



# ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY

## E-NEWSLETTER

July 2020 Edition

### *The Feast of St. Benedict*

The Feast of our founder St. Benedict is July 11. It is a very special time of celebration. Our Order, founded over 1500 years ago, means that Benedictines are the oldest religious community. I believe that this speaks to the depth and breadth of the foundation that St. Benedict built.

When I am working with the youth, I have opportunities to explain Benedictine life to them. When they hear that Benedictines are 1500 years old, I usually ask "Don't I look good for being 1500 years old?" Then they laugh or their jaws drop. I have to admit, this is one way I know whether or not the students are paying attention. And they are: Our youth are listening and looking to us for wisdom and guidance.



St. Benedict remains a pillar in Christian spirituality. In the Monastery, the Liturgy of the Hours is our main pillar. The chanting gives way to prayers, the readings, and reflections. God's word is joyfully exalted in the monastic chant. One can walk into any Monastery and know there will always be a Horarium (daily schedule) for the Liturgy of the Hours.

In the morning, we celebrate the light of a new day and the resurrection of the Lord; Midday, to remind ourselves how God is in our midst; and Evening Praise is a time of giving thanks for all that was given to us during the day. Very simple, yet profound, to "pray without ceasing" (1Th 5:17). St. Benedict clearly states in his *Holy Rule* that "Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God" (43:3). We give thanks to our Founder, St. Benedict, for our prayer life.

Because of COVID-19, these past months have been a challenge for all ages—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. That we cannot "welcome all as Christ" to our Monastery home is just not part of a Benedictine's DNA. I will rejoice when our actual (not just virtual) doors are once again open to all guests to be received as Christ, so that in all things God may be glorified.

Happy Feast of St. Benedict to all who follow the Benedictine Way of life!

***Sister Linda Soler, OSB***  
*Monastic Leadership Team*



## Why I am a Benedictine Oblate

by Terry Roessler, OblSB



I was asked to reflect on and write about why I am a Benedictine Oblate.

Immediately, I thought that I like being part of something greater with a sense of shared values. I know I am connected even when I am by myself.

I was first attracted to the *Rule of St. Benedict* when I was a graduate student



of theology at Saint John's University. It was a time of my life when I no longer knew where I fit. Most of my dreams for my life had been shattered. As I took classes and spent time on campus, I was inspired by the sense of hospitality and the challenge to study.

The encouragement to learn helped me to touch base with my roots and then grow beyond who I had been before. After graduation, I continued to train in ministry, specifically for chaplaincy. I realized I missed the Benedictine influence in my life. I decided to connect with St. Paul's Monastery and went through the discernment process to become an oblate. Six years ago, I took vows as an Oblate of St. Benedict (OblSB) in the Monastery chapel with friends and family present.

Because of work and other life circumstances, I have moved several times since then. At each new home, I have connected with a Benedictine community. Often, I am a weary traveler when I arrive at the front door of a Benedictine monastery, and I am always greeted like a friend.

I am now a hospice chaplain and I remind myself daily to "listen with the ear of my heart." These continue to be guiding words as I navigate the worldwide crisis of COVID-19 and address the issues of racism in our communities.

Over the last few months, most of my days are spent on the phone offering grief support to people going through loss of a loved one or those who are suffering in other ways as a result of quickly changing world events. At times I close my eyes, and in my mind, I think of St Paul's Monastery. I see the chapel with the windows looking out to the cemetery. I hear the sound of the piano. I remember the artwork displays and the library (well, who can't love the library?). Thinking of the peace and centuries-old faith traditions that continue within those walls keeps me grounded as I adjust to an everchanging world.





## 2020 Vision

by Jeff Dols, OblSB, Mission Advancement Director

*"Christ is the light that allows people to see things in their fullness. The precise and intended effect of such a light is to see Christ everywhere else. In fact, that is my only definition of a true Christian. A mature Christian sees Christ in everything and everyone else."* Richard Rohr, *The Universal Christ*

This year of 2020 may well be one of the most eventful and muddled in the lifetimes of many of us. With the global pandemic/economic crisis followed immediately by the tragic and unjust death of George Floyd, our vision for a future as a cohesive society seems quite cloudy at this point. All of which makes it ironic that "20/20" is often the term used to describe *clear seeing*. Could it even be possible that the events of this unprecedented year might result in us seeing our world, ourselves, and our relationships more clearly? Could this finally be an opportunity for a sharpening of focus for our collective consciousness?

New insights started to come slowly in the early days of the stay-at-home order, when some began to see the blessing of trading in hectic, nonstop lifestyles, for the involuntary simplicity of having nowhere else to go. For others, the forced isolation also started to make us appreciate human contact in a way that previously seemed lost in our gradual drift to an always-on, digitally-connected world. We've started to clearly see again the need for human interaction and community.

But more consequential in 2020 has been the deep, heartfelt community response to the unjust death of George Floyd. What we have seen playing out in the streets of the Twin Cities, and around the world, has been an outpouring of grief, sorrow, anger, and

frustration of a people who, for centuries, have not been clearly seen for their inherent divine embodiment, nor treated with the dignity to which everyone is entitled as children of God.

Richard Rohr's above definition of a Christian, within the context of centuries of racism, would suggest that we modern-day Christians are still not seeing each other with the eyes of Christ. Rather we continue to see our brothers and sisters as "other," and certainly something other than the embodiment of Christ. We've also been slow to see how our lack of deeper relationships with people of color have left us blind to our systemic privilege – especially the privilege of not automatically being suspected and profiled for simply going about our daily lives.

As St. Benedict understood in defining *the Rule* for communities, until we can start to see the hidden Christ within ourselves and each other, it will be quite difficult to "Welcome all as Christ." Thus, the *Benedictine emphasis on community and contemplative prayer*, provides a way to stay connected while we continually clean the lens of our perception.

We can only pray that this year of 2020 will finally open our eyes to the inherent dignity of the Christ within ourselves and within everyone we encounter and that our institutions and our cultural values will start to reflect that clarity of seeing.

We offer our prayers for the family and  
for all who are grieving the tragic death  
of George Floyd.

Much work is needed to address the  
inequity of our day. We pray for justice and  
peace for all in our local community  
and across the nation. Pope Paul VI told us,  
"If you want peace work for justice."  
May we all work together for the  
justice and peace that our world  
so desperately needs.

**The Sisters of  
St. Paul's Monastery**





## Dear Oblate Candidates

by Shirley J. Riedmann, Lay Oblate Candidate

I miss my little “pod” as we self-isolate from the COVID-19 pandemic. In all types of adversity, God provides the light and breath of opportunity. As I have reflected on my formation journey these past few months, God has opened so many doors for deepening my relationship with, and understanding of, the Trinity, Mother Mary, and the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The first rule—Listen with the ear of the heart—has given me a new appreciation for the compassionate needs, fears, and anxieties of family and friends during this unprecedented period in our lives. To just “Be” in the lives of those closest to us, and to all we meet, is one of the greatest gifts we can give as a Lay Oblate. The *Rule of St. Benedict* says that if you want to be holy, stay where you are in the human community and learn from it. Learn patience, learn wisdom, learn unselfishness, and learn love. I pray that you are all safe and well in your little “pods,” and we will be together very soon.

## How you could help?

As we all self-quarantine and wait for the days we can visit the Monastery again, you may be wondering how you could help from home? We here at the Monastery are working on expanding our reach, and with that comes a lot of hands-on, data-entry work. If you would like to help from home, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Jessica Lauderma at

[jlauderma@stpaulsmonastery.org](mailto:jlauderma@stpaulsmonastery.org) or call at 651-777-8181.



# THANK YOU!

Healthcare Workers, First Responders,  
and all Essential Workers

## Maple Tree Additions

by Jennie Schlauch, Program Director at  
Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Center



Megan Gangl has three grandchildren who attend Maple Tree. She kindly donated money toward new high chairs for our baby room. We made the purchase last week and the babies are enjoying extra comfort while eating.



The Benedictine Center is offering online programs this summer via Zoom. Your presence would make the conversation richer. If you have not used Zoom, the Benedictine Center staff is glad to help you become familiar with the program when you register.



## ***Condensed School of Lectio Divina [online]***

with Sam Rahberg

August 7-9, 2020

Lectio Divina is an ancient practice of slowly engaging a sacred text over an extended period of time. When it is sustained in this way, Lectio Divina includes interrelated moments of reading, reflecting, responding to, and resting in the Word, all with the hope of nourishing and deepening our relationship with God. The Condensed School of Lectio Divina, available now online, offers contemporary seekers an experiential opportunity to

learn this practice with support. Participants in this weekend retreat will use Zoom for large group presentations, small group discussions, and times of prayer. They will also commit to sustain their practice of Lectio Divina by cultivating times to engage their sacred text offline and by exploring how they might integrate Lectio Divina into their lives in practical ways. The Condensed School of Lectio Divina serves as an excellent introduction to or a good review of the five-day School of Lectio Divina. [Register Online](#) or call 651-777-7251.

## ***Together in Contemplation: A Practice-Based Spiritual Formation Group [online]***

with Jody Reis Johnson

Tuesdays, 7-9 pm, Sept. 22, Oct. 13, Nov. 17, and Dec. 15

Writers in the Christian contemplative tradition have long upheld the practices of silence and community as invitations into holy mystery. The starting point for a life of prayer is seeking God, and the practice of silence can open the heart and grow our awareness of God's presence in daily life. Take time to quiet down the noise and find companions along the spiritual path. Join Jody Reis Johnson for a 4-month spiritual growth group aimed at deepening your relationship with God through contemplative practice, spiritual readings, and discussion about the journey we share. Participants will be asked to establish their own daily practice of silent prayer or meditation. This program will take place online via Zoom. [Register Online](#) or call 651-777-7251.



**For more programs, please visit [www.benedictinecenter.org](http://www.benedictinecenter.org).**





## Called by Name

by Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB, Monastic Leadership Team

Our relationship with our God begins with God's calling out to us. We find our identity in God's calling, in God's calling us by name. St. Benedict makes it clear that God knows our names and our identities. God repeatedly calls out to us: *Seeking workers in a multitude of people, the Lord calls out again and says: Is there anyone here who yearns for life and desires to see good days?* (RB Pro 14). *What is more delightful than the voice of the Lord calling to us* (RB Pro 19)? Names matter. It matters what we are called. Throughout the scriptures, the giving of a name or a new name is a significant part of the person's identity and life. Mary was told to name her son Jesus, meaning *God saves* (Luke 1). Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16.15). Names are an integral part of who we are.

"To God,  
all our  
names  
are beautiful  
and special."

From my students I have learned a lot about one's name as one's identity. I have taught children from many different language backgrounds and cultures; and they had many unique and beautiful names.

Shar Lar Say was a tiny kindergartner who had recently arrived to our school from a refugee camp in Thailand. We were given his name on a list and did our best to pronounce it correctly. However, he ignored us and didn't respond or even look at us when we called his name. We wondered if he had a hearing loss. It wasn't until a month later that his older brother overheard us trying to talk with him and then told a bilingual

staff member that his little brother's name wasn't *Shar Lar Say*\*, it was *Hsar Da Ler Lay*. A mistake had apparently occurred when the family arrived in the United States, and an immigration officer had written down the name incorrectly. Five year old Hsar Da Ler Lay had no idea that we were trying to talk with him because he didn't know that we thought he was Shar Lar Say. It was only when we discovered who he really was and began to use the name given to him by his family that he began to settle in and find his place as a kindergartner in our classroom. Now we were able to teach him to write his name and he began to smile and respond.

As Benedictines, we know that God's call is central to our understanding of who we are and our relationship with God. Our true name comes from God. God's calling out of our names is an invitation to all who will listen. We need to know who we are, our own identity, and we need to know that God knows who we are even more than we know who we are. We all, like Hsar Da Ler Lay, confused by the cacophony of sounds around us, strange and unknown syllables and words in an unknown language. Through all the noise, we are waiting and wanting to respond when we hear our name called. God knows who we really are and doesn't call us by the wrong name. God loves us and knows our true identity. To God, all our names are beautiful and special.



\*names changed for privacy



## Opportunities in a Pandemic

by Jennifer Pozanc, Associate Director of Mission Advancement

Living in a pandemic world has created a lot of change for all of us. Nothing seems quite normal anymore. Imagine working and starting a new job during a pandemic. This is what I did in May. Hi, I'm Jennifer and I started at St. Paul's Monastery last month as the Associate Director of Mission Advancement. It is a great blessing to be part of this amazing organization. At a time when many people are losing their jobs because of layoff and are worried about how to care for their children with limited childcare options, I am blessed to have this amazing opportunity at this time.

I have spent most of my first month working from home. My "new normal" (a phrase I am starting to feel more comfortable with) includes hanging out with my cat, Rena, and hoping she does not sit in front of the camera during Zoom meetings, discovering new ways to work out and keep moving when most of the world is sheltered in place, and worshipping from a computer screen with friends, all in their respective homes.

At a recent Mass I attended at my home church of St. Peter's in Mendota, MN, Father encouraged everyone to adjust our vision in these changing times. I have started asking myself what is God calling me to do right now. Perhaps all of us are being called to a deeper conversion of the heart during this time of crisis. What does that mean to each of us?

One of the things that I have started to do is to take inventory of what I *have* rather than focusing on what has been taken away during this time. For example, instead of dwelling on not having a gym to workout in, now I choose to spend more time in nature. I never imagined that I would like hiking. But over the past three months, I have tried to be creative, get in nature, and discover new places. And there is no shortage of great destinations that one can hike safely and in driving distance of home. Some of my favorite outdoor spots right now are Holland Lake at [Lebanon Hills Regional Park](#), [Lilydale Regional Park](#), and [Afton State Park](#). I have also found an abundance of creativity in the writing and drawing I do. My poetry has become more alive and my photography and drawings (though elementary to say the least) are starting to take life. God's great work is all around us and still powerfully at work in this world in many ways.

In addition, what I notice about the Monastery during this time, I assume, is what it is like when there is no pandemic – welcoming, respectful, and hospitable. In the few days that I have been on site, I am always welcomed by Sister Karen at the front desk, the staff (most still working at home also) are helpful and smart, and the outdoor grounds and spaces are peaceful and spirit-filled. I am looking forward to the day when all the Sisters, staff, volunteers, and others in the community can be together again to celebrate the Benedictine hospitality that is very evident at St. Paul's Monastery.

For now, we cannot be together. Yet, we always welcome hearing from you. Please use [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) to reach out to us. If you would like to introduce yourself directly to me, please email [development@stpaulsmonastery.org](mailto:development@stpaulsmonastery.org).

Blessings to you all. I look forward to working in this community and getting to know everyone.



*Seeing God's great work in nature during the pandemic, life blooms at Lebanon Hills Regional Park; pictured March 19 to June 1 at Holland Lake.*





## A Good Choice

by Sister Louise Inhofer, OSB

The Pandemic has had one positive aspect for many of us Sisters. Since we are home bound, it has provided the incentive to spend more time reading, and as I said before, the book circulation has certainly increased. That brought to my mind the age-old question; “If you were stranded on a deserted island and could have only two things, what would you choose?”

So I gave it some thought. Well, what WOULD I choose? Something entertaining like a deck of cards perhaps? No, playing solitaire card games would soon get boring. A book? Of course, but which one? A novel? Perhaps, but after finishing it, then what? Then my eye landed on the book I was already reading, the *Wisdom Book*, volume 5 of *The Saint John's Bible*. That's it! The Bible. St. Benedict gave us a reading list at the end of *the Rule* where he says “What page or word of divine authorship in the Old and New Testament is not a most straight guide for human life?” What could be better?

The Bible has everything I could want to allow for a variety of reading material: prayers, stories of war, murder, treachery, romance, you name it. Most importantly, it's God's word. It's our history from the time of Creation, to Abraham and the beginning of the Chosen People, to Moses and the Israelites, to the days of Kings, the Prophets, Esther, Ruth, right up to the birth of Jesus with four different biographies, the Apostles, and so on to the Book of Revelation.

Some years ago I read the Bible from cover to cover; it took me a year. Now I am trying to read the *The Saint John's Bible* from cover to cover but in a different way. There are seven volumes arranged according to content rather than in order. It will take more than a year, as I have already spent about a year on *Wisdom Book*. At this rate, I may not be able to finish all seven. But that's OK.

Oh! And the second thing? I would need a Bible Commentary to help me understand God's word better.





## Cooking is My Hope

by Ann Siverling, OblSB

Several weeks ago I was privileged to take part in a Zoom writing workshop that focused on the change of seasons. One of the writing prompts was, "What does hope look like for me?" I found myself staring at my blank page of paper as I tried to answer this question. I jotted down ideas (sprouting seeds, a newborn baby, the sunrise, and just getting out of bed every morning), but none of these seemed right. And then it happened! I felt myself smiling as I thought, "Cooking is what hope looks like for me!" The lightness in my spirit and the smile on my face meant to me that I had found my symbol for hope. But cooking? Really? What a symbol for hope! But as I thought about cooking, I realized that it is with great hope that I find the recipe, check the cupboards, buy the groceries and finally mix all of the ingredients together and cook the food. It is with great trust and hope in the recipe that it is correct. I hope that I have followed the directions correctly, and I also hope that the end result is both tasty and nourishing.

This hopeful act of cooking reminds me of being an Oblate and of the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery and God. It's like God is doing the cooking, and God creates the recipe, and then he gathers all the ingredients (these would be the Sisters and the oblates). And then God mixes, stirs, folds, and blends all of us together. Finally, God places us in the warmth of the Holy Spirit. And look at God's amazing result! God has created a community of nourishment for all of us and for all those we encounter wherever we may be. Thank you God, for what you have created in the community of St. Paul's Monastery and thank you for the perpetual hope this provides during turbulent times.

### Accordion Player

Ron Machel came and played for the Sisters on their *Founding Day*, June 22. He was outside to honor the social distancing but brought joy to all!



## Volunteers Needed

### *Mission Advancement*

We are looking for volunteers to help us in our Monastery duties. If you are interested, please contact Jeff Dols, Mission Advancement Director, at [development@stpaulsmonastery.org](mailto:development@stpaulsmonastery.org). Here are some descriptions of the positions we are looking for.



***Donations Manager***—The Donations Manager works directly with the Monastery’s Mission Advancement Director to assist with solicitation and collection of donations. Primarily, the Donations Manager will support Christmas at the Monastery, which is the Sisters’ largest public fundraiser. Outstanding food, inspirational prayer, great conversations, lovely decorations, and attention to detail are hallmarks of the annual December event. Your solicitations

include: Silent Auction, Mystery Gifts (primarily for restaurant, food/beverage, and experience gift cards), Stocking Stuffers (handmade crafts), food, beverage, supplies, and monetary donations, all of which are essential to create a successful and enjoyable event. In this way, you encourage guests to come back next year and contribute directly to the long-term sustainability of the Sisters’ ministries and this event.

***Volunteer Coordinator***—The Volunteer Coordinator

works directly with the Monastery’s Mission Advancement and Human Resources directors to assist with coordinating the current volunteers and recruiting and orienting new Monastery volunteers. There are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities at the Monastery. Volunteer positions include staffing the Monastery front desk, visiting with and assisting retired Sisters in Monastery healthcare, and kitchen and housekeeping duties. The largest group of volunteers (~50) support the annual Christmas at the Monastery event.



*Christ is our hope  
as we turn to follow a new path  
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit*

*Mother Loraine Tracy  
(founding member and first Prioress of St. Paul's Priory)*





# Commemorative Pavers

*Honoring Those Who Light Our Way*



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 button below 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. Your tribute paver makes a difference in the prayers of the Sisters and all who visit the Plaza.

*Thank you and God Bless you!*

## Order by

*Aug. 14*

for fall  
Installation

## Sizes

**4 x 8 Paver : \$125**

Up to 3 lines of text  
18 characters per line

**8 x 8 Paver : \$250**

Up to 6 lines of text  
18 characters per line



[Click Here to Print  
the Paver Order Form](#)



## Prayer Schedule

*Even though our doors are closed temporarily, we are grateful  
that you are praying with us in spirit!*



*“Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.”*

*—Rule of St. Benedict, Chap. 43*

### SUNDAY

Morning Prayer: 10:00 AM

Eucharist: 11:00 AM

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

### MONDAY–SATURDAY

Morning Prayer: 8:00 AM

Midday Prayer: 11:30 AM

Evening Prayer: 5:00 PM

*For further information, call  
651-777-8181 or visit us online at  
[www.stpaulsmonastery.org](http://www.stpaulsmonastery.org)*



### *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 St. 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 weekly adoration, and during the Rosary. May God bless you and your loved ones.



Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose

“St. Paul’s Monastery”

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# St. Paul's Monastery Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery, are a community who 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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support Community  
ministries, visit us at  
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