

ST. PAUL'S MONASTERY NEWSLETTER

September 2021



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Christ-Centered Friends*

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with prayer service.
Order your pavers today!*

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WELCOME LETTER

Sister Linda Soler, OSB

Say what? Alleluia in September and it's not even the Easter Season. As the Monastery continues to navigate the pandemic and challenge our norms, we move forward and enter what some call a "new norm."

Did you know there was a pandemic during St. Benedict's and St. Scholastica's time? Beginning around 541 CE, the Plague of Justinian swept through Europe, killing up to a quarter of the Eastern Mediterranean population and possibly as much as 10 percent of the world's population. Benedict died in 543 AD at 63 years of age. We don't know what Benedict died from, but he certainly lived through a pandemic without the science we have today.

The season of fall is one of the most breathtaking seasons because of the vivid colors. I love to cruise through Taylor Falls for this very reason. In fact, I have a favorite spot that is not near the traffic; and sometimes I may even get a glimpse of the hot air balloons overhead with a yearning to be in one.

I did some searching, and the landscape around where St. Benedict lived in Subiaco along the Aniene River is 1,345 feet above sea level. Its ancient name recalls its position below three small lakes where the emperor Nero built a villa. An inundation destroyed the lakes in 1305, and only traces remain of the villa. St. Benedict retired as a hermit (c. 494) to a cave, Sacro Speco ("Holy Grotto"), above the lakes; he founded 12 monasteries before departing for Monte Cassino.

Benedict surrounded himself with beautiful foliage in Monti Liata Simbruini Mountains. There, Benedict was able to enjoy the changing leaves as he was internally changing by seeking God. Fall is a reminder of the inner and outer changes. We have had numerous changes during the pandemic and may the season of Autumn be a reminder of our inner self.

Our lives go through cycles of growth, harvest, death, and rebirth just as we see in nature. Seeking God is the fabric of monastic life, and fall is a perfect time to reflect and embrace change.

Sister Linda Soler, OSB





SISTERS' WORDS OF WISDOM

Sister Benita Gerald, OSB

If you see Sister Benita Gerald at the Monastery you will likely see her reading or exploring something. She has always been known as someone who seeks more learning and knowledge. Her friend, Ruth Kinney, calls her “the seeker.” At Monastery events, Ruth would notice Sister Benita “was there with her notebook writing down things.”

Sister Benita’s life of exploring led her to a career in dietetics and nutrition. She received a degree in dietetics from the University of Minnesota, Crookston. On this day, when I ask her why she chose to learn dietetics, her simple answer is “I just wanted to explore.”

But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29 (RSVCE)

Sister Benita was born and raised in St. Benedict, MN, a small community south and west of the Twin Cities near New Prague. Her father, Egon, was a farmer and mother, Agatha, stayed home with Benita and her four siblings – Anyce, Mercedes, Celine, and Dennis.

Sister Benita has many fond memories of her childhood. She recalls climbing trees and playing with her best friend and sister, Celine.

She tells one story of climbing trees and how she got all the way to

the top. Sister Lucia, who is also in the room when doing this interview with Sister Benita, asks her, “what then?” as if Sister Benita may remember another memory and tell more of her childhood.

Sister Benita looked up at her and said in her unique sense of humor, “I climbed down.”

This summer was a special summer for Sister Benita. On July 10, she celebrated 70 years of vowed monastic life with her 70th Jubilee. As part of the weekend, Sister Benita celebrated with family and friends. In her curious way, she loved playing cards and games with them. About the Jubilee, she says “it was a special time.”



Seen here, Benita (right) poses after her first communion with her sister, Celine.

[Read the rest of Sister Benita Gerald’s story here.](#)



Where All Are Welcomed As Christ

St. Paul's Monastery

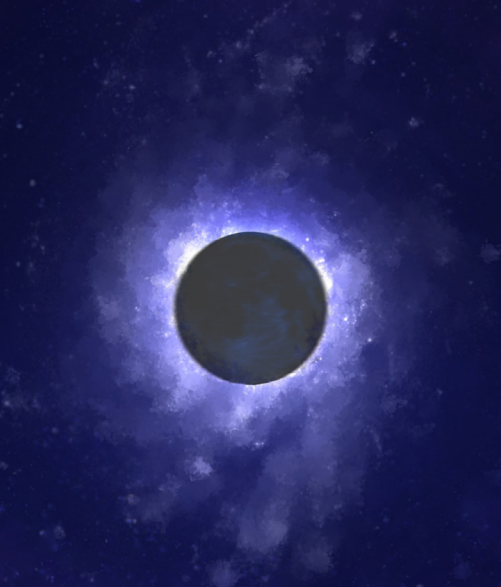
is open

Visitors are now welcome to visit a Sister. The expectation is that guests are vaccinated and show proof of vaccination. Guests must wear a mask.



Please call the Monastery ahead of time, so that we can arrange for hospitality. If visiting a Sister in Health Care, please contact Laurie Berg at lberg@stpaulsmonastery.org to arrange your visit.





SEEN AND UNSEEN

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

This article originally appeared as part of a spiritual direction profile on the [Benedictine Center](#) web site.

A few years ago, I had an opportunity to travel to Nebraska to watch a solar eclipse. I sat with other eclipse pilgrims in a remote gas station parking lot off of a country road surrounded by fields. Waiting for the eclipse to begin and sitting with chirping crickets, I glanced at the sun through my eclipse glasses. The disk of the moon slowly moved, turning the sun into a crescent shape. Without glasses, this was invisible; the sun appeared bright and strong. Only when the sun was nearly covered did I notice the temperature dropping and the sky dimming so that the horizon became like dusk. The sun was strangely pinched, and suddenly it winked out. The sun's corona shone around a purple moon, hanging motionless like a jewel in the purple blue sky. And then it was over and the sun winked back into brilliance.

[To read more of Seen & Unseen, click here.](#)

MONASTERY ART GALLERY

Kathy Fleming

September marks a time of transition as the monastery partially re-opens. And to welcome you back, a new art exhibit from sumi-e artist (black ink painting) Karen Kurka

Jensen will grace our gallery. "My Soul Glorifies The Lord" is the title Karen has chosen for her exhibit and you will find that her work truly illustrates her statement.



I believe I was given the gift of art. All of my life I've felt the power of God's love, but I didn't know what to call it before I truly came to believe that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, sacred spaces in which God dwells. I believe that love saves us and that it is meant to enter our lives, our bodies, our hearts, empowering us to love as God loves. Through my art, I feel God's love, the power of His Spirit working in me, and through this gift, I choose to be a doorway to His love and light.

The exhibit runs August 30 – November 5 with a closing reception on November 4. Please call the Monastery for dates and times for viewing the exhibit.



Live Life in Full Bloom FALL FLOWER FUNDRAISER

Live Life in Full Bloom: Fall Flower Fundraiser

Fall is approaching fast, inspiring many of us to look to our gardens, yards, and patios to create and cultivate a blooming and bountiful environment for all to enjoy! Our fundraising campaign, Live Life in Full Bloom, features mums and other fall plants from Gerten's Green House that will brighten your space. Online ordering starts August 9 and runs through September 2. *In addition, your purchase today will help us get a jump on our fall fundraising as 30% of the proceeds of any plant and 15% of any gift card sold will directly benefit St. Paul's Monastery.*

Details:

- Order now through September 2 at gertensfundraising.com. Enter store ID code 251 for St. Paul's Monastery.

- Flowers and plants will be delivered to the Monastery on September 16. We are offering curbside pick-up on September 16 (1:00-3:00 pm). No reservation required. For alternative pick-up options, please contact us at the Monastery_email.



There are so many plants, flowers, and bulbs available for the fall at Gerten's Garden Center.

These are just a few of the options available in the fall fundraiser at St. Paul's Monastery.



Order August 9-September 2 using store ID 251 at the [fundraising website](http://fundraising_website).

- If you would like to volunteer to be a part of the curbside pick-up team, please contact us at the Monastery_email.



Live Life in Full Bloom
FALL FLOWER FUNDRAISER

Start Ordering August 9

MAPLE TREE CHILDCARE CENTER

Jennie Schlauch, Maple Tree Childcare Center



Maple Tree
Childcare Center



The Maple Tree Monastery Childcare Center graduated 14 children this year. These seven girls and seven boys are headed off to kindergarten in September. We have enjoyed working with them over the years and each one will be greatly missed. We have been honored to be a part of their lives.

OBLATE NEWS



Oblate Candidate News



St. Paul's Monastery welcomed another class of Oblate candidates on August 26 with evening prayer with the Sisters, dinner, and the initial formation class. As part of their formation, the candidates will meet nine times at the Monastery before they celebrate their Final Oblation as an Oblate of St. Paul's Monastery on Saturday, June 4, 2022, the Vigil of Pentecost. These nine women will be officially enrolled as a candidate during evening prayer, October 21, 2021. In addition to having a Sister sponsor for each candidate, an Oblate companion is appointed to journey with each person. The Sisters and Oblates are invited to pray for these candidates as they seek God by following the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict during this journey.



Virtual Oblate Retreat: September 25, 2021



Save the Date!
Father Michael Peterson, OSB
Time for Benedict

The Virtual Oblate Annual Retreat is Saturday, September 25, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Registration details coming soon! Or, call the Monastery for more details. Any current Oblate is encouraged to attend as a time for renewal of commitment.

employee spotlight

Sue Larson

Benedictine values often carry over into our daily lives here at St. Paul's Monastery. Sometimes, as Sue Larson discovered, many of those values become second nature to us from the time we enter the Monastery.

Sue, who works in our Business Office, started working at the Monastery in 2005. She was looking for an opportunity that allowed her to step away from the corporate world and into a job that was closer to home in a more calm, peaceful, and nurturing environment. What she found was a home away from home at the Monastery, which cherishes those values as much as she does.

"This is really a special place for the right people," Sue said. "There is a sense of peace, service, and caring that you don't get many other places. It's something you feel as soon as you walk in the door."

Benedictine values include finding dignity in our work; providing hospitality to others; balance in our work, prayers, and leisure time; respecting each other; and finding peace in all we do. They are central to our work and lives here at the Monastery.

Sue discovered just how much those Benedictine values impacted her and her family. After Sue had been here a few years she and her husband found out their family was about to grow. She was expecting a fourth child after she thought her family was complete. "It was a total surprise," Sue said. "I wasn't expecting to become a stay-at-home mom again. The Sisters were great about it. They were very supportive. After my son Sam got old enough, I came back to my regular hours. Sam is 11 now," she said. "The Monastery has always been like a second home to him. He has a special relationship with all the Sisters. It's almost like he has 30 grandmothers. They all care so much for him."

When the Monastery was open to visitors (before COVID), Sam would come and visit the Sisters. "They really became a second family to him," Sue said. "He really misses seeing them all the time. He always loved coming here. They loved visiting with him, and he loved it too."



Sue Larson happily attended the Benedictine Festival in July of 2021.



employee spotlight

Sue Larson

A big part of Sue's extended family here was Sister Mary Courteau, OSB, our former treasurer who worked with Sue in her office. Sister Mary died in 2018. For Sue, Sister Mary was a wonderful example of what makes the Monastery a unique employer.

"Sister Mary was very special to me," Sue said. "I had a wonderful relationship with her, and I really miss her. She taught me a lot about leadership, respect, and trust. She was wonderful."

If there is one thing Sue would tell people new to the Monastery, it is that they are entering a special place. "I always feel like I am sharing an opportunity with them," she said.



Front: Sam (son), Holly (daughter), Sue, Haley (daughter-in-law).
Back: Tom (husband), Miles (son-in-law), Danny (son), Ryan (son).

INVITATION OF SAINT ANSELM

Sister Jacqueline Leiter, OSB

Anselm of Canterbury is remembered today for many things, as a Benedictine monk and abbot, theologian and philosopher, and Archbishop of Canterbury.

Anselm was born in Italy in 1033 to a pious mother, who taught him to seek God, and a businessman father.

Following his mother's example, from an early age, he was drawn to God. At about the age of 15, he sought to enter

a monastery, but was refused entry because his father, who wanted him to go into business, did not approve. Young Anselm became distracted by the vanities of the world and neglected his earlier fervor for God. Following his mother's death, and estranged from his harsh father, Anselm experienced a change of heart and left his home and his country to continue his studies in France. On hearing of his father's death, the young man was again thrown into confusion. Should he renounce his inheritance and follow the path of the monastic life, or should he return and live on his father's estate? After prayer and discernment, Anselm, at the age of 27, decided to commit to life at the Monastery of Bec.

Anselm was clearly no stranger to detours on the way to seeking God's will for his life, and things did not become smooth for him once he became a monk. He continued to experience bumps on the road when God's calling for him was not what he himself expected or desired. When the monks of his community unanimously elected him as their abbot, he resisted by weeping, prostrating on the floor, and begging them to choose someone else. The monks also wept, prostrated on the floor, and begged him to have pity on the monastery and serve as their abbot. Anselm eventually gave in, and he served the monastery well for 15 years as abbot.

Anselm faced many other difficulties. He was forcibly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. The king of England and the local bishops forced the crozier into his clenched fist, carried him off to the church, and consecrated him. The role of Archbishop was a challenging position fraught with political conflict as Anselm sought to defend the Church from the king's efforts to expand royal control over the Church's authority. He was forced into exile twice.

Anselm's life took a number of detours as he sought to follow God's will in his life. He didn't have the life he had expected or hoped for, but he did find God's help along the way, and he continually sought to be faithful to his calling.



Invitation of Saint Anselm

- = Reflect on how has God been with you on your journey as you seek to follow God's will.
- = Reflect on how God has made you and re-made you.



AROUND THE MONASTERY

Front to back: This month we gathered for St. Paul's Monastery Annual Retreat, with a theme of God's Dream for Humankind. Sister Karen Joseph, OSB, a member of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, lead the retreat and spoke to participants in morning and afternoon sessions daily in our chapel. | New landscaping around the Monastery makes the courtyard look well-manicured and ready for fall. | St. Benedict on a smoke-filled day still looks great. | Sister Paula smiled as she poses with her new colorful glasses and shirt. | Sister Karen Joseph, OSB, shared stories and wisdom.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Please contact Sister Linda Soler or Sue Larson if you would like to volunteer in dietary, liturgy, hospitality, or the Benedictine Center.

651-777-8181

RETREATS AROUND THE MONASTERY

Women As Spiritual, Christ-Centered Friends

St. Paul's Monastery and the Benedictine Center are re-opening with a Spiritual Retreat for single, Catholic or Christian women, ages 22 and older. We look forward to welcoming you back into the Monastery for this event.

[Click here to learn more, and register for this event.](#)



Date:

September 26, 2021

Time:

2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Deadline to Enroll:

September 10

Cost:


\$50.00

\$10 off if you bring a friend!



Sister Paula Hagen, OSB, has over 30 years of experience in retreat

development and as a retreat facilitator. In addition to a Master's in Family Systems, Sister Paula trained as a retreat director at the Franciscan Renewal Center. She created and published several On the Journey retreats for use in parishes nationwide and created and published the Ministry of Mothers Sharing Journal and materials for parishes.



Christine Jurisich's work in retreat ministry began

fifteen years ago as a participant of the Sisters of St. Paul's Monastery Ministry of Mothers Sharing (now Within Ministries).

For ten years thereafter, the Sisters mentored Christine as she developed her ministry as a national retreat facilitator-trainer and writer. Christine is the author of *Retreat, Reflect, Renew: A Sacred Journal for A More Peaceful You*, and foundress of the *Retreat, Reflect, Renew Ministry*.

The Courageous Journey to Renewed Hope

We invite you to join us for a day of exploring how we each need courage to face the future full of the hope our faith calls us to. Amid the loss, turmoil, and questions of our time, how may you connect with an inner strength to face the future with hope in God's unconditional love and mercy? How can embracing St. Benedict's steps to humility help you become a more courageous person? What are the practical steps you can take to cultivate hope in your daily life?

Cost:

\$40.00

Overnight stay available for an additional \$50 a night

Date:

Saturday, October 16

Time:

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

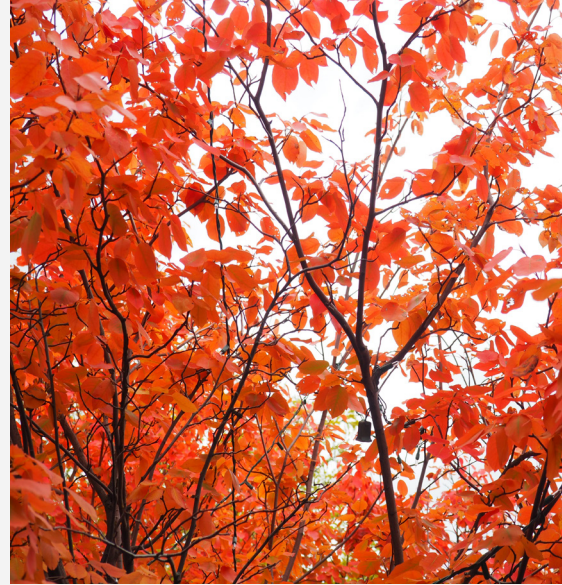
[Click here to learn more, and register for this event.](#)

The Courageous Journey to Renewed Hope



COMMEMORATIVE PAVERS FALL 2021

DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 1



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. 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

[Click here to pay online or
print order form](#)

Commemorative Pavers Fall 2021

Honoring Those Who Light Our Way

FALL 2021 INSTALLATION
ORDERING DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 1



PRAYER SCHEDULE

When our doors are closed, we are grateful that you are praying with us in spirit!

“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, 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
stpaulsmonastery.org
[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#)