” See the full letter at https://www.csjstpaul.org/general/support-of-bishops-resettlement-policy-message/.

Catholic Sisters Week 2020, a project of Communicators for Women Religious, is March 8-14. The 2020 theme is Communities of Spirit, Hearts for Ministry. Catholic Sisters Week shines a light on the spirituality, mission and community building of women religious. Follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

Rapid Relays are emails the Province sends to keep our community updated on timely events. Recently, the software provider we use for this service asked us to update our template to a newer version. If you haven’t been receiving your copy, please check your junk mailbox. If you continue to have issues, contact Trevor May, 651-696-2504, tmay@csjstpaul.org.
Community Musings

Congratulations to our 2020 Jubilarians!

80 Years
Florine Provencher, CSJ

70 Years
Mary Calder, CSJ
Mary Fowler, CSJ
Betty McKenzie, CSJ
Rose Mary Rooney, CSJ
Mary Nicholas Vincelli, CSJ
Betty Wurm, CSJ

65 Years
Mary Ellen Foster, CSJ
Jacqueline Lawson, CSJ
Jane McDonald, CSJ
Dolore Rochon, CSJ
Marie Shaun Walter, CSJ

60 Years
Sharon Gondek, CSJ
Theresa Sherlock, CSJ

50 Years
Barbara Whitlow, CSJ

45 Years
Martha Merriman, CSJ
Tam Thi Tran, CSJ
Althea Johns, CSJ

2020 Consociate Jubilarians

20 years
Ginger Hedstrom
Ginny Jablonski
Carla Nitti
Gayleen Touhey

10 years
Sue Allison
Mary Burns
Mary Joe Dolan
Rosemary Hayes
Ann Meissner
Denice Peterson
Karla Rehberg
Pamela Snow

2020 Caring Hearts Supply Drive for the Homeless

By Ann William Leach

These days we often hear of the plight of people experiencing homelessness. This drive, managed by the Gospel of Life Group, will provide an opportunity to assist the homeless by participating in this year’s Caring Hearts Drive.

What: Fairview’s Caring Hearts Supply Drive for the Homeless
When: Sunday, February 2 through Sunday, March 1
Campus Drop-off Sites: CSJ Administration Center, Carondelet Center, and Carondelet Village. Complete shopping lists will be available at each site.

Monetary donations are welcome. Make checks payable to: Fairview Foundation Homeless Project 1690 University Avenue W. Suite 250 St. Paul, MN 55104

Sister Assembly/Consociate Assembly

Save the Date for February Assemblies

On February 8 there will be two Assemblies at Carondelet Center. Please mark your calendar and watch for more information in the near future.

Sister Assembly
8:30 a.m. to Noon

Consociate Assembly
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Questions for Consociate Diane Gardner

Coordinated by Mary Lagaard, Consociate

Diane Gardner was born in Columbia, MO. She’s lived in WI, MO, PA, MN, AL, MA, FL, AK, CO, CA, WA and Germany.

“I started college at the U of MN, transferred and graduated from the U of MO with BA in English. I went back to school at age 50 for an MA in theology/spirituality from St. Catherine University. I got my certificate in spiritual direction jointly from St. Kate’s and Sacred Ground.

I met the CSJs as a student at St. Kate’s, discerned for four years and became a Consociate in 2001.

Favorites:
- **Book:** So many! “Pigs in Heaven” by Barbara Kingsolver, the Armand Gamache mysteries from Louise Penny, “Flora and Ulysses” by Kate diCamillo. I still read “Little Women” every six-to-seven years!
- **Song:** The old doo-wop hit “In the Still of the Night” by the Five Satins
- **Place:** Taos Pueblo, Taos NM
- **Food:** My husband’s stir fry beef and peppers
- **Memory:** My children when they were young

**Besides Jesus or Mary,** I think I’d have dinner with St. Teresa of Avila, a leader of her Carmelite community, a woman of faith during the Inquisition and a real person who complained about the burdens of leadership.

**Important people in my life?** I’d pick my 2 children as important people in my life. My son is a prayer partner if I need one, has my same crazy sense of humor and has matured into a fine man. My daughter is a wise counselor when I need one, is no-nonsense when it comes to planning and has a loving, compassionate heart.

**My hope for the future** is that my husband and I can manage our health challenges as best we can and LIVE until we die.

**Important lessons** include that all things are part of a vast, cosmic web. That it may take a long time, but love will triumph over hate. That there is beauty all around us if we take time to see. That Jesus comes to us over and over in the guise of real people. That it’s important to respect your elders.

**Challenges** include finding life-long friends when moving every few years. Working my way back from various surgeries, including five eye surgeries and a fractured spine.

**Surprises?** I think I was surprised at how much the history of the CSJs moved and inspired me. Being able to go to LePuy and other CSJ historical sites reinforced the fierce, radical love and service the early Sisters had. I will never forget my first view of the black Madonna, Our Lady of LePuy. She is one of the most powerful objects I’ve ever seen.

Not being Catholic, some of my family and friends don’t quite understand my commitment to the CSJs. Some of my family deals with it by never mentioning it or asking about it. I’m sometimes amazed by how much Catholics and Protestants don’t know about each other.

**My accomplishments** include finally finding my true calling in mid-life, learning you can make a home anywhere, raising two fine adults, being married to the same man for 52 years, and educating the United Church of Christ about spiritual direction. I was the first in the U.S. to be a UCC Commissioned Minister for Spiritual Direction.

**Changes** I’ve seen include being part of the second wave of the women’s movement, increasing acceptance of GLBTQ folks, increasing emphasis on ecology. Changes that sadden me are how divisive current politics are and how uncivil and coarse public discourse has become.

I’d like people to know I have an irreverent sense of humor and work at being a good writer.
MCHCE is Available to Help with Complex Health Decisions

By Karen G. Gervais, Ph.D.
Director, Minnesota Center for Health Care Ethics

The January Together included an article about your Ethics Center, the Minnesota Center for Health Care Ethics (MCHCE). The Center is available with tools and consultations to assist with healthcare ethics-related concerns related to an aging community. If Sisters are interested in meeting individually and confidentially for help in preparing or updating an advance directive, or getting the Center’s assistance in processing information for complex healthcare decisions, contact Karen Gervais directly at gervais@mnhealthethics.org or 651-335-7582. Your requests will be kept in strict confidence. To learn more, see the original article in the January issue of Together.

CV is Best of….

Carondelet Village was recently recognized as one of the best retirement communities in St. Paul. The St. Paul Award Program was established to recognize the best of local businesses and by recognizing the small business community’s contributions to the U.S. economy.

REAL ID

If you plan on visiting a federal facility or traveling outside of the United States after October 1, 2020, you will need to have a “REAL ID.” This means you will need to update your license or ID, or keep your passport or passport card up-to-date. The DMV is very specific on the forms of ID needed before they will update your information. For information, please see the infographic above. Address questions or concerns to Lara Lundgren, 690-7009 or Llundgren@csjstpaul.org.

www.csjstpaul.org
We are all going to die. But are there insights that make the process easier? In this 14th edition of *In Search of the Divine* we hear from those in the midst of the journey and those supporting them as they share their thoughts about the Art of Dying Gracefully.

The dying, Harold Bergh (1925-2018), Sister Pat DeBlieck, CSJ (1938-2018), and Sister Marguerite Turgeon, CSJ (1916-2018), share their death journey with us. Kathleen Conrad, Campus Pastor for Carondelet Village, Sister Angela Schreiber, CSJ, Karen Waldron, RN, hospice case manager, Sholom Hospice, and Cathy Wurzer, radio, TV host and author, discuss how they accompany the dying and the gifts and insights this journey yields including: dying is work; fear is natural; faith helps; talk about it; be present. ISOD 14 will be available soon at distribution sites throughout the CSJ campus and Carondelet Village.

If you would like to have a copy mailed, contact Sister Jane Hurley, janehurley22@gmail.com or 651-695-5205.
The Feast of St. Joseph 2020
Dare To Be Prophetic

Acting out of a place deep within, Joseph was in total union with God. In creating life, he too, said “Let it be done unto me.”

—Mary Hasbrouck, CSJ, ad.

Come and Celebrate!

Jubilarians, Sisters, Consociates, Partners, Friends & Guests
Thursday, March 19th

9:30 AM
Carondelet Village Chapel
Eucharistic Celebration
Reception to Follow
All are welcome!

6:00 PM
Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel
Celebration with Table Prayer
Please RSVP for reception
651-690-7060
All are welcome!
Marguerite Corcoran. CSJ

January 24, 1929 – December 26, 2019

In her own words:

“It happened January 24, 1929, the year of the bank crash, and the beginning of the Great Depression,” wrote Sister Marguerite of her life. “I gave up the warm dark comfort of my mother’s womb and started my journey into the unknown.

“On February 2, 1947, I joined the small spark and flicker of my life with the bright shining light of the Sisters of St. Joseph. This light has shown the way through many changes and conversions. The places to which I was assigned back in the days when we were missioned became dear to my heart. They were the admission offices at St. John’s Hospital in Fargo; St. Michael’s Hospital in Grand Forks and St. Mary’s in Minneapolis. In these holy places there were opportunities to celebrate and rejoice in new life and healing, and also to mourn and weep with those suffering and dying. “After 20 years in Admissions, I left and took an Occupational Therapy Assistant course at St. Mary’s Junior College. After graduating, I worked for two years in cardiac rehab at St. Mary’s Hospital. When the manager of the Free Store on Cedar Avenue died suddenly, I was invited to fill in there. At that time I also returned to St. Mary’s Junior College as a faculty assistant, and was privileged to work with wonderful faculty and staff who were committed to challenging and excellent education.

“In the 1970’s, folks at St. Joseph’s House became aware of the great need for transitional housing, designed to empower women to healthy independent living. Ascension Place and Incarnation House were established. I worked one year at Ascension Place, and then helped in the establishment of “Incarnation House.”

“In 1967 we moved out of institutional living and into the neighborhood. We were blessed in finding a wonderful house overlooking Riverside Park. It was our home for over 40 years. There was enough space to allow us to invite folks who needed a place to live temporarily.” “In the 1970’s we joined the Peace Movement, which brought us to many places.”

“I am remembered with a cloud of witnesses: my family, whose tenderness and love encircled me; my friends, who danced into my heart with joy, peace and hope; co-workers, who have shared life and light; the caregivers who give comfort and healing. Because of these beloveds I have touched the face of God. I will continue to collect memories until that magical hour when “if” becomes “is” when the time comes to fold up my tent because ‘the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over, and my work is done.’”

Sister Marguerite, rest in love and peace.
Agnes Iten, CSJ
March 4, 1926 – January 6, 2020

Agnes (Laura Alice) entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1945, and in 1956 received a BA in English and Education from the College of St. Catherine and an MED from the U of M in 1970. She taught for over 30 years in many Twin City Catholic elementary schools. In 1978, she moved to Hawaii and taught for another 20 years. Friends called Agnes a “master teacher,” and one stated that whoever was in her middle school classroom left it fully ready and prepared for high school. Upon retirement Agnes served 9 years as receptionist for the St. Joseph Administration Center.

One friend said: “Sister Agnes lives religion—with her quiet gentleness, her friendly helpfulness, and her classic goodness. She’s been my friend for 32 years.”

A passionate proponent of the sanctity of all life, in 2003, she composed the Poem “Can We Sit Back.” Below are some excerpts.

**Can We Sit Back**

God “knit me in my mother’s womb” where I was made in the image of God. Yet, so many stand back and allow a precious life to be destroyed. I don’t want to choose between the small number of death penalties and the forty million abortions. All life is precious.

As for the babies being born into poverty—Our Holy Father sees the suffering poor throughout the world, yet he is ProLife. Mother Teresa worked among the poorest of the poor, yet she was ProLife.

We declare life is an inalienable right, but do we believe in social justice?

*Sister Agnes, rest in love and peace.*
Consociate Commitments

The following is an excerpt from Mary Freitag’s reflections at the May 1, 2019 Ritual of Consociate Candidate Welcome and Commitment. For the full text of Mary’s statement, check out the Consociate tab on the CSJ Forum of the website.

I listened to the movement of the trees in the wind. I listened to the Barred Owl and trusted its wisdom. I heard the Pileated Woodpecker’s rhythmic poundings as they communicated with one another. And then I heard the invitation to trust. I learned I could experience God’s lead in multiple ways—such that all reality communicates Divine guidance—the flow of great love!

I could trust that my foundation—my God core—was in place. I could hear the invitation to follow my own rhythm and manifest God in the physical world through my work. Living in that flow I could bring God and Spirituality into my psychology practice adding new classes and retreats at Spiritwoods Wellness Center in Stillwater. I could absorb the wisdom of the Sisters and Consociates; the Holy Spirit through all of creation; and Jesus’ teachings on how to manifest the Divine through action. And most assuredly—I could hear God speak—through the silence of my own heart. From that I could experience gratitude for the “blessing of the teaching” rather than bitterness.

Fast forward to today. We as Consociates are called to meet the needs of the time. And I believe that in order to do that fully we must have gratitude for the blessing of the teachings as the first step in turning poison into medicine as the first step to living in that flow of great love always.

So, does God ever HEAR me? Well, I’ve changed my question. Am I listening to God? Through listening, I learn that God is appearing everywhere before our eyes. Everywhere we look we can witness the flow of great love. My Companion, Sister Ansgar, and I summed up one of our conversations with a profound statement and I quote: “To awaken before we die we must not remain sightless in the midst of miracles.”
Sister Berissima (Letitia Agnes) was born on February 10, 1869 in Dublin, Ireland. She moved with her family to America when she was eight years old. She entered the Novitiate in St. Paul on September 7, 1891 (becoming the first member of St. Mark’s parish to enter the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet) and professed final vows on August 15, 1899.

Sister Berissima’s first ministry was at St. Agatha’s Conservatory where she had been a student at one time. She was then assigned to go to the newly built College of St. Catherine to become the first art teacher at the new school (Derham Hall). The portrait of St. Catherine which she painted still hangs in the main parlor at St. Catherine University.

Sister Berissima went on to teach in North Dakota at St. John’s Academy (Jamestown) and St. James Academy (Grand Forks). It was a sad day for Sister Berissima when she became sick and could no longer teach. She retired to St. Mary’s Hospital (Minneapolis) in 1940.

CELESTE’S DREAM

Responding to the Needs of the Times and Building Community

A reflection by Alma Silver, St. Kate’s Community Leader Intern with Celeste’s Dream and Justice

“If we don’t have money, then we can’t buy the food we need. Needing help with getting food doesn’t mean that you are any less of a person.”

When a student shared this in conversation as I helped direct the vigorous flow within the St. Catherine University food shelf, I grew profoundly aware of food access as a universal human right that must be available without distinction. Before immersing myself in the vibrant community of food justice advocates on my campus, I had remained comfortably oblivious to the alarming experiences of hunger among my fellow students. I recognized food insecurity only as a remote issue, never fully considering its concrete impacts on health, achievement, and opportunities.

As I worked to bring visibility to resources surrounding food access, I engaged in conversations that challenged my perspective in uncomfortable, necessary, and transformative ways. My work in food access led me to discover the spirit of community that fuels initiatives to address systemic barriers to consistent and nutritious meals faced by our neighbors and peers. Working toward food access for all cultivates a holistic cycle of community members caring for one another. Throughout our community garden harvests that yield donations of fresh produce, our collaborative gatherings to propose long-term solutions, and our unified presence each time the food shelf opens, the passion and vision for food justice forges connections between students, Sisters of St. Joseph, and broader community members. The formation of a community central to responding to the needs of the time reflects the transformative power of mutual care and understanding.

Strengthening partnerships and embracing connections brings us closer to a future in which no student faces obstacles to accessing food. Together, we will continue to move forward in removing barriers to necessities within our community while sustaining a spirit of kinship.
LEARNING IN STYLE

Learning in Style School celebrates the holidays with volunteers and staff and begins the year with interns and new students.

Learning in Style School hosted a holiday lunch for volunteers and staff on December 17th. The lunch was catered by two of our former students who now own their own catering business. The food was delicious and the event was great fun.

We are delighted to have two interns on board as we begin 2020. We are also pleased to report that on the first school day of 2020, five new students registered for the second semester. These new students come from Mexico and Somalia.

Our Interns
Isabel Saavedra-Weis (left)
Benedicte Afolabi (right)
are helping us in the classroom and with our student outreach program.
Solidarity with ALL our Dear Neighbors

Many people are seeking peace-filled ways to respond with compassion, peace, and reconciliation following the recent targeted killing of Qasem Soleimani, a senior Iranian military general, by the United States and the resulting escalations actions toward war. The Justice Office worked with Province and Congregational Leadership to release the Statement of Peace and Nonviolence featured on the inside front cover of this issue.

About 100 people gathered together with the CSJ community for 11th Day Peace Prayer in January to pray for peace in the wake of escalating global tensions, rhetoric and actions. Pope Francis’ 2020 World Day of Peace Message grounded us in a shared vision of peace as “the object of our hope and the aspiration of the entire human family.”

Memoona Ghani from the Islamic Resource Group of Minnesota shared her reflections for building peace as a part of the evening’s prayer service. She invited us to “build bridges of understanding. Here in Minnesota, there are a lot of cultural groups all around us, and so step outside of your comfort zone and meet new people from other religions and other ethnic groups. Build bridges through meeting others and building relationships.” Those present shared ideas and discussed how we might build bridges so the circle of compassion, love, and peace will be unbroken as we prayed for our world leaders and committed to peace and active non-violence as a way of life. We continue to join with others in prayer for peace for our world at this time.

The Justice Commission’s Legislative Advocacy Partners (LAP) Working Group also offers three concrete and peace-filled actions we can take including:

1. **Ask your elected members of Congress to promote peace building efforts with Iran, and not an escalation towards war.**

   Make just one call to 1-844-872-0234 to connect with all your members of Congress.

2. **Remind our elected officials of their ability to calm the pressures and the rush to violence.**

   The Constitution gives the power to declare war to Congress. Urge your Senators and Congresspersons to support and/or co-sponsor **H.R. 2354** or **S. 1039** which would limit military action against Iran without congressional authorization.

3. **Join with others in praying for peace.**

   Continue to pray for peace at our monthly 11th Day Peace Prayer and seek out other opportunities for solidarity building and prayer for peace.

Memoona Ghani of the Islamic Resource Group of Minnesota shared ideas on how to “build bridges of understanding” at the January Peace Prayer service.
The Justice Office reports that the:

**Justice Commission** is encouraging CSJ participation in raising our voices for systemic change especially as a part of the 2020 MN State Legislative Session by getting involved in at least one day of advocacy action(s). Consider coming together with us for the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition Day on the Hill on April 1 at the MN State Capitol. If you are interested in joining us for the day, please contact Marty Roers in the Justice Office, 651-690-7054, to register and arrange for carpooling.

**Anti-Human Trafficking** partners in mission gathered on January 3 at the CSJ Administration Center for a collaborative live-stream event with the Congregation of St. Joseph in Kansas along with communities across the country and the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi from Rochester, MN on “Human Trafficking and Its Intersections with Pornography.”

**Confronting Whiteness and Racism** (formerly the Dismantling Racism) **Working Group** members with CSJ community members attended a special Rev. Martin Luther King Day film screening at Penumbra Theatre for the film “I am Not Your Negro” with discussion following. The working group is also excited to host the February Peace Prayer.

**Criminal Justice Working Group,** in preparation for Sister Helen Prejean’s upcoming visit has rescheduled the screening of the Hollywood film on her work, “Dead Man Walking.” It will be shown at 1:30 p.m. on February 9 in the auditorium at Carondelet Village. We are looking forward to Sister Helen Prejean’s talk on Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Rauenhorst Ballroom at St. Catherine University. All are welcome.

**Earth Partners Working Group** continues working with the Team to develop the CSJ Province Sustainability Plan. Earth Partners look forward to a joint meeting with St. Kate’s Student Senate Sustainability Committee on February 17, 2020. The group is also working with the Province to implement phase II of the composting plan which will now include Carondelet Center and the Provincial House and explore possibilities for Carondelet Village.

**Gospel of Life Task Group** has scheduled three screenings of the movie “Unplanned.” Scheduled showings during February are in the Carondelet Village theatre at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday the 6th, Saturday the 8th, and Sunday the 9th. The Group is also coordinating the **Caring Hearts Supply Drive for the Homeless.** (See page 5 for details.)

**Immigration Working Group** thanks the St. Joseph Workers for their trip to offer support to, learn from, and work with our dear immigrant neighbors at the US-Mexican border during the week of January 20. We look forward to hearing more about the SJW trip upon their return.

**Legislative Advocacy Partners Working Group** invites you to attend a LAP training and to get the LAP action alerts to assist you in timely advocacy updates on issues throughout the Session.

**LGBTQ Connections Task Group** plan to attend the RECLAIM annual fund-raising brunch on the morning of February 29. If you are interested in attending, contact Sister Linda Taylor for more information.

**Native American Awareness Working Group** is working with the Church of Gichtwaa Kateri in Minneapolis and the Jay Philips Centers for Interfaith Learning at St. Thomas and St. John’s Universities to host a series of programs on Native American Spirituality with professor Damian Costello. The program on Saturday evening, April 18 at 7 p.m. in Carondelet Center will focus on Native American spirituality and the spirituality of Black Elk.

**Ritual Task Group** invites you to the next peace prayer on Tuesday, February 11 at 6:30 p.m. hosted by the Confronting Whiteness and Racism Working Group, which will focus on the theme of “Black bodies and the justice of God.”
“One lesson at a time. One woman at a time. One day at a time.” is one of Sarah’s six mantras. This mantra reminds us that we focus on each resident of Sarah’s individually, and we learn and grow through our daily experiences. We take each day as it comes. Each woman at Sarah’s moves forward one step at a time to accomplish her goals.

“To the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” —Lao Tzu

A reflection from a former resident of Sarah’s:
“I grew up in a desert climate in southern Tunisia, in a small village torn apart by religious extremism, poverty and violence. I endured physical, emotional and sexual abuse even from my own family… until one dawn, when I was 18 years old, I put on a backpack and ran away forever.

I entered the U.S.A. with a student visa after a year of hiding and hard work.

I was 20 years old, homeless and traumatized, with no access to mental healthcare, no education, no family, no future. I was too vulnerable, so I got re-victimized and my life was overshadowed with suicidal thoughts.

But there was one last thing to try. A place. And it took one call for them to show up, pick me up in their van and later offer me a home. This was my first day at Sarah’s.

Within the first month at Sarah’s, I enrolled at a community college, I got a job nearby, I got a pro-bono lawyer, and they assigned me a healthcare advocate—which meant access to medication and a therapist. Being part of Sarah’s also helped connect me with a social worker.

I moved on from Sarah’s after one year. Now, I have my own apartment, I am a professional interpreter, and I am graduating from college this spring.

Above all these accomplishments, I still wonder how many women will ever have the chance to survive trauma and tell their story, like me today.

I am destined for great things for the single reason that I was taken in and cared for by Sarah’s. Without exaggeration, Sarah’s saved my life.”

~Mary* (name changed for privacy)
As a child, Advent was one of my favorite liturgical seasons. After all, none of the other seasons have chocolate calendars! Through the years, however, I was disappointed to notice that I couldn’t find the same joy in Advent. The weeks before Christmas that had once seemed so long were now crammed full of finals, work obligations, and gift purchases. So this year, when I heard about the “holiday chaos” that I would have to experience at my worksite, St. Anne’s Place, I was less than thrilled. I quickly learned, to my dismay, that “holiday chaos” starts in early October. After making over 100 phone calls, organizing storage closets to make room for donations, and facilitating volunteer group after volunteer group, I was ready to be done with Christmas… and it was only November!

When my supervisor asked me if I would be willing to work a 12-hour day to help facilitate their annual Santa Night, I hesitantly agreed. However, what I experienced that night I can best describe as magic. In a flurry of Christmas chaos, the families at the shelter ran from one room to the next, completing Christmas crafts, taking pictures with Santa, shopping for one another at our “free store,” and wrapping the gifts. I helped the smaller children wrap their presents for their moms as they proudly signed their names and placed bows on top. The wonder and joy exploding from each of the children quickly filled my heart.

This joy that I witnessed, I realized, likely resembles the same joy that filled the hearts of the shepherds and the Magi as they first saw the face of Baby Jesus. The joy that lights our souls aflame and melts away all other cares. The joy that, truly, only Christ can bring.

We have long since packed away our Christmas decorations, but I have not packed away this joy. Like the shepherds and the Magi, I too am filled with wonder and joy when I see the face of Christ in my residents, my housemates, my coworkers, and all I encounter. May we all live in God’s Christmas gift of joy all throughout the year!
Situated right in the middle of Carondelet Center’s first floor, the Wisdom Ways Library harbors an eclectic collection of over 3,300 items, arranged under 46 categories. Want to read a spiritual memoir? A short history of Islam? An anthology of new Native poetry? Or a book from some of our most popular sections: Cosmology, Spirituality, Labyrinth, and Enneagram? We have all those and so much more. Ours is a small but mighty library, bursting with the power of stories and ideas to inspire positive personal and societal change. It is a dynamic resource to support all on their spiritual journey. As such, the library, too, undergoes continual transformation just as we all do. As we enter the new year, here are some of the changes that occurred in 2019 and what to anticipate in 2020.

Throughout 2019, the appearance of the library morphed with ever-changing displays to highlight monthly themes in spring and summer, such as PRIDE in June. In later months, more emphasis was steadily placed on displays to strongly support Wisdom Ways programs, highlighting books of featured authors and topics. Patrons could also more easily spot new arrivals in the added New Books section, where new items remain for a month before being shelved into the general collection. And, of course, furniture changed, most noticeably with the addition of a desk by a window, where patrons may read, write, or engage in a featured contemplative activity.

Less visible may be the creation of two new categories, Enneagram (ENN) and Writing (WRI), as well as the return of an audiovisual section (AUD/DVD). Also not to be missed are our sections for all books in the Hedgerow Initiative (HRI) and the two year training program, Transforming Soul & Society (TSS) curriculum.

In contrast, the addition of our interactive Question Board on which we post a new question each month for anyone interested to write an answer was quite visible. October’s question was In a word or picture, how would you describe this moment? And we closed out 2019 with December’s question, What do you ask for in this time of waiting?
For 2020, if desired, patrons can choose to check out a Kindle with a book uploaded. In addition, we look forward to implementing an on-line catalog soon (Yes, our entire collection has been scanned into a database!) and an automated self-checkout option. Left unchanged, however, is our one-month return policy with no checkout limit.

Why does Wisdom Ways invest so much effort into library improvement and upkeep? It’s so you can serendipitously discover Who Are You? by Malcolm Godwin in a moment of confusion; purposely find Joyce Rupp’s Boundless Compassion to ground yourself in what’s most needed; or be introduced to My Grandmother’s Hands, Resmaa Menakem’s groundbreaking book on racialized trauma, as a possible path toward healing. It is because we believe that your and our constant transformation go hand in hand.

Come refresh yourself at Wisdom Ways!

The Ministries Foundation is thrilled to announce that Jearlyn Steele will be returning as the 2020 Carondelet Gala emcee and performer! Please join us on Friday, May 8 as we celebrate and support the important work of the ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph!

Jearlyn Steele is a member of the internationally acclaimed family, The Steeles, who have performed from Carnegie Hall to Brazil and even to the Super Bowl Live Verizon stage in 2018. Musically, she has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She was a frequent special guest on the radio broadcast, A Prairie Home Companion and was also featured in the film of the same name. Jearlyn has served on Boards for Chrysalis, a women’s resource center, and the Ordway Circle of Stars, who unite children with the world of art. In addition to all of that, she still maintains her four-hour CBS Sunday night radio show, Steele Talkin’ on WCCO Radio 830AM.
SMHC UPDATE

With so much publicity about Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood recently, it is timely to share information with you about our good neighbors at St. Catherine University.

You may or may not be aware of the many ways the work of St. Mary’s Health Clinics (SMHC) is supported through the partnership promoting inter-professional education and development.

1. SMHC serves as a clinical education site for many of the health professions students from St. Kate’s. Last summer their MSN (Master of Science in Nursing) students completed their clinical rotation in Public Health by working with SMHC’s Nursing Supervisors, clinic patients and staff. In the spring of 2020, St. Kate’s BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) students will work for their Global Health Nursing education experience with SMHC’s staff and patients.

2. During Spring Semester, 2020, a student in Public Health will complete an internship at St. Mary’s.

3. Presently SMHC is serving as an internship site for an MSW (Master of Social Work) student from St. Kate’s, under the preceptorship of a SMHC social worker. Recently the Nutrition students presented education for our clinical staff on updated clinical nutrition information promoting cardiovascular and diabetic health.

4. St. Kate’s supervised students provide SMHC patients with OT (Occupational Therapies) and PT (Physical Therapies) as needed. Clinics are held twice per month on St. Kate’s campus. OT and PT students, after records are reviewed by a physician overseeing Nutrition, provide patients with food from the St. Kate’s food shelf that best support their patient’s health. The food shelf offers fresh and canned food and personal care items.
5. In November, a phlebotomy refresher course was provided to SMHC’s nurses at St. Kate’s, offered by a faculty member there. This was a hands-on skill development session.

6. While in the planning stages yet, a goal for the fall of 2020 is that St. Kate’s would expand clinic services for primary care for SMHC’s patients. Not only would it be an additional clinic site for patient care, but it would also serve as a clinical education site for St. Kate’s students in the Health Professions, under faculty supervision. Much work is being done to make this become a reality. It is an exciting venture with many partners, one that will benefit both organizations, patients, and families served.

Watch for updates in the near future about our partnership with our generous and supportive neighbors.

Christmas at CV!

A grand time was had by all as our Sisters celebrated Christmas with the other residents at Carondelet Village. Individual parties were hosted with the residents in Memory Care, Skilled Nursing and Assisted living. Special thanks to all who came together to make this annual event so special for so many!
Congregational Leadership Team Transition

At Carondelet in St Louis and around the world, Sisters, friends and family gathered for a “Celebration of gratitude for and blessing of congregational leadership” on January 11, 2020. Those present at the event and the entire Congregation shared their profound gratitude for the out-going team’s generosity of service and blessed them all with a litany of thanks and a blessing as they begin a new chapter.

Those present blessed the in-coming team by praying for an abundance of the qualities needed for leadership and sang a blessing for the congregation and the family of Joseph.

“One of the delights of this age,” said Sister Cathy Steffens, CSJ, of the event, “is that live streaming allowed as many people as possible to be present in gratitude and blessing.”

2020-2026 Congregational Leadership Team: Sisters Sally Harper (first councilor), Patty Johnson, Mary McGlone, Sean Peters (congregational director) and Therese Sherlock.

Outgoing Team: Sisters Danielle Bonetti, Barbara Dreher, Mary Ann Leininger, Mary McKay, and Miriam Ukeritis.