



Franciscan
Spirituality Center

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2023

At the Center

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Journey Into the Woods
- Partner Yoga
- Befriending Brokenness
- Moving Through Grief Retreat
- Iconography Workshop

PEACE AND SOLITUDE AT ST. JOSEPH RIDGE

A stay in one of our hermitages might be just what you need.

If you are looking for a quiet, restorative getaway, we invite you to make a private retreat just 15 minutes from the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

Our three individual hermitages built on the edge of woodland have all of the modern conveniences you need while offering the silence and serenity necessary for a deeper experience with God.

FSC staff spiritual directors are available to meet with you to listen and reflect on what might be stirring within you during your stay.

Each hermitage is equipped with electricity, electric heat and fireplace, water, stove, microwave, refrigerator and a bathroom/shower.

Furnishings include a twin bed, an easy chair, and a dining/writing table and chair. Towels and bed linens are provided. Guests are asked to bring their own toiletries and food. Please, no pets and no smoking.

CHECK AVAILABILITY AND MAKE A RESERVATION:

- Please call 608-791-5295.
- Guests provide and prepare their own meals in the furnished apartment-sized kitchen.
- Guests are encouraged to take advantage of the many hiking trails on the grounds.
- Hermitages may be reserved for \$70 per night (discounts apply for longer stays). You determine the length of your stay.
- Spiritual direction available for an additional charge.



Shining a light in our world



Earlier this spring, many of us on the FSC staff attended the musical “Thea’s Song” at Viterbo University. It was held on March 30, the 33rd anniversary of the death of Thea Bowman, FSPA, from breast cancer. The musical brought her amazing life to the stage, and many of us were moved by the powerful acting and music that was a part of the production.

Audience singing was encouraged as many well-known hymns were sung. It’s difficult to pinpoint a favorite from those hymns, but one song in particular does stand out. We sang and danced to “This Little Light of Mine,” and I’ve been humming it ever since that evening.

The musical, paired with the fact that the days are now getting longer, has me thinking a lot about light and how the FSC has a role in helping goodness and light shine in our world.

We get to create programs and retreats that foster wholeness and healing. *A Courage and Renewal Retreat: Abundantly Available Grace* is one such retreat that is coming up in July.

We teach people how to listen deeply and engage in peaceful dialogue through our three-year Spiritual Direction Preparation Program.

We offer opportunities for creative expression and healthy body movement so that participants feel invited to dive deeper into their spiritual journeys. We have a summer labyrinth walk planned as well as continued *Art as Prayer* sessions and a *Women’s Yoga Retreat*.

We collaborate with community organizations to keep our focus set on the needs of the time. One collaboration that we are particularly focused on right now is developing programming that addresses grief and loss experienced by veterans and those serving in the military.

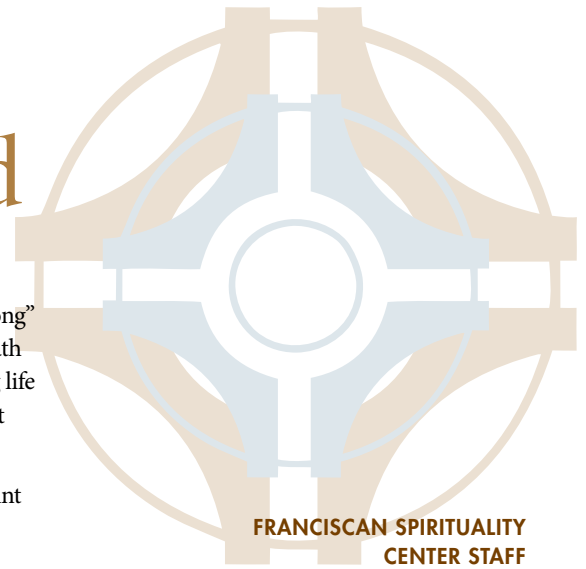
Part of our mission states: “The Franciscan Spirituality Center is dedicated to anyone searching for God, meaning and wholeness. We live this mission because we believe ... as we grow in wholeness, we contribute to the healing of all creation.” We help people to recognize the light within themselves so that it can shine brighter in the world, and we are grateful for Sister Thea’s light that shone for so many.

We invite you to see us this summer. Register for a program or retreat, or seek out one of our spiritual directors. Come explore how your light within can be a beacon for others and contribute to greater healing in our world. Happy summer!

Peace and all good,

Jean Pagliaro

Jean Pagliaro, Director



FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY
CENTER STAFF



Steve Spilde
Associate Director &
Spiritual Director



Cathie Boerboom, RGS
Spiritual Director



Sarah Hennessey, FSPA
Spiritual Director



Karna Marks
Spiritual Director



Hope Hembd
Director of Community
Engagement



Laurie Swan
Office Manager



Julie Connelly
Program & Retreat
Coordinator



Stacey Kalas
Communications &
Marketing Coordinator



Marcia Bentley
SDPP Associate



Kathy Holman
Administrative Assistant
& Receptionist



Natalie Smith
Guest Service Specialist

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Joyce Heil, *Vice Chairperson*
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Karen Lueck, FSPA
Janie Morgan
Nate Oldenkamp
Mark Thorn

Meet our PARTNER SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS on page 15.
Barb Kruse • Peter Watkins • Chelle Belland



Thank you for a fantastic Art Dash!

Our sixth annual fundraiser was another huge success, bringing together community members and artists for a fast-paced and fun-filled evening. Thanks to the generosity of our guests and sponsors, we raised just over \$15,000. These funds help us keep programs and services accessible as we seek to support all people in their search for God, meaning and wholeness.

This year's event featured 80 pieces of original art and a wine pull. Tickets sold out at a record pace, and we are already planning next year's event.

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 21, 2024.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Phil S. Addis	Georgina Kingsley
Sandy Andersen	Shane Lamb
DeeDee Draz Barreras	La Crosse Clay Center
Kate Bausch	Tiffany Lavender
Elise Boam	Barb Lawless
Carissa Brudos	Johnathan Lawson
Lynne Burgess	Dani McAlister
Baxter Cochennet	Gene McNurlen
Joyce Diveley	Bruce Nuttall
Karen Dunn	Lisa David Olson
Rose Dymetryszyn	Dave Piro
William Eddy	Leanne Poellinger
Melissa Fannin	Rick Ross
Mary Lou Ferguson	Summit Art Studio
Sharon F. Gleich	Colleen Shore
Jamie Graw	Marianne Stanke
Joan Gundersen	Linda Steine
Tim Hammond	Susan Stoffel
Burt Hammons	Jason Stuemppes
Nancy Heerens-Knudson	Jason Ray Photography
Jamie Heiden	Connie Thompson
Dan Henderson	Marcia Thompson
Jess Hetchler	Mary Louise Thompson
Dan Howard	Joni Welda
Chris Johnson	Betts Williams
Karen Kappell, FSPA	Jennifer Williams
Chris Kerbaugh	Bob Witte
	Carol Witt-Smith



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

ART PATRON:

Mayo Clinic Health System

ART ADVOCATES:

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Hoffman Planning, Design & Construction, Inc.
Gundersen Health System
Altra Financial Advisors | Karen Lueck, FSPA

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Trust Point Inc. | Sharon Berger, FSPA

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:

AssuredPartners | Kish and Sons Electric
La Crosse Graphics | Joyce Heil

MEDIA SPONSORS:

Mid-West Family | Coulee Region Women

DOOR PRIZE CONTRIBUTORS:

Tiffany Lavender
La Crosse Community Theatre
The Great Escape of La Crosse

Thank you to All Glazed Up! for the use of easels and to everyone who contributed bottles of wine.



Art Dash

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER





A NOTE ABOUT ONLINE REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION: We offer a mix of in-person and virtual programs.

If you register online, you will receive a confirmation email and receipt. If you do not receive this, please check your spam/junk folder or a secondary email address that you may have used. If it's not there, please call 608-791-5295 to verify that your registration was successfully completed.

On the day before the program, you will receive a courtesy email with instructions and a Zoom link (if it's a virtual gathering).

If you have not received this link within 24 hours of the program start, please call our office at 608-791-5295 or email fscenter@fspa.org. Our office closes at 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and typically is not staffed on weekends, so it is especially important to make sure you have your Zoom link prior to evening and weekend programs.

WEEKLY GROUPS

DEPRESSED ANONYMOUS (IN-PERSON)

EVERY MONDAY • 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Investment: Free

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits.

This is a 12-step group for those dealing with depression to generate positive energies, form friendships and find support. If you are interested in participating, please call Gayle at 608-406-7990.



OPEN ART SPACE (IN-PERSON)

EVERY TUESDAY • 5-7 p.m. (starting June 6)

Investment: Freewill offering

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits.

Have you struggled to dedicate time for creative expression? Ready to break open your new art or crafting supplies, or finally finish that project you started a while ago? We invite you to work on your art in a community setting. Be connected and inspired by the support of others or simply use the space to work quietly on your own. This is a safe, nonjudgmental environment; all skill levels and mediums are welcome.



MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS, CONNECTION AND HOPE SUPPORT GROUP (IN-PERSON)



EVERY THURSDAY • 4-5:30 p.m

Facilitator: Therese Ann Roellich

Investment: Free

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits.

For more information, please call Therese at 608-451-5697 or email therese.recovery.resources@gmail.com.

This weekly mental health support group is for anyone seeking mental health wellness, connection and hope. Participants gather to support each other in their daily journeys through life. It is a discussion group where we listen to, and learn from, each other. There is also the opportunity to gain educational information about mental health. This group is based on the premise that it is a safe space, where what is shared is considered confidential. No one is required to speak or share their story. You can simply choose to listen if that feels best.

Therese Ann Roellich is the facilitator of the group, along with other support people. Therese is trained as a Peer Support Specialist with the state of Wisconsin. She has personal lived-experience, being in recovery with both mental health conditions and substance-use addiction. Therese has spent many years advocating for those living with addictions, mental health conditions and experiencing homelessness.



MONTHLY PROGRAMS

MEDITATION FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH (ZOOM)



JUNE 1, JULY 6, AUGUST 3

First Thursday of the month, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

Investment: Free (online donations may be made at www.FSCenter.org/donate)

Registration deadline: May 31/July 5/August 2

Meditation is proven to reduce stress and promote relaxation. All are welcome to join us for a time of rejuvenation through videoconferencing. We'll start with a guided meditation that includes relaxed breathing, a body scan and a visualization. Afterward, we will have a brief discussion.

Gatherings are on the first Thursday of the month, and you are invited to attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits.

Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.



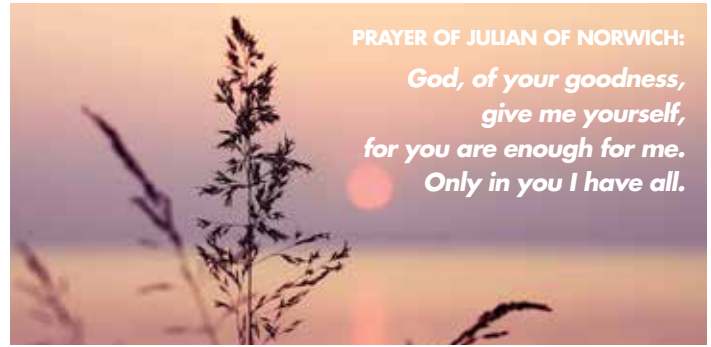
HOW TO REGISTER

HOW TO REGISTER: Go online to www.FSCenter.org. Payment for most events is due at the time of registration. To pay a portion now and the balance at the time of the event, please register by phone at 608-791-5295.

DEPOSITS: If indicated, the deposit is due at the time of registration and will be applied to the total fee. The balance is due two weeks before the start of the event.

REFUND POLICY: If you cancel at least 48 hours before the start time of the event, we will refund your payment. Deposits are not refundable.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: If you would like to attend a program but cannot manage the entire investment, please call Laurie Swan, FSC office manager, at 608-791-5279. We are committed to serving all on their spiritual journey and will hold your request in confidence.



COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 7, 21; JULY 5, 19; AUGUST 2, 16

First and third Wednesday of the month, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Robert Lynn

Investment: Suggested donation of \$3, payable at the door



Registration is appreciated; drop-ins are welcome.

Christianity has a deep tradition of silent prayer in the form of contemplation or meditation. This community setting will practice Christian meditation in the tradition of John Main, OSB, learning to quiet the mind and open our hearts to divine presence. If you are new to meditation, this is a gentle place to start. If you have an established meditation practice, deepen your practice by sharing it in community. We honor the variety of traditions and streams of meditation practice that you might use. Followers of Thomas Merton will find a home here.

Note: Freewill offerings will benefit the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

Robert Lynn is a lifelong learner at Wartburg Theological Seminary and Nashotah House, and a meditating student of Santikaro Upasaka. He has been practicing meditation individually and in a variety of group settings for several years.

LISTENING TOGETHER:

A MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 12, JULY 10, AUGUST 14

Second Monday of the month, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Laurie Swan

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits.



This group meets the second Monday of every month and provides a safe place for those who are experiencing grief and the loss of a loved one to share their stories. Grieving comes with a variety of emotions that may arise with the immediate loss of a loved one or

can even surface years later. You'll have an opportunity to process your unique experience while receiving the comfort and compassion of others who understand. Our facilitator, Laurie, has journeyed through her own grief experiences and is passionate about providing space for others to come together in their own grief process.



2023 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

ART AS PRAYER (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)



JUNE 19, JULY 17, AUGUST 21

Third Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m.

Instructor: Mary Thompson

Investment: \$15 per session

Registration deadline: June 16/July 14/August 18

"Take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention."

— John O'Donohue

Please join us for a lighthearted summer of painting. You are welcome to pick one session or come to all! Our focus will be on finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. With watercolors and other assorted media, we'll explore ways to paint the treasures discovered in our sacred spaces. Examples include a ruby red beet pulled from the vegetable garden, a bumblebee inspecting a patch of sunflowers and the fluffy, white clouds of a summer blue sky. Abundance is at our fingertips.

Supplies needed: watercolor paints, paper and brushes; collage papers and glue (if you'd like to explore collage with watercolor); pencils, colored pencils, ink pens, pastels, crayons; objects to paint, such as vegetables, fruits or flowers; photograph of a summer sky (a photo also will be provided); rags/paper towels. (Supplies will be available at the FSC for in-person guests.)

Mary Thompson has a degree in fine arts and a master's degree in education, having delighted in the creative arts since her first box of crayons. Besides teaching art to all ages, Mary has supported the healing of women in recovery through the practice of art therapy. She also has been an affiliate of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration for more than a decade.



Note: Participants ages 8-16 may attend for free with a paid adult. Please call 608-791-5295 for more information.



HEALTHY BODY MOVEMENT

GOLDEN YOGA (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

SESSION 1: JUNE 13, 20 AND 27

SESSION 2: AUGUST 8, 15 AND 22

Tuesday, 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Instructor: Amber Moesch

Investment: \$30 for each three-week session

Registration deadline: June 11/August 6

Golden Yoga provides a safe approach to improved strength, balance and flexibility. Each class includes a gentle flow of seated stretches, standing poses and balance exercises. Participants will need a chair to offer modifications and balance support. The last 15 minutes of each class will include stretching exercises.

Amber Moesch loves sharing the movement and poses of yoga as a way to practice mindfulness. By helping her students link movements and breath with awareness, she creates classes that wake up the body and quiet the mind. Amber draws on her many years of experience and training in yoga and restorative exercise to create classes that are tailored to the students who show up.



PROGRAMS AND RETREATS

SINGING BOWLS MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 1 • Thursday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.



Presenter: Joan Filla

Investment: Suggested donation of \$10 at the door

Registration deadline: May 31

Tibetan singing bowls produce sounds that invite deep states of relaxation, enhancing the ability to meditate and enter expanded states of consciousness. The sounds and vibrations can create a sense of grounding that facilitates a connection to the deepest parts of our being. Join us for an evening of exploration and renewal in the presence of ageless bell sounds. You are invited to wear comfortable clothes, as you will be able to sit or lie on the floor as you prefer. Questions and hands-on experience with the bowls will be offered at the end of the session.

Joan Filla, M.D., is a local physician who was introduced to Tibetan singing bowls while recovering from the trauma of her past. Singing bowls and meditation became an integral part of her healing journey, and she hopes to share these powerful tools with others.

FIVE-WEEK SERIES

AN INTEGRAL APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
(ZOOM)

JUNE 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • Thursday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Presenter: Wendy Mitch

Investment: \$95 for the series

Registration deadline: May 25



As people embark on a journey of self-discovery, they often reach these "in-between" places. Their old understandings of reality don't work anymore; yet, the journey forward can feel lonely as they leave a place that felt like home. This virtual series can offer guidance during these challenging times of transformation. Drawing on the work of Integral theorists Clare W. Graves, Don Beck and Ken Wilber, and the similar work of Spiral Dynamics, we will look at the various phases of human development. Words such as "God," "Spirit" and "religion" will take on different meanings depending on where we are on our journey. We don't lose our faith; it simply transforms. Through the use of small-group sharing, facilitated discussions, journaling and integral practices incorporating head, heart and body, participants will find community and practices to encourage continued growth.

Wendy Mitch, owner of Shifting Perspectives: Coaching and Consulting, has been challenging, training and developing others for more than 35 years. She is a certified Integral Life Coach through New Ventures West, a certified teacher in the Enneagram Spectrum Method, has her master's degree in servant leadership from Viterbo University and is a licensed facilitator for the Arbing Institute. She is on track to complete the Wisdom Way Life Coaching Program in January 2024. Wendy and her husband, Rusty, live in Plover, Wisconsin, and have six adult children.

ART FOR THE SOUL (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 2-3 • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m.
and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Jan Wellik

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$165, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$95, includes lunch on Saturday



Registration deadline: May 22

"Let us remember within us the ancient clay, holding the memory of seasons, the passion of the wind, the fluency of water, the warmth of fire."

— John O'Donohue

Come rest, relax and reconnect with yourself during this creative retreat for the soul. We will explore the natural world and our spirituality through guided expressive writing, watercolor painting and collage-making. There will be time for solitude and sharing our creative expressions in community with others. No artistic experience is necessary. All art materials will be provided.

Jan Wellik is the founder of Eco Expressions, a nature writing program, and the author of the "Nature Writing Field Guide for Teachers" and "Embodied Nature: Poetry Collection."

SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT WEEK (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 2-7 • Friday, 4 p.m.–Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Facilitators: Cathie Boerboom, RGS;

Sarah Hennessey, FSPA; and Steve Spilde

Investment: \$700, includes private bedroom and all meals

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$350 for this retreat to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code SILENTRETREAT50 when registering online or call 608-791-5295.

Registration deadline: May 23

This retreat is limited to 9 participants.

A silent directed retreat is an invitation to deepen your connection to the Sacred and to yourself through solitude and silence in a community of prayer. You will have a private, comfortable bedroom, delicious meals and a daily meeting with a spiritual director who will listen to you and your unfolding story. Your days will be open for time in quiet spaces for reflection, with options for attending liturgy, praying in the chapel and creating art. You also will have an opportunity to experience a singing bowls meditation during the retreat.

Support for this program is provided by the Norman L. Gillette Sr. Scholarship Fund.





2023 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

FIVE-WEEK SERIES

GRIEF CIRCLE (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 7, 14, 21, 28; JULY 5 • Wednesday, 10 a.m.-noon

Facilitators: Karna Marks and Kay Kienetz

Investment: \$50 for the series

Registration deadline: June 1

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$20 for anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code GRIEF60 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.



This group is for anyone grieving the death of a loved one. It is a place to share your thoughts, feelings and concerns about what is happening to you. It is a place where you can talk about your loss with other people who understand, because they also are grieving. Sometimes friends and family, although well-intentioned, may not understand the meaning of your loss and the depth of your pain. The support of others on the same journey can provide a great deal of comfort and healing.

Support for this program is provided by the Mary Kathryn Fogarty, FSPA, Scholarship Fund.

Karna Marks is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.




Kay Kienetz is a spiritual director and recreational therapist in the La Crosse area. She has a master's degree in science and is a lifelong learner, as well as a compassionate and creative co-explorer.

GROUPS THAT MEET AT THE FSC (IN-PERSON)

Saturday Morning Men's Group meets to discuss a current book related to spirituality from 9-11 a.m. on the first and third Saturday of the month. For more information, please call Joe Bodnar at 608-461-1836.

Conversations That Matter is a men's group that provides the opportunity to dialogue with other men on issues that matter in their lives. This group meets from 7-9 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of the month and 6-8 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. For more information, please call 608-791-5295

 Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for more information about these upcoming programs and events.

JOURNEY INTO THE WOODS (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 10 • Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Presenter: Char Peterson

Investment: \$50, includes box lunch, snacks, coffee and tea

Registration deadline: June 5

Note: The event takes place at DragonFly Connection: Respite-Renewal-Retreat (4 miles south of Stoddard).



Limited to 10 participants.

Join us for a journey of exploration and connection to the earth. This daylong retreat will draw on the wisdom found in the traditions of the Celts, the followers of St. Francis and our First Nation teachers, as well as what nature can offer us. This nature immersion experience—held rain or shine—is designed to touch on our human need to look to creation to find the healing properties that can move us through our traumas with resilience and new growth. We will practice guided meditation, take contemplative walks along pathways and a labyrinth, and explore elements of forest therapy. We will work with many of the elements that the earth has provide as we engage in rituals using herbs, essential oils, stones and plants.

Char Peterson is a lifelong learner of a variety of healing modalities that recognize, focus and encourage the recovery of our sense of the Sacred in all Creation. She has practiced her soul care work most recently as a hospice chaplain at Gundersen Health System. She has a master's degree in theology and a master's level Certificate of Pastoral Ministry from St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota.



THE SOUND OF BOWLS AT SUNSET (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 13 • Tuesday, 7-8 p.m.



Presenter: Tom Roberts

Investment: Suggested donation of \$10 may be paid upon arrival.



Registration is appreciated but not required.

Note: This event takes place outdoors, near the FSC's hermitages on St. Joseph Ridge, about 10 miles east of La Crosse (W2658 State Hwy. 33 Trunk, La Crosse, WI 54601). Pets are not allowed on the property.

All are invited to this special evening off-site to experience the power and beauty of traditional Tibetan singing bowls outside as the sun sets. Bring a chair or a blanket, and prepare to be opened to deep relaxation and meditation in the presence of ageless bell sounds.

Tom Roberts is a retired psychotherapist and practicing Zen Buddhist. He is the author of "The Mindfulness Workbook: A Beginner's Guide to Overcoming Fear and Embracing Compassion" and has introduced hundreds of people to Tibetan singing bowls.

SUMMER SOLSTICE LABYRINTH WALK (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 21 • Wednesday, open between 4-7 p.m. (Please arrive no later than 6:30 to allow enough time for your walk.)

Facilitator: FSC staff

Investment: Freewill offering at the door

Registration is appreciated; drop-ins are welcome.

Special time for families: If you are bringing someone younger than 16 to experience the labyrinth, we ask that you visit between 6 and 6:30 p.m. Thank you.

As we welcome the warmth and light of summer, we invite you to walk our indoor canvas labyrinth. A labyrinth is a single path that has been used as a walking meditation for prayer and reflection since ancient times. For many, it is symbolic of a pilgrimage and can help bring about clarity, peace and healing. Our indoor labyrinth is designed in the pattern of the cathedral labyrinth in Chartres, France, which dates back to the 1200s. This is a silent, self-guided practice suitable for older teens and adults. People of all faith backgrounds and traditions are welcome. A brief instruction is available for those new to the labyrinth.



WOMEN'S SUMMER SOLSTICE YOGA RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 22-25 • Thursday, 4-9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m.-noon



Presenter: Heather Henry

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$360, includes private bedroom and all meals
- **COMMUTER:** \$240, includes dinner on Thursday, lunch on Friday and Saturday

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$252 (overnight) or \$168 (commuter) to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code SOLSTICE30 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

Registration deadline: June 15

This retreat is an opportunity to stop and smell the roses. Celebrate summer and honor the seasonal shift by aligning with the recognition and reception of abundant gifts and the expression of gratitude. Step back from a busy daily routine to meet life where it is at this moment. We will listen compassionately to our body's language and communication, responding tenderly. Together, through gentle movement and postures, breath, meditation and sacred sound—with Ayurvedic wisdom woven throughout—we will create a healing opportunity for ourselves and our planet. Return home effervescent, with a renewed, compassionate relationship with your body, yourself and your life.

Heather Henry has been teaching heart-led yoga for nearly 25 years. She looks toward nature, as Divine expression, to connect to the rhythms that bring balance to our lives. Honoring each person's unique path and body, she encourages deep internal communication to be expressed and attended to. She supports women to inhabit their whole body while taking responsibility for and design their lives.

ROOTED IN REFLECTION (ZOOM)

JUNE 22 • Thursday, 6-8 p.m.



Presenter: Megan Pike

Investment: \$10

Registration deadline:
June 19

Supplies needed: colored pencils, pen or pencil, eraser, sheets of paper and (optional) paper plate.

Take time to learn about and grow through two spiritual practices great for all ages: Ponder, Picture, Pray and My Life as a Tree. This virtual opportunity connects the stories of our own lives with the stories of others through reflection and artistic expression for all levels of artists—yes, even you. Take time for yourself or with others in your household to learn these spiritual practices that can be incorporated into your routine.

Megan Pike has served in a variety of settings from Morocco to college campuses to post-disaster relief sites to the bedside of patients in a health-care setting. Megan has learned to embrace herself as an artist, ignoring the third-grade teacher who told her she couldn't draw, and encourages others to embrace their artistic side as well. She enjoys teaching others new ways to engage with their Creator and seek opportunities for reflection and self-love.



A COURAGE & RENEWAL RETREAT: ABUNDANTLY AVAILABLE GRACE (IN-PERSON)

JULY 7-8 • Friday, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Facilitator: Mary Louise Peters

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$165, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$95, includes lunch on Saturday

Registration deadline: June 30



CENTER FOR
**COURAGE &
RENEWAL**

Personal renewal allows us to live with self-acceptance, gratitude, compassion and the acceptance of grace. The possibilities are in every moment, with each thought, in every action. Through individual written reflection and group interaction, you will have opportunities and time to recognize the grace that is always abundantly available. Our time together will include silence, guided discussion, poetry, wisdom tradition essays and art experiences. The retreat is based on the Circle of Trust® approach developed by Parker J. Palmer, Ph.D., writer, activist and co-founder of the Center for Courage & Renewal.

Mary Louise Peters, a facilitator prepared by the Center for Courage & Renewal (www.couragerenewal.org) has been designing and facilitating Circle of Trust® retreat experiences since 2010. She also provides educational consultation and training across the U.S. to build state and local system capacity to improve outcomes for children with disabilities and their families.



2023 Programs and Retreats *continued.*



ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: DANIEL THE PROPHET IN THE LION'S DEN (IN-PERSON)

JULY 10-15 • Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, 9-10 a.m.

Instructor: Phil Zimmerman

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$700, includes private bedroom Sunday through Friday night, all meals and all supplies. Overnight guests may check in Sunday evening (5-7 p.m.)
- **COMMUTER:** \$575, includes lunch and dinner Monday through Friday and all supplies



Registration deadline: July 3 • Limited to 25 participants.

Both a meaningful prayer practice and a technical art form, iconography traces its history to the beginning of Christianity. Icons are often referred to as “windows into heaven” and continue to be venerated by Orthodox Christians and others. Noted American iconographer Phil Zimmerman will guide participants step-by-step through the process of “writing” or painting an icon in the Byzantine style, following ancient guidelines and techniques while using modern artist’s materials (acrylic paints, gessoed board, gold leaf). All materials and supplies are included. By the end of the week, students will have a beautifully completed icon varnished and ready to display. While previous iconography experience is not necessary, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of painting and color mixing.

Note: Class may extend into the evening hours on Friday for varnishing.

Phil Zimmerman is the owner of St. John of Damascus Icon Studio in Pennsylvania, having studied iconography with Richard Osacky (the late Bishop Job, OCA Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest). He has offered retreats at the FSC for more than 20 years.

PAINT & PICNIC: FAMILY CANVAS PAINTING EVENT (IN-PERSON)

JULY 22 • Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-noon

Instructor: Laurie Swan

Investment: \$40 for first two participants, and then \$5 per additional painter. Lunch and one canvas per family are included.



Registration deadline: July 17

Note: If case of inclement weather, this event will move indoors.

Bring the kids and join us for a family canvas painting event outdoors in the beautiful courtyard at St. Rose Convent. Our theme incorporates the beloved “Footprints” poem and includes a beach scene. Children will be able to create the footprints in the scene by using their own feet, which will create a lasting memento for your family. The event includes a picnic lunch and opportunity for fellowship and fun.

Laurie Swan is the office manager at the FSC and an artist. She hosts painting parties for all ages but especially enjoys working with kids. Learn more at www.facebook.com/artandsoul.laurie.swan

INTRODUCTION TO WRITING PRACTICE (IN-PERSON)

JULY 8 • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon



Presenter: Cynthea Gillespie

Investment: \$25

Registration deadline: June 30

Have you been waiting for just the right time to dive into writing but are scared to face the blank page? Whether you are a newbie or an experienced writer, you are invited to this safe, judgment-free zone to explore your writing voice. Based on the rules of Writing Practice as developed by world-renowned author Natalie Goldberg, this introduction gives you the tools to jump-start your writing. Bring a fast writing pen (no laptops), spiral notebook or inexpensive writing pad. Though it’s not required, you may want to read “Writing Down the Bones” or “Wild Mind” to familiarize yourself with the structure of Writing Practice, as well as for inspiration, encouragement and solid advice on many aspects of the writer’s craft.

Cynthea Gillespie first studied creative writing with author Natalie Goldberg in 1998 at Clouds in Water Zen Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, and has since continued her studies in classrooms and retreat centers throughout the United States. A professional writer for nearly 30 years, in addition to her writing workshops, Cynthea now offers transformational workshops, including Visual Journaling and the Soul’s Journey, as well as SoulCollage®.

THREE-WEEK SERIES

AWAKEN THE WRITER WITHIN (IN-PERSON)

JULY 13, 20, 27 • Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.

Presenter: Cynthea Gillespie

Investment: \$45

Registration deadline: July 6



Take the summer plunge! This three-week, intensive series is for those who are already familiar with the discipline of Natalie Goldberg’s Buddhist-inspired Writing Practice and are interested in taking a deeper dive into the beauty and pain of our lives with humor and compassion. Using Goldberg’s “Thunder and Lightning: Cracking Open the Writer’s Craft,” we’ll take 21 days to break through any writing blocks, face the blank page and mine the jewels of our lives, including details you thought you’d long forgotten. Each session will begin with a simple, 10-minute mindfulness meditation to quiet the mind, as we prepare to unleash the deeper spiritual aspects of our beautiful, creative selves.

POETRY CAFE (ZOOM)



JULY 24 • Monday, 6:30-8 p.m.
Facilitator: Sarah Hennessey, FSPA
Investment: \$5
Registration deadline: July 21



Join other poetry lovers for an evening of words and community online. Bring your favorite poetry, either written yourself or by another author, for a time of sharing and reflection. After introductions and setting the scene, we will each read the poem we have chosen.

silence, the rest of the group will share words that they really liked in the poem and other thoughts about the works.

Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.

SOULCOLLAGE RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 4-5 • Friday, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Su-Hsin Huang, SP
Investment:
 • **OVERNIGHT:** \$175, includes private bedroom, all meals and all supplies
 • **COMMUTER:** \$115, includes lunch on Saturday and all supplies

Registration deadline: July 29

SoulCollage® is an expressive arts practice done individually or in community. Founded by Seena B. Frost, the method develops creativity and intuition, encourages self-discovery and provides personal guidance. SoulCollage meets you wherever you are on the journey called life. You do not have to be an artist to make SoulCollage cards; anyone can create and enjoy this powerful practice. Sister Su-Hsin will help you slow down and listen to your inner child.

Su-Hsin Huang is a member of the Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary of the Woods, Indiana. She is a trained spiritual director and has a background in theology and art. She is a SoulCollage® Facilitator and has been making cards since 2011. She uses SoulCollage cards to access her own inner wisdom and journey with others.



MOVING THROUGH GRIEF RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 10-12 • Thursday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day

Facilitators: Cathie Boerboom, RGS, and Kay Kienetz



Investment: \$280, includes private bedroom and all meals

Required book ("The Grief Recovery Handbook") is not included; you can purchase it on your own or at the FSC's Sophia Bookstore. You will need to read the first seven chapters of the book prior to the retreat.



We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$140 for this retreat to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code RETREAT50 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

Registration deadline: July 31

This three-day retreat is a concentrated version of the series we offer, also called Moving Through Grief. Many of us have experienced losses and grief in our lifetime. If you would like to move through some of your grief, this process equips you with the skills to help you do so. Your loss may be a partner, parent, child, marriage, pet, health, job or a variety of different losses. This is an in-depth experience that includes presentations and "homework" you will do privately, as well as small-group sharing. The work you will do requires a quiet, private space, which is why you are encouraged to be an overnight guest. It takes courage and vulnerability to work with your grief. We welcome you to do so in this safe, confidential, respect-filled environment. This retreat is not therapy. If you do have a therapist, we suggest you check to make sure this is a good match for you.

PARTNER YOGA (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 12 • Saturday, 9-10:30 a.m.

Instructor: Michelle Hundt

Investment: \$15 per person, includes snacks

Registration deadline: August 4



Enjoy this fun and enriching class with a close friend, partner or family member. Learn poses in which two people support each other in a way that enhances connection while building trust and communication. Learning poses with a partner provides balance while establishing proper alignment.

Michelle Hundt enjoys teaching people to take time for themselves through the art of yoga. She has been teaching and sharing her skills since 2014. She focuses proper body alignment, which builds strength, stamina and coordination, and the sequence of poses.





2023 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

CENTERING PRAYER: SILENT LISTENING RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 18-19 • Friday, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Marcia Bentley

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$165, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$95, includes lunch on Saturday

Registration deadline: August 11

Centering Prayer is a modern form of meditation that began in a Trappist monastery in Massachusetts. It is a Christian prayer of silence, a surrendering of ourselves to God. While some Eastern forms of meditation deal with the disciplined focusing of one's attention (on breath, for example), Centering Prayer is a prayer of intention—we give our consent to God's presence and action within us. It is a movement toward the center of our being, from our ordinary psychological awareness to our spiritual being, our true self.



The intentional letting go of our emotional programs for happiness and our over-identification with various groups frees us to enter into a deeper relationship with God. Join us as we uncover the dynamics that make up Centering Prayer, practice silent prayer together and sample some of the traditions that have grown up around Centering Prayer.

Marcia Bentley is a spiritual director and part-time staff member at the FSC. She lives in Madison, where she practices spiritual direction and leads three weekly Contemplative Prayer Groups. She participates on the Core Leadership Team and supervises students in FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. Marcia credits Centering Prayer for contributing to the transformation in her own life from a fast-paced career in the computer field to a deeper, more fulfilling contemplative lifestyle today.

BEFRIENDING BROKENNESS (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 25-26 • Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Diane M. Millis

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$165, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$95, includes lunch on Saturday

Registration deadline: August 21

What if instead of hiding the breaks in our lives, God is inviting us to make them more visible and beautiful? Author and educator Diane Millis believes God is inviting us to tend to and befriend the brokenness in our lives. As a spiritual director, she sees how often people embark on spiritual paths to bypass their pain—hoping that by drawing near to God, they will overcome their wounds. Yet, as the late theologian Henri Nouwen reminds us in his book "Life of the Beloved," most of our brokenness cannot be simply taken away. The deepest pain we suffer often stays with us all of our lives, and we are called to embrace it. Through various forms of prayer, poetry, personal writing and sacred conversation in small groups, Diane will introduce us to practices for befriending the tender, painful places that arise in our hearts and in our lives.



Diane M. Millis, Ph.D., loves to accompany people as they explore how God is at work in their lives—through their hopes, their dreams, their heartbreaks and their disappointments. She is the author of "Conversation—the Sacred Art," "Deepening Engagement" and "Re-Creating a Life" (named one of the best spiritual books of 2019). She has taught at the University of Minnesota, the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, St. Catherine University and United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. She offers retreats throughout the U.S. and Canada. Diane lives in Minneapolis with her husband, Mark, and their son, Ryan. To learn more about her ministry, visit www.dianemillis.com.

STARTING THIS FALL

NINE-MONTH PROGRAM

SING: SPIRITUALITY IN NATURE GROUP (IN-PERSON)

2023: September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9

2024: February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8

Saturday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.



Presenter: Jan Wellik

Investment: \$225 for the series

Limited to 15 participants.

Join a community of seekers to build a relationship with nature, ourselves and others while exploring spirituality and the mystery of the natural world.

Each month, we will gather at an outdoor site in the La Crosse area to incorporate nature journaling, writing, artmaking, mindfulness, walking and forest bathing. The walking generally will be 1 mile or less (unless as a group we decide to hike farther). Participants are asked to commit to the entire series. All materials and handouts will be provided. Please wear comfortable, seasonally appropriate clothes. Bring a water bottle and, depending on the season, sunscreen and/or bug spray.

This group is for adults only, and pets are not allowed. This series is based on activities and guidelines created by the Center for Spirituality in Nature and their curriculum: "Inside Out: Practices for Going Deeper in Nature" by Beth Norcross.

September 9: Coming Home (Fall Equinox)

October 14: Harvest

November 11: Giving Thanks

December 9: Winter Solstice

January: No session

February 10: Connection and Compassion

March 9: Spring Equinox

April 13: Healing and Renewal

May 11: Spirituality of Water

June 8: Summer Solstice

STARTING THIS FALL

NINE-MONTH PROGRAM

GROWING WITH THE ENNEAGRAM (ZOOM)

2023: September 13, October 18, November 8, December 13

2024: January 10, February 14, March 13, April 10, May 8

Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Presenters: Wendy Mitch and Kay Kienetz

Investment: \$225 for the series

This series will be a virtual small-group experience for personal growth and spiritual transformation using the Enneagram. You will receive companionship and mutual support as you process how this content is relevant to your life. Group members will share our personal stories in a confidential and supportive environment using a structure based on group spiritual direction.

Wendy Mitch is the owner of Shifting Perspectives: Coaching and Consulting, based in Plover, Wisconsin, a certified Integral Life Coach through New Ventures West and a certified teacher in the Enneagram Spectrum Method.

Kay Kienetz is a spiritual director and recreational therapist in the La Crosse area. She has a master's degree in science and is a lifelong learner, as well as a compassionate and creative co-explorer.



EIGHT-MONTH PROGRAM

GRACE ALONG THE WAY: A SPIRITUAL DIRECTION GROUP FOR CLERGY (ZOOM)



2023: October 3, November 7, December 5

2024: January 9, February 6, March 5, April 9, May 7
Tuesday, noon-2 p.m.

Presenters: Grant Van Lishout and Karna Marks

Investment: \$200 for the series



We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$100 for this series to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code CLERGY50 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

Limited to 8 participants.

Together, we will create a supportive circle to share our stories of struggle, growth, joy and transformation. This is a confidential space to explore what is relevant and meaningful in our very real lives. We'll gather monthly to connect—to listen in love, to welcome the questions and to honor our human and spiritual experiences.

Grant Van Lishout is a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Director Preparation Program and has been offering individual and group spiritual practices for five years. He is pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Eagle River, Wisconsin, where he lives with his wife and two daughters.

Karna Marks is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC. Her Master of Divinity is from Luther Seminary, and she was a parish pastor for 22 years before joining our staff.

SEVEN-MONTH PROGRAM

RISING STRONG™: A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

IN-PERSON GATHERING RETREAT: October 6-7

Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

ZOOM MONTHLY GATHERINGS:

2023: November 9, December 14

2024: January 11, February 8, March 14

Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.

IN-PERSON GRATITUDE/CLOSING RETREAT: April 12-13

Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Presenters: Karna Marks and Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

Investment:

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$625 for the series, includes two full weekend retreats with private bedroom and all meals
- **COMMUTER:** \$500 for the series, includes two full weekend retreats (without bedroom stay) and lunch

Limited to 16 participants.

This seven-month cohort experience is based on the groundbreaking research of author Brené Brown. All of us face transitions, setbacks, disappointments, failures, grief, heartbreak and challenges in this very human experience we are living. Together, within a caring community, we'll get curious about the sacred rhythms of life and explore gentle spiritual practices. The curriculum is based on video clips with Dr. Brown, experiential exercises and personal exploration. We'll explore the power of vulnerability, define and re-define courage, explore emotions, practice gratitude, joy and authenticity; and cultivate resiliency in a supportive, positive environment. Rising Strong™ is not therapy. If you do have a therapist, we suggest you check to make sure this is a good match for you.



NINE-MONTH PROGRAM

COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY (ZOOM)

2023: September 11, October 9, November 14, December 12

2024: January 8, February 12, March 11, April 8, May 13

Monday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Investment: \$225 for the series

Presenters: Sarah Hennessey, FSPA,
and Julie Connelly

Limited to 7 participants.

Join us for a time of deep personal sharing as you are held in a community of trust and confidentiality. Each session will begin with a poem for reflection and questions to bring us to a deeper level of application for your spiritual journey. We will hold a space for individual sharing, group reflection and contemplative space. A commitment to the entire series is part of building community. Together, we will be companions on the journey.

Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC and a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Director Preparation Program.

Julie Connelly is the program and retreat coordinator at the FSC and a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Director Preparation Program.



Emmaus



Large Conference Room



Grace Hall

Meeting Spaces

YOU'LL FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR AT THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER:

- 8 distinctive meeting rooms that can seat 2 to 90 people
- State-of-the-art technology
- Professional, comfortable seating and flexible layout options
- Privacy and quiet
- In-house catered refreshments and meal options (dining room also can be reserved)
- All-day, half-day and economical two-hour rates
- Bedrooms that can be reserved for overnight retreats
- Franciscan hospitality and environmentally friendly service
- Historic charm and exquisite woodwork throughout the building

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR NO EXTRA CHARGE:

- Large TV/display screens
- Computer access
- Microphones
- Listening assistance devices
- Flip chart with markers



Small Conference Room



Francis Room

CALL US AT 608-791-5295 TO DISCUSS YOUR GROUP'S NEEDS AND HOW WE CAN MAKE YOUR NEXT MEETING MEMORABLE.

Hope Hembd joins our team!



Please help us welcome Hope Hembd, who joined our staff in mid-April as Director of Community Engagement. This is a newly created position, and Hope's impressive work experience in business development, communications and fundraising helped her stand out as the ideal person to take on this role. We also appreciate her sense of humor and a commitment to hospitality.

Hope comes to us from Viterbo University, where she was Director of Corporate Relations, Advancement. She grew up in La Crosse and graduated from Viterbo (both bachelor's degree and master's in servant leadership) but also has worked in Chicago, California and Germany.

In her new role, Hope looks forward to bridging the FSC and surrounding La Crosse area. "It is exciting to know that through

sharing the Center with others, I will be bringing peace, joy and fulfillment to people of all faiths," she said. "The idea that I get to do this in my hometown makes it that much more fulfilling."

In addition to introducing our programs and retreats to others, Hope has personally benefited.

"I was fortunate to have sessions with a spiritual director, and I learned the importance of making time to reflect and rejuvenate," she said. "I believe that spirituality and faith shine on everyone in a different way, and the FSC allows you to be yourself on your own personal journey."

Her personal interests include entertaining and cooking for family and friends, reading, golf and volunteering.



Hope (pictured far right) getting to know staff members better at our Art Dash event.

Meet our Partner Spiritual Directors

The Franciscan Spirituality Center has four spiritual directors on staff. In addition, we partner with the following trained directors. Please call 608-791-5295 to set up an appointment.



Barb Kruse, FSPA Affiliate. I live in La Crosse and have been married to Joe for 43 years. We have four sons, three wonderful daughters-in-law and six beautiful grandchildren. I retired from the Franciscan Spirituality Center in 2017. During my time at the FSC, I was a spiritual director and director of the Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. I also offered

workshops on Compassionate Communication and participated in other programs and retreats. I love to be outside doing any kind of activity or oftentimes just sitting still. I also like to fly fish, cook, garden, play cards, read and visit. I prefer to meet with participants at the FSC or via Zoom.

Peter Watkins. I have been a spiritual director since 2012 and have a Master of Divinity degree from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. I taught high school philosophy and theology for more than 30 years, and I just retired from teaching high school in 2021. I did my spiritual direction training at Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality in the Twin



Cities, where I supervise aspiring spiritual directors. Ignatian Spirituality has been formative for me personally and as a director, and I am trained in and love accompanying folks through the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. I also teach contemplative practices to a Lutheran congregation and work with aspirants discerning a call to holy orders in the Episcopal Church of Minnesota. I enjoy running, going on long pilgrimages, cookouts and road trips. I can meet with people in the Twin Cities or by Zoom.



Chelle Belland. I have a background in mental-health therapy and have benefited from my own spiritual direction for more than 10 years. My background of listening to people's stories and working through my own spiritual journey inspired me to become a spiritual director. While meeting with individuals, I am deeply committed to creating space for and listening to everyone's faith, prayer and spiritual practices, no matter their belief background. In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors, running, reading, baking and working out. My husband and I have been part of the La Crosse community for more than 25 years and have raised three daughters. I am available to meet at the FSC or by Zoom.

‘They loved me back to life’

Local author, mental health advocate and former U.S. Air Force Intelligence Officer Alice Holstein shared a bit of her incredible story during our Art Dash event.

The following is excerpted from an essay she wrote for a book in progress: “Bipolar Soul Journey: Stories of Survival and Grace”:

In about 2012, I heard about the three-year Spiritual Direction Preparation Program but feared I could not do the rigorous work required. In 2008, I had begun work, part-time, for the Department of Veterans Affairs mental health services as a peer support specialist. This was a huge contribution to my finding renewed meaning and self-esteem, but I was not yet entirely well. An arduous journey of suffering and recovery had been an endurance test; I feared that my current mental and physical capacities were not up to the challenge.

Then came a dream that I should be doing spiritual direction. In the middle of the night, I rose from bed to write down all the reasons to pursue the program. Not long afterward, I applied for the 2014 class; I was 71 at the time, one of their older participants, but age was not a hindrance since they valued mature people. Life experience that included hardship and recovery was a plus.

The program, forged more than 30 years earlier, included weekend lectures, small-group discussion, book and journal reports, individual spiritual direction, a weeklong, silent retreat and an internship. My colleagues, about 40, from mixed religious backgrounds, were in their 40s and 50s; none had as liberal a background as my Unitarianism, but I was again welcomed without question. Our individual and group conversations were intense and meaningful. Instructors were outstanding. The food and the hospitality, which the Franciscans do so well, was generous, served with a gourmet touch. The Franciscan Spirituality Center itself, adjacent to the convent, is a place of palpable spirituality. People come into this space, recognizing its peace and warmth. They remark about its healing qualities.

The result of this intense three years is that I bloomed while doing the work. At this time, I was still working part time, doing public speaking and serving on several mental health boards. All of these



“My romantic fantasy is that the sisters’ prayer commitment ... brought me home from the desert to heal. Whether that is true or not, I choose to believe they helped love me back to life.”

activities helped restore me to mental-physical health, but [SDPP] carried me over the top in my healing journey. Creativity returned in force; I reclaimed some of my earlier writings that I once thought were lost and useless. These eventually became part of a website with much free, mental health recovery information. The main theme was the revolutionary concept that mental illness could be a spiritual path.

By the time I retired from the VA in 2017, I was ready to develop a small practice as a spiritual companion myself. Wanting to pursue my writing seriously was another goal. These elder years were beginning to feel like the best years of my life.

Today, I continue to meet monthly with my own spiritual director. She is one of my lifelines, and I am part of a peer review group that assesses our work as spiritual directors. Interesting workshops are available at the spirituality center. I participate in the FSC’s Good Friday community walk as they carry the cross, stopping at various social justice stations along the way. I regularly walk the indoor labyrinth several times a year. During these elder years, I have pursued becoming a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Affiliate. This includes small-group participation and pursuing other FSPA activities. In short, I have come to love the Franciscans. Their work and values live deeply in my heart. These do not conflict at all with my choice to be a Unitarian Universalist member of the local Fellowship.

The sisters and affiliates do enormous good things in the community and beyond, often quietly, without fanfare. My romantic fantasy is that the sisters’ prayer commitment ... brought me home from the desert to heal. Whether that is true or not, I choose to believe they helped love me back to life.

Learn more at www.aliceholstein.net.

At the Center newsletter is published four times a year on earth-friendly paper with a higher recycled content. Find us on Facebook and Twitter.

Franciscan Spirituality Center

920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601
608-791-5295
www.FSCenter.org FSCenter@fspa.org

Identity

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is a sacred place that welcomes everyone. We are rooted in the Gospels and sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

Mission

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is dedicated to supporting anyone in their search for God, meaning and wholeness. We live this mission because we believe: In each of us lives the Sacred. We need each other to recognize and honor that part of ourselves. Responding to spiritual hunger is necessary for growth, healing and peace. As we grow in wholeness, we contribute to the healing of all creation.

Core Values

In keeping with the tradition of our Franciscan founders, we hold these core values:
Sacredness: Believe that in every person and all creation lives the Sacred.
Respect: Acknowledge the dignity, diversity and worth of each person as a unique image of God.
Community: Through prayer, empathy and sharing, create a safe, peaceful place.
Hospitality: Welcome all with compassion, acceptance and celebration.
Professionalism: Commit to competence, quality, trust and personal spiritual development.

What We Do

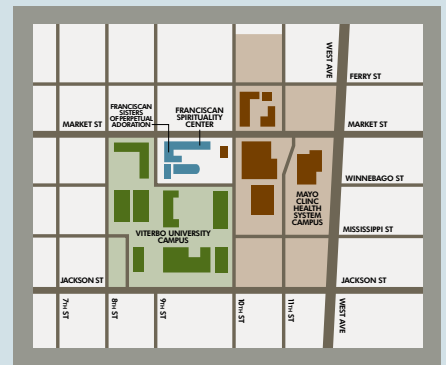
The Franciscan Spirituality Center guides and directs processes for prayer and offers personal presence to anyone on their sacred journey as co-creators of a just and peaceful world. The FSC offers individual and group spiritual direction, guided and preached retreats, daylong programs and events. Staff is available for off-site workshops, presentations and programs.

- facebook.com/FSCenterLaCrosse
- instagram.com/franciscanspiritualitycenter
- twitter.com/fs_center
- youtube.com/@franciscanspiritualitycenter
- atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com



Whether you are joining us for an in-person retreat or attending a program virtually, you are welcome and valued!

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is located in the heart of scenic La Crosse, Wisconsin, sharing space with St. Rose Convent and next to Mayo Clinic Health System and Viterbo University. Guests may choose to stay in one of our 32 private bedrooms or three woodland hermitages. Other amenities include eight meeting rooms, a bookstore, a small library and accessible parking. The FSC is within walking distance of the Mississippi River, hiking trails and a vibrant downtown.



Your generous financial support helps sustain our mission. Here are ways to give:

- Drop off or mail a check to: Franciscan Spirituality Center, 920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601
- Make a secure, online donation at www.FSCenter.org/donate
- Text FSC to 608-292-2999 to make a gift through your mobile phone.
- Become a *Spirited Friends* monthly donor; call 608-791-5295 to learn more.



Call 608-791-5295 or visit www.FSCenter.org for more information on how to plan your visit and experience Franciscan hospitality at its best.



Franciscan Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

New painting by Dan Howard

You'll want to stop by to see this beautiful oil painting of our building by Dan Howard. In true Franciscan style, the frame is made from reclaimed wood. Dan is a post-Impressionist painter from Viroqua (he grew up in the United Kingdom) with a powerful story of how creating art has dramatically changed his life. We are grateful for the beauty he has put into the world! Dan enjoys painting historic buildings, and accepts commissions. Learn more at www.artofdanhoward.com.



OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC FROM 8:30 A.M.-5 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

COMING THIS FALL



SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT WEEKEND
September 10-15

JOURNEY INTO THE WOODS - PART 2
September 16 • Char Peterson

ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
September 18-23 • Phil Zimmerman

RETREAT FEATURING BRIAN McLAREN
September 22-23 • Steve Spilde

SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT
October 13-15 • FSC spiritual directors

CREATING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE
October 20-21 • Wendy Mitch

AGING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
October 28-29 • Elizabeth Lewis

ENNEAGRAM FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS
November 17-18 • Continuing Education

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