



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

"MUSIC IS A MINISTRY"

*"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."
Ephesians 5:19*



**BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF
ST. SCHOLASTICA MONASTERY
DULUTH, MN**



Dear Friends of the Monastery,

“Music is a Ministry” is our theme for this year’s annual report. Living together in Community and working each day during a global pandemic presented many challenges and constraints; yet we found a common ground through our love of music that brought us closer in will and heart. “Music is a Ministry” is a way of life as a Benedictine; it ties us together in prayer and is the heart of our liturgy. For decades, and especially over the last year and a half, we found stability, peace, gratitude, sanctity, and sanity through the musical gifts and talents of our Sisters here at the Monastery.



“Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:19

“Music is a Ministry” is another way we minister to one another and to those outside of the Monastery. We are blessed by many talented Sisters and volunteers who create music that enhances and supports our worship.

Please know that your prayers, volunteer hours, and donations play a vital role in our ministries. Because of your gifts, we are able to continue our ministry work and care for our aging Sisters. We are grateful for your generosity. I hope you enjoy “Music is a Ministry.” We pray for you, and we **sing** for you too.

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” Ephesians 5:19

As we move on to our fiscal report, please note that for the third year in a row we have not had an annual appeal. We feel it is important that our donors know we are mindful of only asking for what is needed. In 2019 and 2020 we were blessed by previous gifts, alleviating the need for an appeal, and in 2021, with the uncertainty of Covid-19, we will forego an annual appeal.

This year our volunteer coordinators recorded 122 hours of service to the Community. Due to Covid-19, our volunteer numbers are down, but we are now gradually welcoming our volunteers back. There were 1,061 contributions given, including gifts from 103 first time donors which totaled \$251,009.48. Thank you!

Community Support	201,500.84
Retirement.....	14,159.18
Care of Infirm Sisters.....	20,720.34
Center for Spirituality and Enrichment.....	6,388.10
McCabe Renewal Center	6,561.91
Vocations/Father John Whitney Evans Fund	792.68
Twinning Monasteries.....	866.43
Other (designated by donor)	20.00
Total	\$251,009.48

Join us in saying a prayer for our Jubilarians who are featured in the next pages: Sister Maria Volk, 70 years; Sisters Theresa Spinler and Claudia Cherro, 60 years; and Sister Joan Marie Stelman, 25 years.

Blessings and peace,

Sister Beverly
Sister Beverly Raway, Prioress

OUR 2021 JUBILARIANS

Sister Maria Volk – 70 years – July 11, 1951

by Theresa Butler, Development/Public Relations Administrative Assistant

Anna Volk first learned about St. Scholastica Monastery when her older sister became an aspirant with the Community. Growing up on a farm in Raleigh, North Dakota, Anna watched two of her siblings choose religious vocations as a priest and sister. Anna, too, decided to seek God in religious life.

In her senior year of high school, Anna left North Dakota to complete her degree at Stanbrook Hall in Duluth. She entered the novitiate in 1950 and was given the name Sister Maria. She made her first profession in 1951 and final profession in 1954. Sister Maria said that being a Sister allowed her to venture into “places I would never have gone on my own.” She served in teaching and pastoral work in many places.

After her retirement, Sister Maria became involved in two wonderful organizations – CHUM Duluth (Churches United in Ministry) and Pax Christi Duluth. Her strong faith and her passion for justice and peace aligned with the mission of both organizations. Pax Christi Duluth thrived for many years under Sister Maria’s leadership, keeping current on global, national, and local peace and justice issues and responding to them.

Sister Maria served on the CHUM Board of Directors for six years and also on its Development Committee. She helped raise thousands of dollars for CHUM. For her dedication and many years of service, she was awarded a Ministry Recognition Award and gift from CHUM in 2004.

We are blessed by Sister Maria’s “Yes” to God and 70 years as a Duluth Benedictine.



Sister Claudia Cherro – 60 years – July 11, 1961

by Sister Therese Carson



As a first-grade student at Sacred Heart Cathedral School in Duluth, Claudia Cherro was blessed to have Sister Victorine Sitter as her teacher. Through her she first experienced the loving spirit of the Benedictine Order. She told Sister Victorine, "Some day I'm going to be just like you."

Claudia attended high school at Stanbrook Hall, and then entered the Community in 1959 and became Sister Lizette, though she later reverted to her baptismal name. "I found communal prayer to be the most satisfying part of life, a pause in the day's work that helped shift my focus back to God. Of course, this didn't happen right away; it required years to grow into it."

Sister Claudia earned a degree in Elementary Education at The College of St. Scholastica and taught for eleven years. Then, after earning a master's in ministry degree at Seattle University, she served in pastoral ministry at St. Leo's in Hibbing and Resurrection Parish in Eveleth. "I loved being immersed in the nitty gritty of people's lives: being there when they needed someone to listen. It was a holy gift to have the time for this. I had considered marrying and raising a family, but I would never have been able to help people like this. By becoming a Benedictine Sister, I was free to serve others in this special way."

For the past six years, Sister Claudia has been the Prioress' secretary, where she welcomes interruptions in her daily work as part of her vocation of serving others.

Celebrating her first vows in 1961 and her golden jubilee in 2011 were two of her greatest joys as a religious. "After fifty years I knew that I had lived this life in God faithfully and completely. Religious life lets us focus on Christ, which helps us build a stronger community. It also allows each of us to choose how much time she is able to give to others."

For those considering religious life, Sister Claudia says, "Be faithful to your prayer life; don't turn your thoughts to God just once a day but seek God's guidance constantly. Seek advice from a good spiritual guide, a faithful priest or Sister, who can help you discern where God is calling you. And don't be afraid. Sisters face the same human challenges as are found in other ways of life. We strive to know and serve God, but the community keeps us centered in Christ. I am happy I chose this path and wouldn't change this life for anything else."

Sister Theresa Spinler – 60 Years – July 11, 1961

by Sister Theresa Spinler

Growing up on farm in southern Minnesota, I was imbued with a sense of beauty of nature in all seasons, including all plants and animals. There was much hard work, but I never disliked it.

I remember visiting my aunts in Lisle, Illinois at Sacred Heart Monastery when I was very young (my dad had five sisters who were nuns). I was in awe of these nuns dressed in black, doing farm work with a joyful spirit. They touched my life without knowing it.

I have really enjoyed all my ministries but especially working as an RN at St. Mary's Medical Center for 18 years. There were so many meaningful and powerful moments of making a difference in someone's life. Also, I loved living for 14 years at McCabe Renewal Center, where I did full time massage and worked with the outdoor environment. These were such wonderful times. And, of course, I still work with plants indoors and outdoors at the Monastery, which I find most fulfilling.



I have been blessed with many opportunities to study, travel, and live with beautiful, holy people. My dream is that, as we continue to journey together, we will be open to the ways in which the Spirit is calling us to live our Benedictine way of life. I am grateful for health, family and friends, and each day of life.

Sister Joan Marie Stelman – 25 years – July 11, 1996

by Theresa Butler, Development/Public Relations Administrative Assistant



Joan Stelman first heard the call while doing a research project at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at St. John's Abbey. While at St. John's she had the opportunity to join the Benedictine monks for the Liturgy of the Hours and it was there she discovered the beauty of Benedictine prayer. This led her to start reading *The Rule of St. Benedict* where she found what she was searching for – a vocation as a Sister. She remembers saying, "I think God wants me to be a nun."

Joan was born in Duluth and then when she was six moved to Minnesota's Twin Cities with her family. Following high school, she served almost 16 years in the U.S. Forest Service at the North Central Forest Experiment Station – Federal Government. When she decided to become a Sister, she wrote to two Benedictine Communities – the Duluth Benedictines and the Trappist nuns in Iowa. When she chose St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, she felt like she was coming home to the town where her dad grew up and her parents met, on the shores of beautiful Lake Superior. Joan entered in February 1995, taking Joan Marie as her religious name. She made her first vows in 1996, and final vows in 1999.

Before entering the Monastery, she was not a stranger to ministering to people. When she lived in the Cities she was part of the BeFriender ministry, in which she helped provide pastoral care to people in need, especially those with Alzheimer's. When she became a Sister, she worked with Sisters in Benet Hall for two years which was a natural fit for her. She said being part of the BeFriender ministry helped her to have empathy for people with Alzheimer's, allowing them to express what it was that they needed to say. It continues to be a joy for her to be with the infirm Sisters in Benet Hall.

Sister Joan Marie has had the opportunity to work in each of the Sisters' three sponsored ministries: Essentia Health, The College of St. Scholastica, and Benedictine (formerly Benedictine Health System). Sister Joan Marie is humbled by the regard that people have for all of the Sisters' ministries. One of her favorite times in ministry has been teaching – giving Power Point presentations to groups of people in the Sisters' sponsored ministries about the Community and Medieval history. From 2014 to 2021 Sister Joan Marie served as Director of Mission Integration for Essentia Health East. She began her new role as Senior Vice President for Mission Integration at Benedictine on June 7, 2021.

Writing has also been a favorite part of her ministry. When she worked in the CSS Alumni department, she had the opportunity to write a grant to get a new "Storm" costume which she wrote from the point of view of Storm; it succeeded in getting the funds for a new mascot costume! She also enjoys getting out and visiting people. In her new position she recently had the opportunity to go visit some of the Benedictine Informational Technology support people. She always enjoys meeting and talking to new people and finding connections.

Sister Joan Marie is grateful to celebrate her 25th Jubilee and looks forward to celebrating with her Community, family, friends, and co-workers at a celebration in September.

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



To all who make contributions, we live and grow because of you.

Your Giving

Charitable contributions to St. Scholastica Monastery strengthen and enhance the lives of our Sisters and support our ministry work. Sisters serve in spiritual direction, community outreach, education, health care, peace and justice, governance, renewal and retreat outreach, creative arts and sponsorship.

Donors often designate a special purpose for their gift or make a gift in memory of a loved one.

Consider naming the Sisters as a beneficiary of an IRA, life insurance policy, charitable gift annuity, property, or in your will or trust.

Talk with us about these giving opportunities and other tax-wise strategies.

Charitable Bequests

While planning for your future and after taking care of your family, we invite you to consider a bequest to the Sisters which will offer a valuable tax savings.

Charitable bequests are easy gifts to make and can be given in any dollar amount. If you would like to designate the Sisters in your will or trust please talk to your plan administrator and let us know that you have. A donor who designates the Sisters in their will, trust or insurance policy is recognized as a Covenant Donor. Covenant Donors names are inscribed in a book in the Eucharistic Chapel in Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel and on our donor recognition board in the Monastery entry. Please contact us for more information or questions about how you wish the Sisters to administer and fulfill your bequests.

If you would like more information please contact Jan M. Barrett, Development and Public Relations Director, at janbarrett@duluthosb.org and 218.723.6540



Sister Jeanne Ann Weber

"As the Community liturgist, I facilitate our Morning and Evening Prayer, the Eucharist, and other rituals. Since Liturgy is the heart of our Benedictine way of life, it is a privilege for me to be involved with this ministry and with many other Sisters, lay persons, and clergy, who share a vast array of gifts. I work with the Liturgy Committee and seasonal planners, organists, the Monastery Contemporary Group, lectors, prayer leaders, soloists, and sacristans.

"I am also liaison with the College when we collaborate on special liturgies such as Advent Vespers, the Feast of St. Scholastica, and other rituals and Masses."



Schola Pictured from left to right are some members of our Schola (monastic choir): Sisters Theresa Spinler, Mary Susan Dewitt, Lois Eckes, Marie Therese Poliquin, Mary Josephine Torborg, Josine Krausnick, Jayne Erickson, and Kathleen Del Monte; and volunteers Linda Senta and Marianne Connelly. Not shown is Regina Roemhildt, director.

The Schola sings at Sunday Mass once a month and at Christmas and the Easter Triduum, as well as other special celebrations.

The Monastery Contemporary Group consists of (left to right) Becky Urbanski, Regina Roemhildt, Sister Jayne Erickson, Jude Collins, Debra Jackson, Sister Theresa Spinler, Therese Campbell, Sister Lois Eckes, and Mary Bridget Lawson. Not pictured: Scott Junkert.

The Contemporary Group plays for Sunday Mass once a month and fills the Chapel with energy and joy.





Sister Dorene King plays the piano and organ, cantors, and sings in Schola. She also shares her musical gifts in her ministry with children, singing and playing the guitar.



Marianne Connelly (left) on the penny whistle and **Mary Bridget Lawson** on guitar play traditional Irish airs for special occasions. Marianne sings in Schola and Mary Bridget is a member of the Contemporary Group.

Sister Marie Therese Poliquin sings with the Schola and plays piano and organ. She occasionally cantors at Mass and is a welcome accompanist at Sunday Morning Prayer. Each December she lends her soprano voice to the Messiah Sing-along at The College of St. Scholastica.



Sister Linda Wiggins enjoys playing the organ at Evening Prayer.



Sister Jayne Erickson is a member of the Contemporary Group, sings in Schola, and cantors at Mass. She plays guitar and piano, is learning to play the organ, and composes meditative hymns for monastic liturgies.



Sister Mary Susan Dewitt sings in schola, cantors at Mass, and plays the guitar. She comes from a family of musicians.



Sue Anderson is a volunteer who sings in Schola and plays the trumpet for special celebrations. What would the Easter Vigil Mass be without a trumpet?



Sister Gretchen Johnston plays the piano and organ, cantors, composes classical music, and teaches piano. She also plays organ and directs the bell choir at Zion Lutheran Church in Superior.



Meridith Schifsky, volunteer, plays her harp for special occasions in the Chapel and dining room, and with the Sisters in Benet Hall.



Sisters Claudia Cherro and Mary Josephine Torborg are both cantors and occasionally join their voices together at special celebrations. Sister Mary Josephine sings in Schola.

Jude Collins at far right (pictured with Sister Mary Susan Dewitt in the middle and Mary Bridget Lawson at the left) is a volunteer who cantors at Mass. She sings with Schola and the Contemporary Group.



Sisters Lois Eckes and Theresa Spinler are cantors, sing in Schola, and are members of the Contemporary Group.



Sister Therese Carson
sings in Schola.



Becky Urbanski plays flute
and **Scott Junkert** plays the
keyboard with the Monastery
Contemporary Group.



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Vocation Ministry

MISSION

We, the Sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, Minnesota, are monastic women who seek God in community through a life of prayer and work. Living in accordance with the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict, we respond to the needs of the Church and the world through our ministries.

Donations to the Monastery provide funds allowing Sisters to continue various missions and the opportunity to do beautiful work. Thank you for helping the Sisters serve in the following ministries: