

Benedictine Bridge

connecting with the communities at Holy Wisdom Monastery
weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care of the earth into a shared way of life

[Sisters & Sojourners](#) | [Sunday Assembly](#) | [Oblates](#) | [Guests & Retreatants](#)
[Friends & Supporters](#) | [Volunteers & Coworkers](#) | [New on our website](#) | [Calendar](#)

July 2014



Dear *Benedictine Bridge* and *Living in Community* Readers,

You may notice some changes to this issue of *Benedictine Bridge*. We've combined the things you said you read most in *Benedictine Bridge*—the article on a Benedictine value, the article on the sisters' community, the retreat information and calendar—with the focus on community living from *Living in Community*. This is especially important now that the new mission, that came out of the visioning sessions many of you attended, focuses on ALL the communities at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

Mission: *Holy Wisdom Monastery, home of Benedictine Women of Madison and an ecumenical community of communities, weaves prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life.*

Instead of sidebar articles focusing primarily on upcoming events, we will offer space to each community to highlight what's important to them. The community headings we chose are: Sisters & Sojourners; Sunday Assembly; Oblates; Guests & Retreatants; Friends & Supporters; Volunteers & Coworkers. In addition there will be a section highlighting new posts on our website and the events calendar.

Benedictine Bridge will continue to be sent near the middle of each month. *Living in Community* will no longer be sent. As always we would love to hear your reaction to these changes or suggestions for articles. Send comments to info@benedictinewomen.org or reply to this email.

Benedictine Bridge co-editors:

[Car McGinley](#), director of communications

[Ann Moyer](#), director of membership



Guests enjoy the *Now* art exhibit, May 2013. (Photo by Kent Sweitzer.)
Join us for the next art exhibit, [Transformation and Restoration in Rural Wisconsin](#), opening October 3, 2014.

Art and music in the monastic tradition

by [Rosy Kandathil](#), Benedictine Sojourner

Guests who come to Holy Wisdom Monastery often comment about our library and the powerful presence of art and music here. Finding these gifts in the simplicity of the monastic setting is no accident; they reflect a history that stretches back to the beginnings of the monastic tradition. Rosy Kandathil, a current Benedictine Sojourner, tells the story well in her recent blog post, excerpted here:

Christian monasticism began in Egypt in the 3rd century with women and men who chose to withdraw from society and live in the desert outskirts to pursue a life with God. Paradoxically, communities emulating the strict disciplines of these holy women and men quickly grew, spread across Europe and became an important part of medieval society. With this growth came the need for books and devotional objects for the daily life of the community. In this setting, the monastic commitment to manual work balanced with prayer, allowed many monks and nuns to serve God as creative artists.

From the 6th through the 12th centuries, most of the books of the Western world were produced by monasteries. Skilled scribes copied and illuminated texts with intricate original artwork. These mixed media works were not simply decorative, but were intended to draw the viewer into a sustained contemplation of the layered meanings within the writing.

To enhance the liturgy and periods of prayers that characterized the common religious life, monastic musicians created striking choral arrangements and plainchant (also called Gregorian chant) for scripture readings. In order to keep everyone on the same note, medieval monks invented the system of musical notation based on spoken syllables (*do re mi*) that is still in use today.

To create an environment for devotion, monastic communities fostered relationships with visual artists who could beautify their spaces. Some of these artists were monks and nuns, but others were not, and ongoing conversations between patrons, artists, and monasteries produced lively partnerships between the larger society and cloistered communities. Famous works of art—Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, for instance—were originally commissioned for monastic settings.

To this day, all monasteries pay great attention to an aesthetic sense that honors beauty, balance and harmony as attributes of God. For untold years, music and art have been a means of focusing the mind and body, facilitating meditation and prayer across time, language and culture. One can look to the use of shared songs, chants, singing bowls or iconography as diverse forms of music and art that draw people into a state of alert devotional stillness in many sacred traditions.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the creative arts and prayer together can unite us with other living beings and with the planet at large. Art is a means of perceiving and appreciating the sacred and of bringing people into the presence of wonder. The monastic tradition, through its ongoing commitment to spiritual growth and the common good, continues to provide vibrant spaces for the flourishing and advancement of creative arts.

Read Rosy's complete blog post, along with others in the series, on our website at: [Living in Community - A Benedictine Sojourner's Journey](#).

This article was originally printed in the June 2014 issue of Nature's Pathways. It has been modified for this publication.

Art exhibits at the monastery

The monastery gathering area, with its clean lines and abundant available light, provides a gracious setting for art exhibits as pictured above. Currently on display is the sisters' collection of wildlife prints by Owen Gromme. Stop in any time to enjoy these prints...they are also for sale!

This fall we will feature a new exhibit: [Transformation and Restoration in Rural Wisconsin](#), a collection of photographs by John Kalson and Kathleen Sletten. Join us for the opening of this new exhibit on Friday, October 3, 2014, 5:00-8:00 pm. Images of farmland by Kathleen Sletten will be juxtaposed with images of native prairie plants by John Kalson to highlight the work the sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery are doing for the Wisdom Prairie Project, an effort to restore 53 acres of farmland to native prairie.

Sisters & Sojourners

Welcoming our newest Benedictine Sojourner

by [Sister Lynne Smith](#), co-director of formation

Our newest Benedictine Sojourner, Karyn, has arrived at Holy Wisdom Monastery to begin a year with us. Karyn comes from Billings, MT where she has worked in a congregation as the director of Christian initiation/pastoral ministry for the last eight years.

Karyn brings a broad familiarity with Benedictine values. In anticipation of her time with us as a Benedictine Sojourner, she writes:

The monastic values of prayer and hospitality really speak to my heart. I feel most called to share my gift of hospitality and, in doing so, it by nature pulls in the need for prayer, justice and care for the earth. They are all woven together in the tapestry of monastic life.

We welcome Karyn with Benedictine hospitality.

Pictured here are women attending an Exploring Benedictine Community retreat last year. Karyn is among the retreatants (front row, far right) along with Sisters Joanne Kollasch (back row, middle) and Lynne Smith (to the right of Joanne).

Also pictured are three women who have recently completed time with us as Benedictine Sojourners: Vicki (back row, second from left), Brenda (back row, far right) and Sarah (front row, middle).

Learn more on our website about our [Benedictine Sojourner program](#) and consider attending the next [Exploring Benedictine Community](#) retreat, November 7-9, 2014.



Gathering with other monasteries

by [Mary David Walgenbach](#), prioress

In June, Sister Lynne Smith and I traveled to the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, ID for our Federation Chapter meeting, held every three years. We gathered with 50 other Benedictine sisters, representing the 14 monasteries of the [Federation of St Gertrude](#). Benedictine monasteries are grouped into federations for mutual support and accountability for monastic living. We listen to what is going on in each monastery and where the spirit of God is speaking to all of us. Shawn Carruth, OSB, a sister of Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston, MN and recently retired professor of religion at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, provided a context in her opening address: "Behold I Am Doing Something New" (Isaiah 43:19) Imagine! Create! Embrace!

As a Federation we established the following direction statements:

For the next three years we, the Federation of St. Gertrude and individual monasteries:

- Commit ourselves to develop collaborative methods to share resources for study/lectio of scripture and monastic spirituality as a means of nurturing newer members and promoting personal and communal transformation of all members.
- Commit ourselves to honestly review our reality and address our critical challenges creatively in order to free us to continue to be a vital monastic presence.

Included in Sister Shawn's address was the text of the poem, "How to Paint a Portrait of a Bird," by Jacques Prévert. A reflection on the poem and the address, written by Sister Lynne Smith, begins: "This poem touches me deeply as a metaphor for our Benedictine life." Follow this link to read more: [Reflections on "How to Paint a Portrait of a Bird"](#)

Attending classes in Chicago

Beginning August 21, 2014 Sister Lynne Smith will attend the Institute for Religious Formation at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, studying formation for people entering religious communities. This academic-year program includes courses on Scripture, theology, human development and growth, spirituality and research. Lynne will be back in Madison during her semester break in December. When she completes the program on May 15, 2015 she will continue in formation work with women who come to begin the process of joining Benedictine Women of Madison. Women interested in learning more about exploring life with Benedictine Women of Madison may contact [Ann Moyer](#) at [608-836-1631](tel:608-836-1631), x197.

[Sunday Assembly](#)

Sunday Assembly celebrates the Feast of Benedict and Scholastica

by [Lynn Lemberger](#), director of worship & music

[Sunday Assembly](#) continues to be a growing community within the larger community of Holy Wisdom Monastery. Around 200 people, from seniors to babes in arms, gather each Sunday for worship. We are a diverse group of people with an array of religious traditions, political, educational and economic backgrounds, family situations, sexual orientation and gender identity. We embrace prayers, texts and lyrics that are inclusive, expansive and challenging, while staying grounded in Benedictine spirituality and honoring the monastic tradition. Together, we are an evolving, progressive, ecumenical Christian people of faith. An atmosphere of welcome, friendliness and hospitality extends from the moment people arrive, through the Sign of Peace, and after worship when all are invited to share coffee and fellowship in the dining room.



Gathering for food—whether the broken bread of the Eucharist or potluck meals—is a vital part of our life in community. Sunday Assembly children and adults gather in this picture taken at an intergenerational event after worship, held in February 2014.

A special tradition for Sunday Assembly is our annual potluck brunch in celebration of the Feast of Benedict and Scholastica, held each

year in July coinciding with an oblate retreat weekend. The [Rule of Benedict](#) and the wisdom of his sister, Scholastica, are foundational to the life of Benedictine Women of Madison, to the ecumenical worshipping community of Sunday Assembly and to the Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery. We invite all—members of Sunday Assembly, oblates and guests alike—to remain after 9:00 am worship on Sunday, July 20, 2014, for this community celebration. Sunday Assembly members and friends are asked to bring a dish to pass.

Note: In the future we look forward to having a Sunday Assembly member writing for this section of our newsletter.

Oblates

Celebrating and growing with the oblate community

by [Ann Moyer](#), director of membership



Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery, class of 2014

Front Row (left to right): Nancy Schubert, Heidi Haverkamp, Cindy Uhrich, Jane Ayer, Amy Fallon, Laura Woodworth; Back Row (left to right): Sister Lynne Smith, Joe Schubert, Ron Ballew, Marian Wasierski, Ellen Joyce, Jill Grabill, Sister Joanne Kollasch, Jennifer Dobson, Sister Mary David Walgenbach; Missing: Jean Edens who is making her oblation later in July 2014.

The [Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery](#) celebrate their 15th anniversary this coming weekend. As one of the growing communities of Holy Wisdom Monastery, oblates strive to live the *Rule of Benedict* wherever they are in society. Rooted in various Christian traditions they find in the *Rule* a practical spirituality for daily life. Regular retreat gatherings provide opportunities to grow spiritually, to nurture the monastic in each other and to integrate Benedictine spirituality into their lives.

[The Unfolding Self: Detours, Destinations & Discoveries Along the Way](#) is the title of the biennial Benedictine retreat, September 19-21, 2014. This retreat is open to oblates and the public and will be led by Rev. Rachel Srubas, a Presbyterian pastor, author, spiritual director, teacher and Oblate of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. You will explore ways to trace the map of your life and the transformations it reveals. The retreat will include times for shared prayer, reflective conversation, restorative silence, and engaging presentations by a leader with a passion for spiritual seekers and their stories.

Learn more or register by September 5, 2014 at [Benedictine Retreat](#).

Note: In the future we look forward to having an oblate writing articles about the oblate community for this section of the newsletter.

Guests & Retreatants

A mystical vision: Sacred Activism with Andrew Harvey

by [Carolyn McGinley](#) and [Carole Kretschman](#), committee members



Andrew Harvey

Collaboration expands consciousness and broadens the field of possibility. This is the case with the retreat collaboration between The Christine Center (Willard, WI) and Holy Wisdom Monastery (Middleton, WI). For the past two years these organizations have worked together to bring evolutionary speakers to Holy Wisdom Monastery. Last year Barbara Marx Hubbard explained her vision of conscious evolution to over 200 retreatants. This August 15-17, Andrew Harvey, the founder of The Institute for Sacred Activism, will show how ordinary people can make a real contribution to the world's crises through social activism.

The one hope for the future lies, I believe, in Sacred Activism—the fusion of the deepest spiritual knowledge and passion with clear, wise, radical action in all the arenas of the world, inner and outer. We have very little time in which to awaken and transform ourselves, to be able to preserve the planet, and to heal the divisions between the powerful and the powerless. Let us go forward now with firm resolve and profound dedication.

— Andrew Harvey

Learn more or register by August 1, 2014 at [Broken Open By Love with Andrew Harvey](#).

Friends & Supporters

Friends of Wisdom Prairie, ready to launch

by [Greg Armstrong](#), director of environmental education

I was asked to launch the Friends of Wisdom Prairie support organization at the beginning of the year. As I write this in July, we are still on the launch pad, the fuel tanks are pressurized and the igniter is sparking away. The Friends of Wisdom Prairie Council is formed and includes an impressive group of people who care about Holy Wisdom Monastery and care for the earth. We are asking people to join the organization beginning this summer.



Come and help us care for the earth:

[Wisdom Prairie Workdays](#) (Wednesdays, 9:00 am-12:00 pm)
or [Community Workdays](#) (Saturdays, 8:00 am-1:00 pm)

I have wonderful dreams of what this organization can be. I believe it will provide an opportunity for people to express their care for the land and nature—a chance to join with others to love a piece of land, restore the ecological health of this land and provide a good place to live for the plants, mammals, birds, insects and micro-organisms that compose the community of life here. I also believe it will afford opportunities to learn to be a better and generous-spirited member of the land community. I do hope you will join us.

Join today at [Friends of Wisdom Prairie](#), or contact [Greg Armstrong](#), Monday-Wednesday, at 608-836-1631, x123.

Volunteers & Coworkers

Making celebrations happen

by [Jill Carlson](#), director of guest services

It was a beautiful summer Saturday that found several groups using the monastery, retreat and guest house and the grounds for celebration, meditation.

Outside, on the Lake Lawn (overlooking Lost Lake), Ashley Foss and Leif Bergquist started their life together as newlyweds. In the guest house, the First Unitarian Society held a meeting and shared lunch in the monastery. A group of Buddhists practiced Tai Chi outside near the guest house, then returned to their meeting room.

That evening, Roger and Linda Pettersen celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the monastery dining room with 70 friends and family members.

To make the events run smoothly, Jamie Dunbar, hospitality and event coordinator spent many hours working with the groups and couples to ensure that all details were covered.



In the kitchen, chef Barbara Wright prepared food for lunch and the anniversary party. Val Bunville, housekeeper, helped with food prep along with myself and three [volunteers](#) Melanie Bennett, Peg Davey and Cathy Jones.

Peg Davey, a frequent kitchen volunteer is pictured here, left, with chef Barbara Wright, right

Interested in holding an event, meeting, retreat or wedding at Holy Wisdom? Contact [Jamie Dunbar](#). Follow these links to learn more about our [hospitality](#), [guest services](#) and [celebration spaces](#) on our website.

New on our website

[Friends of Wisdom Prairie](#)

[Nature Notes Summer 2014](#)

[Listening with the Ear of Your Heart, new series begins in August](#)

[Gregory the Great's Benedict: a pastor for the ages](#)

[Art and music in the monastic tradition](#)

[Reflections on "How to Paint a Portrait of a Bird" by Lynne Smith](#)

[Recent homilies from Sunday Assembly homilists](#)

[Transformation and Restoration in Rural Wisconsin Art Exhibit](#)

Calendar

[Sunday Worship](#), 9:00 am
Monastery Assembly Room

[Daily Prayer](#)
Monastery Oratory
Morning Prayer, Sunday-Saturday, 8:00 am
Midday Prayer, Monday-Friday, 11:45 am
Evening Prayer, Sunday-Saturday, 4:30 pm

July 18-20
Oblate Retreat Anniversary Celebration
Oblates celebrate the 15th anniversary of the oblate community.

July 19
[Wisdom Prairie Walk and Talk](#)
Learn about aspects of the land on this educational walk. 1:00-2:30 pm

July 20
Sunday Assembly Potluck Brunch
Celebrate the Feast of Benedict & Scholastica. After 9:00 am worship. Bring a dish to share.

July 23
[Wisdom Prairie Workday](#)
Volunteer on the Wisdom Prairie, 9:00 am-12:00 pm, snacks and beverages provided.
Register by July 16, 2014.

August 2
[Community Workday](#)
Restore the land and renew your spirit at our volunteer workday.
8:30 am-12:30 pm, lunch provided. Register by July 26, 2014.

August 15-17
[Broken Open By Love: An Invitation to Sacred Activism with Andrew Harvey](#)
Sacred Activism is a transforming force of compassion in action that marries the fire of the mystic's passion for God with the activist's passion for justice.
Register by August 1, 2014.

August 26
[Listening With the Ear of Your Heart](#)
The series continues . . . new people welcome!
This series of eight gatherings gently leads participants on a journey toward personal spiritual transformation and a more contemplative and peace-filled life. 1:00-2:30 pm or 7:00-8:30 pm
Register by August 19, 2014.

August 27
[Wisdom Prairie Workday](#)
Volunteer on the Wisdom Prairie, 9:00 am-12:00 pm, snacks and beverages provided.
Register by August 20, 2014.

August 27
[Listening With the Ear of Your Heart](#)
The series continues . . . new people welcome!
This series of eight gatherings gently leads participants on a journey toward personal spiritual transformation and a more contemplative and peace-filled life. 1:00-2:30 pm
Register by August 19, 2014.

September 6

[Community Workday](#)

Restore the land and renew your spirit at our volunteer workday.
8:30 am-12:30 pm, lunch provided. Register by August 30, 2014.

September 14

[Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian/Without Sophia I Would Not Be a Buddhist](#)

In our multireligious world how does religious identity evolve?

Learn more with Paula Hirschboeck and Paul Knitter; 10:30 am-5:00 pm

This retreat is full.

September 19-21

[The Unfolding Self: Detours, Destinations, and Discoveries along the Way](#)

Biennial Benedictine Retreat with Rev. Rachel Srubas

Learn ways to trace the map of your life and the transformations it reveals.

Register by September 5, 2014.

September 24

[Wisdom Prairie Workday](#)

Volunteer on the Wisdom Prairie, 9:00 am-12:00 pm, snacks and beverages provided.

Register by September 17, 2014.

October 3

[Transformation and Restoration in Rural Wisconsin Art Exhibit](#)

Exhibit opening reception, 5:00-8:00 pm. Join us to meet the artists and hear reflections on their work.

November 7-9

[Exploring Benedictine Community Retreat](#)

Experience Benedictine community life and learn more about our Benedictine Sojourner program.

[Visit our calendar for upcoming events.](#)

Get social with us!



[Forward this message to a friend](#)

Follow this link to subscribe to: [Benedictine Bridge](#)



Holy Wisdom Monastery

4200 County Road M, Middleton, WI 53562 | Phone: 608-836-1631

Website: www.benedictinewomen.org | Email: info@benedictinewomen.org