

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY NEWSLETTER

December 2022



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WELCOME LETTER

Travis Salisbury, ObISB

“How is it December already!?”

You’ve heard it. You’ve thought it. Time goes by fast. And, yes! It’s December already!

Advent is a liturgical season beloved by the Church, but is often lost in the quick passing of days. The symbol of the evergreen wreath with its four candles—a wheel of Advent time marked by longing, hope, and faith—is present in our congregations and our homes. The snow still has its novelty and is another symbol of time set aside for quiet stillness and waiting.

We feel all this at St. Paul’s Monastery. Our prayer three times each day is an Advent sojourn through the psalms, the hymns, and the prayers of the season so that truly **“in all things God may be glorified”** (Rule of Benedict, Ch. 57 and 1 Peter 4:11).

This issue of the Monastery’s newsletter is an invitation to a mindful Advent, an invitation to be sure in the quick passing of days we live in such a way that God is glorified by our lives.

Oblate Ann Siverling not only offers us the regular column “Oblate Reflections” (p.8) but also a saga many of us can relate to, setting up our Christmas trees (p.10). Sister Jacqueline Leiter shares with us the invitation of the Shepherds (p.11). Our liturgist Steve Kasperick-Postellon reflects on giftedness through the eyes of St. Benedict (p.9). And, of course, December 3-10 join us for Christmas at the Monastery (p.5-6, 13). As you are thinking of finding gifts for others don’t miss out on our new 75th anniversary book (p.8) and our fabulous Silent Auction (p.5).

In this season of generosity, we too hope that you will remember the Sisters, their mission, and ministries which are so needed today in the world. **Your gifts—no matter the size—make a big impact.** If you are considering a gift of stock/securities, you’ll find information on that process on page 4.

Thank you for your ongoing friendship with the Sisters, Associates, and Oblates of St. Paul’s Monastery. You are a blessing to us and we give thanks for you every day in our prayers and in our hopes for you.

May the God of All bless you abundantly this holy season.
Come, Lord Jesus, come!





MISSION ADVANCEMENT NEWS & UPDATES

Each year, the Monastery is asked questions about the electronic transfer of stock/securities as part of our generous donors' year-end giving. As with every non-profit, year-end generosity through cash and securities donations is vital to the support and empowerment of the mission and ministries of our Sisters. Thank you for discerning your support of the Benedictine way of life here at St. Paul's Monastery.

You are able to give securely online at <https://stpaulsmonastery.salsalabs.org/christmasappeal2022>. Checks may be mailed to the Sisters at 2675 Benet Road, St. Paul, MN 55109.

If you are thinking about a gift of stock follow these steps for a seamless process.

1. Before instructing your broker, please notify **both** Travis Salisbury (tsalisbury@stpaulsmonastery.org) and Rose Quast (rquast@stpaulsmonastery.org) and include the name of the stock (with call letters), the number of shares or estimated amount you intend for the donation, and if you intend the proceeds to be designated to a ministry or for a specific purpose.
2. Contact your broker with the following information: make transfer of stock to RBC Wealth Management/Stock Transfers. Contact and inform Wendy Skarnes at RBC at wendy.skarnes@rbc.com or 612-371-7897. Instruct your broker of RBC Wealth Management's DTC #0235 and instruct your broker to transfer to St. Paul's Monastery (Account #312-84928).

The gift value of the donated stock or securities is determined on the date the stock is received by the Monastery's broker (RBC Wealth Management)—not the date the order was placed by the donor or the donor's broker. According to the IRS, the gift value of appreciated stock is the mean value between the high and the low price of the stock on the close of the exchange market the stock trades on the date the stock is received by RBC.

Advent Wreath Blessing

God of hope and love,
we praise you for sending Jesus, your Son,
to save us from our sins
and to be the light in our darkness.

Bless us as we gather in his name,
and bless this wreath
as a sign of your unending love
and of Jesus' presence among us.

Keep us watchful in prayer
as we await his return in glory.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit,
in eternal glory,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

—Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family





CHRISTMAS AT THE MONASTERY

DECEMBER 3-10

A festive weeklong event with the spirit of Christmas at St. Paul's Monastery.

The Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Monastery look forward to our 15th annual Christmas at the Monastery fundraiser (December 3-10). Christmas at the Monastery is our Community's largest event. We are grateful for your support over the years. Your donations will make for a successful event for the Sisters. Along with our fantastic silent auction, the Sisters welcome all as Christ into their home at the Monastery for a special wine and cheese gathering on December 10. [Click here for the full Christmas at the Monastery schedule.](#)

ONLINE SILENT AUCTION

DECEMBER 3-10

The Silent Auction goes live at 8:30am on Saturday, December 3. Bidding continues until 7:15pm on Saturday, December 10. Don't miss out on these incredible items this year: Breezy Point Cabins on Lake Superior stay, Minnesota Orchestra tickets, Golf Packages (Indian Hills, Logger's Trail, Brookview, New Hope Greens), Minnesota Wild tickets, Tour of Saint John's Abbey, Saint John's University Athletic Passes, Maddens on Gull Lake and multiple other restaurant gift cards, and several fantastic themed baskets!

[CLICK HERE](#) beginning Saturday, December 3 to place your bids!

ONLINE ADVENT RETREAT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 | 9:00AM (ZOOM)

Holy Desires: Advent Insights Into Pope Francis' 'Desiderio Desideravi'; an online retreat with Fr. Michael Joncas
*Offered through the Benedictine Center, a ministry of the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery,
and sponsored by the Oblates of St. Paul's Monastery*

"Desiderio Desideravi" is Pope Francis' apostolic letter "on the liturgical formation of the People of God." He writes: "[W]e see that the liturgical year is for us the possibility of growing in our knowledge of the mystery of Christ, immersing our life in the mystery of His Death and Resurrection, awaiting his return in glory. This is a true ongoing formation." [#64). Following Pope Francis' guidance, this retreat will encompass formation for and by the Advent Liturgy, exploring especially what Pope Francis calls "the gestures and words that belong to the assembly." [#51]

This event will take place online via Zoom. [Click here to register.](#)

LIVESTREAM LITURGY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

Join the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery online for 11:00am Mass (Fr. Dan Ward, OSB presiding) and 5:00pm Evening Prayer on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. These liturgical celebrations will be streamed on the [Monastery's Facebook page.](#)

FILL THE SISTERS' SHOES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

An ancient tradition on the Feast of St. Nicholas (December 6) is for children to leave their shoes out overnight with hopes of finding small gifts on the morning of St. Nicholas' Day. The spirit of St. Nicholas Eve and day is one focused on giving over receiving, remembering those less fortunate and that St. Nicholas loved children.

The Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery have ministered to thousands of children over the last 75 years in schools and parishes all over and beyond the Archdiocese. They founded Archbishop Murray Memorial High School (now Hill-Murray School). Since 1991, the Sisters served the eastside of Saint Paul through Maple Tree Childcare Center.

This St. Nicholas Day you are invited to make a gift to "fill the shoes" of our Sisters who, with St. Nicholas of Myra, have great love and care for all children. Help us raise \$10,000 for the Sisters. [Donate now!](#)

LIVESTREAM LITURGY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

Join the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery online for 11:30am Mass (Bishop Joseph Williams, presiding) and 5:00pm Evening Prayer on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. These liturgical celebrations will be streamed on the [Monastery's Facebook page](#).

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 6:00-7:30PM

Christmas at the Monastery is a beloved tradition at St. Paul's Monastery—celebrating 15 years funding the mission and ministries of the Benedictine Sisters at St. Paul's Monastery. It is exciting to invite our friends back to the Monastery—the first time we are able to do so for the holidays since 2019!

Come home this year and join our Sisters, Associates, and Oblates on Saturday, December 10 from 6:00-7:30pm celebrating a delightful evening of fun, music, food—catered by Lake Elmo Inn! Hear more about the work of our Sisters while enjoying their hospitality at the beautiful campus of St. Paul's Monastery all decorated for the holidays. Tickets are \$50 and space is limited. [Purchase your tickets now!](#)

Sponsored by Mike and Amy Dickson; Mike and Janis Nash, and Lake Elmo Bank.

DONATE

SUPPORT THE MISSION & MINISTRIES OF THE SISTERS

Your tax-deductible contribution at this time of year supports our Sisters in a special way sustaining and empowering our ministries. Through your gift you provide sacred spaces where all are welcomed as Christ for prayer, retreats, spiritual rest and renewal, art exhibits, and the beauty of creation.

[Donate securely online](#), mail in your support to the Monastery, or use your phone with the QR code. Every gift, no matter the size, empowers the Benedictine way of life through the mission and ministries of the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery. **Thank you for your generosity!**



MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER

Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center



The Maple Tree children enjoyed a special treat on October 19 when *Kroehm Duo* presented a marimba concert.

Kroehm Duo came at no charge to Maple Tree and played familiar tunes as well as some new selections.

Special thanks to Maple Tree parent, Laura Staller, for finding out about this wonderful duo and sharing the contact information with us.

Visit Maple Tree at mapletreechildcare.com today!

BENEDICTINE CENTER NEWS & UPDATES

Mary Elizabeth Ilg, OlsB, Co-Director of the Benedictine Center



Holy Desires: Advent Insights Into Pope Francis' 'Desiderio Desideravi'

Retreat Leader: Father Michael Joncas

Saturday, December 3, 9:00am on Zoom webinar

\$10 for individual registration; \$100 for group viewing

[Click here to register through the Benedictine Center.](#)

"Desiderio Desideravi" is Pope Francis' June 29, 2022 apostolic letter "on the liturgical formation of the People of God." Pope Francis writes: "[W]e see that the liturgical year is for us the possibility of growing in our knowledge of the mystery of Christ, immersing our life in the mystery of His Death and Resurrection, awaiting his return in glory. This is a true ongoing formation." [#64]. Following Pope Francis' guidance, this retreat will encompass formation for and by the Advent Liturgy, exploring especially what Pope Francis calls "the gestures and words that belong to the assembly." [#51]





ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY OBLATE REFLECTION

Ann Siverling, ObISB

Growing up in rural, southeastern Minnesota, one of the favorite salads made by my mom was called "Glorified Rice." This was pretty typical for our community. It's basically a rice pudding with crushed pineapple, whipped cream, and maraschino cherries. Thinking about rice being glorified by adding some ingredients and glorifying God led me to my Webster's Dictionary to look up the word *glorified*, and this is what I found: "represented in such a way as to appear more elevated or special." A "churchier" definition of the verb *glorify* is: "To praise and worship God." Finally, an additional definition of the verb *glorify* is: "Describe or represent as admirable, especially unjustifiably." Using these definitions, in all things God will be: 1) Represented as more elevated or special; 2) Praised and worshiped; and 3) Represented as admirable, especially unjustifiably.

Given these choices, I think God being glorified means God is praised, worshiped, and seen as elevated, special, and admirable and **justifiably so**. Not to get into a grammar lesson here, but there is something key missing from the title of this reflection. God is the subject, and God is being glorified in all conditions, but the title doesn't say by whom God is being glorified. The obvious answer to this is all this glorification of God happens by us, in us, and because of us. Wow—that can seem like a big responsibility. How can I always make certain that what I am doing and how I am living my life is glorifying God?

I have found a glorious model for us. Each day after my morning prayer, I pray the Oblate prayer. In recent weeks I have found myself drawn to the following phrase: "May we be models in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities of wise stewardship, dignified human labor, sacred leisure and reverence for all living things." These are the marks of Benedictine living, and these are some of the "things" in which we can glorify God.

Every blessing to each one of you as you live Benedictine, and may you ceaselessly glorify God in all you do and say.

75th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery

Sister Lucia Schwickerath, OSB



A Perfect Holiday Gift

The holidays are here! Need a great gift idea for friends and family? *Walking Monastery Way, Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery*, would be a thoughtful gift and a great addition to anyone's library. Available now on Amazon.com, the book is filled with stories and photos from the past 25 years, along with wonderful memories and hopeful insights into the future. A variety of contributors provide a glimpse into the prayerful peace and grace that is found at the monastery. Be sure to put this gift idea on your list for those you love.



ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY LITURGY MATTERS

Steve Kasperick-Postellon ObISB, Director of Liturgy & Music

Benedict instructed “that in all things God may be glorified” in the context of Chapter 57 of the Rule, concerning “The Artisans of the Monastery.” These skilled workers are called to “practice their craft in all humility,” and to set the prices for their work “a little lower than those outside the monastery are able to set, so that in all things God may be glorified.” He borrowed the idea of glorifying God in all things from the First Letter of Peter (4:11), and there again, the context is about how we use our gifts. We are admonished, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace [...] with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified.”

The call to glorify God in all things, then, is not only for monastics. “Each one has received a gift.” Like Benedict’s community, our families, our parishes, and our workplaces have not only skilled workers, but helpers, leaders, administrators, healers, teachers, peacemakers, and recipients of countless other gifts. But we are not recipients only—God has given us these gifts so that we may collaborate in God’s ongoing work of the creation and restoration of the world.

Do you know your gifts? What abilities do you have that allow you to be an agent of God’s purposes in ways that get results beyond what anyone could consider normal? Heed Benedict’s invitation: practice these gifts in humility, knowing that they are not from you or for you, but from God and for others. Drawing on God’s strength, be a good steward of the grace you have received. In this way, God will indeed be glorified.



PASTORAL LETTER YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

After years of listening and preparation, Archbishop Bernard Hebda published his pastoral letter **You Will Be My Witnesses** on the Solemnity of Christ the King. [Click here](#) to read this document that will guide the life of our local Church for years to come. Our Monastery and our Sisters actively participated in the preparation of this document.





'TIS THE SEASON CHRISTMAS TREE SAGA

Ann Siverling, OblSB

Once upon a time there was me. And there was my friend Fern. We decided to share an apartment, and for the time we lived together, we had a blast, and we became deeper, forever friends. Because we were sharing an apartment, we both had to have some of our belongings in storage units. One of the things in my storage unit was my artificial Christmas tree. When my dear friend, Fern, moved to Florida to be with her daughter, I was able to move into my own place and bring all the contents of my storage unit to my new apartment.

When my first Christmas in that apartment was approaching, I gathered all of my Rubbermaid tubs of Christmas decorations and the Christmas tree in its storage bag into my apartment so I could decorate for the birth of Baby Jesus. I had the tree carefully packed in the storage unit, but it must have fallen and gotten shoved around and squished in the moving process, because when I took it out of its storage bag, it looked like this!

This horizontal, green mess did not look good—it looked like my tree was done for, kaput, hopeless. I took a deep breath, studied the situation, made my plan of attack for this tree, and worked to get it in its stand and at least vertical.

After a period of wrestling, or perhaps dancing, with this pile of tree, I managed to get it standing. So now it looked like this ... ([click here to continue reading](#)).



THE POWER OF SANKOFA

Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery

Sankofa is an African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is “it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.”

Sankofa is derived from the words “san” (return), “ko” (go), and “fa” (look, seek, take). the sankofa symbolizes the Akan people's quest for knowledge among the Akan with the implication that the quest is based on critical examination, and intelligent and patient investigation. The past serves as a guide for planning the future. It is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future.

This last July, the Monastic Congregation of St. Benedict (of which our Monastery belongs) reflected on the Sankofa and recently our Monastic Council of Sisters also took time with this image as we together look to the 75th anniversary of St. Paul's Monastery and the 40th anniversary of the Benedictine Center.

*With the Sankofa's feet planted in the present moving toward the future, its head facing back to reap the wisdom of the past, and the egg held representing the new to be birth, **Sr. Virginia Matter** reflects:*

**Silence is the grounding that
Anchors us as we enter a
New chapter
Knowing You call us to be
Open to new possibilities...moving
Forward with
Advent hope**



THE SHEPHERDS' INVITATION GLORIFYING GOD

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

*The First Nowell, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell
Born is the King of Israel!*

Gospel of Luke recounts the angels' announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds living out in the fields as they watched their flocks at night. The traditional carol adds vivid details of a cold winter night, and in our imagination we picture deep snow (unlikely in the Middle East) and brilliant star-speckled midnight sky. Shepherding was a humble profession, and these shepherds were likely low-paid, uneducated laborers on the night shift, not the owners of the flocks who would have been asleep at home in their warm beds. The shepherds in the field that night were likely men and women* busy about the ordinary and messy work.

Yet it was to those shepherds that the Angel of the Lord broke into the ordinary, and the glory of the Lord shone upon them. It was quite a wake-up call, and they were terrified. The Angel encouraged the shepherds to not be afraid, and shared good news of a child born in the nearby city of Bethlehem. Trusting the Angel's message, the shepherds made haste and went to find the child lying in a manger with Mary his mother and Joseph. And returning to the fields and their flocks, they glorified and praised God.

The Shepherds' Invitation

The shepherds were busy about their ordinary work and life when God's angel appeared to them. In spite of their initial fear, they received and trusted the message they were given. May we, like the shepherds, be ready and open to receive God's message in the ordinary circumstances of our life. Whether God speaks to us through an angel or through family members, co-workers, or the people we serve, may we be ready to listen and make haste to follow the call. And, may we be ready to return to our ordinary lives and work, glorifying and praising God. May we recognize the Holy in the ordinary.

*We often picture the shepherds as men, because that is how most nativity sets depict them. We don't imagine a shepherdess out in the fields or at the manger. But scripture includes stories of several women who watched over the sheep: Rachel (who married Jacob), the daughters of Jethro (Zipporah, who married Moses, and her sisters) and the young Shulamite woman in the Song of Songs. In the Middle East today, often the youngest daughters watch over the family's flock. We also have the nursery rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

December * Birthdays



SISTER MARIE
FUJAN

December 20



CHRIS FOLKENSON

Guest Services/Housekeeping

December 3



ROBERTA GLYNN

Nurse

December 26

CHRISTMAS AT THE MONASTERY

*Please enjoy a collage of
photos from our past
Christmas at the Monastery
events.*





Commemorative

Honoring Those Who Light Our Way

**PAVERS BLESSING WILL BE HELD
AT A FUTURE DATE FOR THE
75TH ANNIVERSARY IN JUNE 2023**

Forever link yourself or a loved one to the tradition
and future of St. Paul's Monastery by purchasing an
engraved commemorative paver.



Pavers



**CLICK HERE TO PAY ONLINE
OR PRINT ORDER FORM**

Our Gathering Plaza is blessed with pavers engraved with messages from the Sisters, Oblates, relatives, and friends of St. Paul's Monastery. **Click on the link above** to print the form and create your own paver message to commemorate a special occasion or honor a Sister, your parents, other family members, or friends. The Sisters and those who visit the plaza remember your loved ones in prayer.

Thank you, and God bless you!

4x8 Paver

Three lines of text, \$130

8x8 Paver

Six lines of text, \$260

PRAYER SCHEDULE

Join the Sisters for prayer at the Monastery. Call 651-777-8181 to arrange your visit.

“Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”
- Rule of Benedict, Chap. 43



SUNDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 10:00AM

EUCCHARIST: 11:00AM

EVENING PRAYER: 5:00PM

MONDAY-SATURDAY

MORNING PRAYER: 8:00AM

MIDDAY PRAYER: 11:30AM

EVENING PRAYER: 5:00PM

*For further information and to arrange your visit, call 651-777-8181
or visit us at www.stpaulsmonastery.org.*

Community Prayer Ministry

Here to Serve You in Prayer

We Would Love to Hear From You

Let us, in fellowship, “lay (our) petitions before the Lord God with the utmost humility and sincere devotion” (Rule of Benedict, Chap. 20).

If you would like to send an online prayer request, the Monastery website has two different ways to do so. You can use the “Prayer Requests” link at the top of our home page. Or you can go to the “Ministries” tab and select “Community Prayer Ministry.” Prayer requests go to all the Sisters who pray daily for these intentions at Evening Praise, during adoration, and during the Rosary. May God bless you and your loved ones.





MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery, are a community that live Gospel values as expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict. Through our Monastic life and wise stewardship, we nurture contemplative presence in service of Church and society.



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To connect with or support
Community ministries, visit us at
www.stpaulsmonastery.org
[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)