

PATHWAYS



NEWSLETTER OF THE DULUTH BENEDICTINE SISTERS, DULUTH, MINNESOTA

VOL 37, NO. 2

LENT 2026



PATHWAYS

MAGAZINE
of the Benedictine Sisters

Published by:

Sisters of St. Scholastica
Monastery, Duluth, MN

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PATHWAYS is published three times a year
and is distributed among friends, relatives,
associates, and benefactors of the Sisters of
St. Scholastica Monastery.

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Cover photo: Snow Crocus, by Sister Jeanne Ann Weber

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRIORESS

Dear Friends of the Monastery,

As we move into this new year, my heart is filled with gratitude for the many blessings we have recently shared as a community. December offered us moments of deep joy and celebration — most notably the gift of honoring Sister Marie Therese on her 100th birthday. Her century of faith, service, and steadfast Benedictine spirit continues to inspire us all. What a privilege it was to gather with her, remembering the countless ways she has touched our lives and the life of the Church!

We were also blessed with a beautiful Christmas season at the Monastery. The prayers, music, and quiet moments of reflection invited us once again to welcome Christ into our hearts and into our world. The warmth of our celebrations was enriched by the presence of so many friends and guests who joined us. Your visits, greetings, and kindness embodied the Benedictine value of hospitality — receiving one another as Christ and sharing the joy of the season together.



Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, OSB

As we look around at the turbulence and uncertainty present in our country and in our world, we are reminded of how urgently the Benedictine values of community and peace are needed. Our monastic life calls us to be steady witnesses to these values — creating spaces of welcome, listening deeply, and building peace through daily acts of kindness and prayer. In a world that feels increasingly fragmented, we continue striving to be a community of stability, hope, and reconciliation.

Now, as the glow of Christmas gently gives way to the next season of our liturgical journey, we look forward to Lent. Lent offers a sacred opportunity to return to the simplicity that grounds our monastic life: prayer, silence, listening, and acts of loving service. It is a season that invites each of us to deepen our relationship with God and to open our hearts more fully to the transforming work of the Spirit.

May this Lenten season be one of renewal and grace for you. Please know that you remain in the daily prayer of our community. We are grateful for your presence in our lives and for the many ways you share in the mission and spirit of St. Scholastica Monastery.

With the peace and hospitality of Christ,

With gratitude and blessings,,

Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, O.S.B.

Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, OSB
Priorress, St. Scholastica Monastery



Beauty framed in birch.

Photo by Sister Jayne Erickson

Fall Back, Spring Forward

by Rev. Corbin Eddy

Those of us who move in and out of daylight savings time rely on a little set of directions to confidently reset our clocks and watches: "Fall back. Spring forward." These same simple instructions may also be useful as we come to terms with the challenges of Lent.

The season begins with a dramatic falling back. "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." As Ash Wednesday calls us to step back and to see ourselves from the stark perspective of mortality, it also includes a more positive wake-up call. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

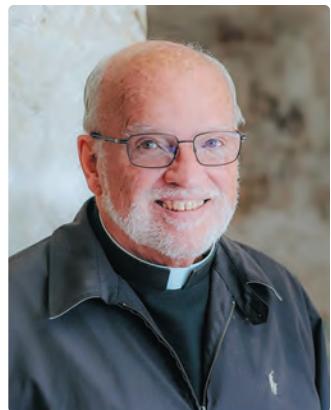
In a world of competing cultural values, Lent is a 40-day time-out to take an inventory of values and priorities and to make appropriate adjustments as time relentlessly moves forward.

Recognizing that our future is getting shorter, the call of the Gospel for ongoing conversion becomes ever more urgent. With our mortality front and center, we are challenged to 'spring forward' in ways that are mindful and deliberate.

The Season of Lent situates the consciousness of mortality in a cycle of rebirth. The word Lent itself comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which means 'springtime.' The whole earth comes back to life in the spring. The world as we know it reawakens from a cold and barren winter to live a new day. Lent is designed to offer a springtime transformation for the soul.

From earliest times Christians have interpreted spring's reawakening as a metaphor for Christ's resurrection. In its beginnings, Lent was a forty-day period to prepare converts for Easter baptism. The flowing, sometimes even rushing waters of springtime

became a sacramental sign that the whole world could "be baptized." All creation could be reborn in the spirit of the gospel. The resurrection of Jesus is the moment of a cosmic reawakening to the ultimate victory of good over evil, of life over death.



Rev. Corbin Eddy

The season of Lent is centered in spiritual revival. Over the centuries it continues to invite believers to step away from the routines of every day in order to take a fresh look at their core relationships with God, with community, and with the earth. Beginning with a dramatic reminder of their mortality, believers acknowledge their

sinfulness and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. This kind of truth telling becomes a platform for "springing forward" in faith, hope, and love, even though the language of springing may express more confidence than most of us have as we humbly take one step at a time.

There is a very interesting Easter Carol written by an anonymous poet of the 13th century. The original Latin text, *Tempus adest floridum*, was set to a tune that we now associate with *Good King Wenceslaus*. Interestingly enough, the 19th century English translation was made by James Mason Neale, the same Anglican priest who wrote *Good King Wenceslaus*. When you come to the last verse, you may be surprised to discover that he uses feminine pronouns for God, a strikingly unique feature. Enjoy singing the carol aloud or in your heart as you contemplate your own version of "springing forward" this Easter.



From the 1582 songbook *Piae Cantiones* published in Finland.

Spring has now unwrapped the flowers;
Day is fast reviving.
Life in all her growing powers,
Toward the light is striving.
Gone the iron touch of cold,
Wintertime and frost time.
Seedlings working through the mold
Now make up for lost time.

Herb and plant that winter long,
Slumbered at their leisure,
Now bestirring, green and strong,
Find in growth their pleasure:
All the world with beauty fills,
God the green enhancing;
Flow'rs make glee among the hills
And set the meadows dancing.

Earth puts on her dress of glee;
Flow'rs and grasses hide her;
Folks go forth in charity—
All as one beside her;
Each of us this glory sees
In the awakening season,
Reason learns the heart's decrees,
And hearts are led by reason.

Through each wonder of fair days
God herself expresses
Beauty follows all her ways
As the world she blesses;
So as she renews the world,
Artist without rival,
In the grace of glad rebirth,
We must seek revival.



The Neale translation of Tempus adest floridum was published in Carols for Easter-Tide (1854). Public Domain from the 1582 songbook Piae Cantiones, published in Finland

REMEMBERING OUR DECEASED FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Please Pray for Our Deceased Family and Friends

Charles Lee Gerchman	8/24/2025
Jeannine Engelson	11/15/2025
Diane Elaine Ellison	11/19/2025
Sister Mary Laurentia Doyle	11/21/2025
Susan Margaret Stokes	12/5/2025
Willard Tripp	12/14/2025
Marlene Pinten	12/15/025
Rev. John D. Gibbs	12/27/2025
Rita Herald	1/10/2026
Mary Lou Sabroski (former Sister)	1/21/2026
Joseph Cherro	1/21/2026

Photo by Sister Lisa Maurer

The Sorrowful Mysteries and Vocational Discernment

by Sister Lisa Maurer

The Sorrowful Mysteries lend themselves very well for a reflection when discerning one's vocation. Along with the universal call to holiness, each of us have a particular call to single life, married state, priesthood or religious life. Praying with the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary is a powerful way to enter into discernment, and lead us closer to who and how God dreams us to be. Jesus' Passion and Death exemplify perfect surrender to God, demonstrating complete trust and obedience to the Father's plan and setting a pattern for us to submit our lives to God's will.

THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

After withdrawing and kneeling, Jesus prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." Luke 22: 41-42

As we discern using the Mystery, we, like Jesus, need to pray for the strength to follow God's will. It is not easy to understand who and how God is calling us to be. Nor is it always easy to do. Having a deep and abiding life of prayer will allow us to respond courageously to God's call.

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. John 19:1

Being scourged was excruciating. Yet, Jesus, for our sake submitted to God's will and endured the lashes and the pain. As we discern our vocation, we should pray for the desired offer ourselves, our very lives to God as Jesus did.

If you or someone you know wants more information about vocations, email vocations@duluthosb.org or visit www.duluthbenedictines.org/vocations.



Vocations cross, India.

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

They stripped off his clothes and threw a cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. Matthew 27:28-29a

In this Mystery we see Jesus endured the terrible ridicule and mockery. When we discern our vocation, we may find difficult to

say "yes" because of perceived obstacles. May Jesus' example give us courage and strength to let nothing stand in our way of following God's will.

THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out to the place of the skull, Golgotha. John 19:17

When Jesus took up His cross, he embrace it as the Father's will for Him and set out on the path to Calvary. At some point in our discernment, we must take up our cross in earnest and set out on the path God has set for us. In doing so, we will know the presence of Jesus, who will walk with us to help shoulder any burden.

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE CRUCIFIXION

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him. Luke 23:33a

Ultimately, following the will of God is about a total self-surrender and full obedience. In this Mystery, Jesus shows us the glorious culmination of discernment. When we enter willingly into God's dream for us, like Jesus, we will live a life of holy obedience and perfect surrender.

Gratitude for Our Oblates' Advent Reflections and Hope for the Season Ahead

As we reflect on the beauty of this past Advent season, we are filled with gratitude for the Oblates who offered reflections that enriched the prayer life of our wider community. Their thoughtful insights, rooted in the Rule of St. Benedict and attentive to the movements of the Spirit, helped guide many through a season of hopeful waiting. Each reflection was a reminder of how deeply the Benedictine charism is lived beyond the walls of the Monastery.

Looking ahead, we are blessed once again to journey together into Lent. This holy season invites us to return to simplicity, deepen our prayer, and renew our commitment to conversion of heart. Our Oblates will continue to share reflections during Lent, offering wisdom drawn from their lived experience of Benedictine spirituality.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication and presence of our Oblates, whose prayer and service strengthen the life of our community. If you feel called to explore the richness of Benedictine spirituality in your daily life, we warmly invite you to learn more about our Oblate program and the ways you can journey with us.

May this coming Lent be a season of grace and renewal for all.

For more information about the Oblate Program, please contact Jane Dolter, Director of the Oblate Program, St. Scholastica Monastery, at 218-391-4516 or janedolter@msn.com.



Sister Jeanne Ann Weber blesses Oblate Thom Chartier with Sister Claudia Cherro.



Thom gives his reflection.

Lent and the Quiet Hope of Springtime

by Dawn Carrillo

The word *Lent* comes from an old word meaning springtime. This alone invites a pause. It suggests that Lent is not only about sacrifice or repentance, but about attentiveness — about watching and waiting for life to emerge. Springtime is woven into the very name of the season, reminding us that Lent is always oriented toward renewal, even when the landscape of our lives still feels cold and bare.

Lent begins while winter lingers. The earth often looks unchanged: trees stripped of leaves, skies heavy with gray, the ground hard and unyielding. And yet, beneath the frozen surface, something is already happening. Roots are stirring. Sap is beginning to rise. We live in that same in-between space during Lent. We may not yet feel transformed. We may still carry heaviness, grief, or fatigue. But we trust—sometimes quietly, sometimes with effort — that God is at work below the surface. Spring is coming, even if we cannot yet see it.

This waiting is deeply spiritual. Lent teaches us to resist the urge to rush toward Easter joy without honoring the slow work of God. Renewal rarely announces itself loudly. It begins in silence, in small shifts of awareness, in softened hearts. Like the gradual lengthening of daylight, change often comes so gently we notice it only in retrospect. Lent invites us to become still enough to recognize these subtle movements of grace.

Spring is a season of renewal, and so is Lent. Both invite us to let go of what no longer brings life. In nature, dead leaves decay so that the soil can be enriched. In the spiritual life, we are asked to release habits, resentments, or fears that have hardened within us. This is not an act of punishment, but of trust. We trust that making space—emptying ourselves—allows God to plant something new. Lent becomes less about what we give up and more about what we make room to receive.

The beauty of the earth in springtime reflects this promise. When the first signs of life appear—tiny green shoots, birdsong returning, light shimmering differently—we are reminded that beauty persists, even after long seasons of barrenness. The earth does not hoard its beauty; it offers it freely. This generosity mirrors God's love, which is poured out again and again, regardless of how often we fail to notice or respond. Simply observing

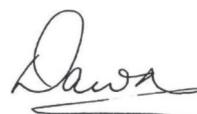
the earth awakening can become a form of prayer, drawing us back into wonder and gratitude.

Still, Lent does not ignore the brokenness of the world. We live amid chaos—unspeakable violence, division, suffering that feels overwhelming. Like late winter storms, these realities can make hope feel fragile. Yet Lent invites us to hold this pain honestly, without despair. Scripture tells us that "*the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth*" (Romans 8:22). Groaning is not the sound of defeat, but of labor. Pain is present, yes—but so is expectation. Something is being born. We need not rush to fix everything...we wait, we pray, and we trust that God is drawing life out of places that feel barren.

At the heart of this season is the quiet assurance that God's love is always present. Even when evil feels loud and destructive, love remains deeper and more enduring. God's love works patiently, persistently, often unseen—like seeds in the soil. Lent reminds us that no force of darkness has the final word. Love does.

In the stillness of this Lenten season, we are invited to rest in the promise that God is making all things new — beginning, perhaps, with us. To nurture this renewal, we invite you to come to the Center, where we offer spiritual direction, life coaching, private retreats, seasonal and ongoing programs, quiet spaces, and opportunities for communal prayer. For more information about the Center and our current offerings, visit retreatduluth.org or email dcarrillo@duluthosb.org. Whether you come for a specific program or simply for time apart to reflect and rest in God's promise of love and renewal, you are most welcome. We would be honored to receive you.

A most blessed Lent to you,



Dawn Carrillo,
Director of the Center for Spirituality and Enrichment



Dawn Carrillo



Sister Mary Josephine Torborg: Gracious and Warm Hospitality

by Sister Therese Carson

Sister Mary Josephine did not start out in food service or hospitality. When she entered the Benedictine Community in 1953, her first ministry was to teach elementary classes at Our Lady of Victory School in Minneapolis and St. Francis School in Brainerd. After nine years of elementary teaching, she was called home and was asked to seek a degree in Dietetics at The College of St. Scholastica. Upon completing her BA in Nutrition, she became Director of the College Food Service, a position she held for five years. One of the first big events to prepare for was the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the founding of St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth. This celebration took place in Somers Dining Room because a larger space was needed for Sisters and guests.

"As Food Service Director, it was a pleasant surprise to discover the many ways to use my gifts of creativity and teaching. Many students chose to do their College Work Study hours as dishwashers, waitresses, table setters for special events, and so on. These were very teachable moments when students could learn the proper way to do things in hospitality work. I learned quickly that if you set the standards high, students will meet the challenge. They often remarked after completing a project, "The Dining room is beautiful when the tables are set with care."

She learned about the beauty of a well-set table from her mother. On special feasts the family would have dinner in the dining room rather than around the kitchen table. Mother would take out her best table linens, and have her children set the table with special china, glassware, silverware, and so forth. The table was always a picture of beauty. "I have always loved a well-set table," Sister recalled. "My work in Hospitality has given many opportunities to provide a beautiful space for guests to dine. I am often inspired by the quote of Fyodor

Dostoevsky as I work. 'The world will be saved by beauty.' A scripture passage that often comes to mind when preparing for a special event is from the Gospel of Mark. 'Jesus sent for two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him, and wherever he enters say to the owner of the house, The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' [Mark 14:13-15]." She paused a moment, then continued, "When we set a table, we are setting a place for Jesus. We are welcoming God into a place of beauty. This demands our very best."

As Sub-Prioress,
+Sister Joyce Fournier
needed help in

preparing the Monastery dining room for feast days. Seeing the creative talents of Sister Mary Josephine, she asked her to take responsibility for this task. Recalling this, Sister said, "It is always a delight when an exciting idea comes to mind and I can figure out a plan to bring it to completion. Then the joy that comes as I watch the responses of the Sisters!"

After five years as the Director of the College Food Service, Sister Mary Josephine worked at St. Mary's Medical Center as a dietitian for Diabetic patients and Oncology patients. After nine years there, she asked for a sabbatical. Granted a six-month leave, she attended a sabbatical program for religious at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Having the option of taking the courses as an audit student or as a full-time student, Sister chose to take the classes for credit since she had so much free

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Sister Mary Josephine Torborg



Sisters Johnetta Maher, Rebecca Burggraff, Grace Marie Braun, and Mary Josephine Torborg relax after a successful celebration at the College.

MONASTERY PROFILE

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time to study. She immersed herself in her studies, and † Mother Grace Marie Brown, Prioress, recognized in her another calling. She encouraged Sister to continue at Duquesne for another year to complete her master's degree in Formative Spirituality.

After graduating with an MA, Sister was offered a full scholarship for their doctoral program. Her dissertation was titled, *An Experience of Vulnerability that Led to Compassionate Living*. After graduation, she became Chair of the Theology and Religious Studies Department at The College of St. Scholastica and served in this position for five years. She taught full time in this department for more than 35 years and still considers it her greatest calling. Now retired from the College, she is a guest lecturer for The Center for Spirituality Enrichment at the mastery and gives occasional retreats.



Sister Mary Josephine teaching at the College.

Her hospitality ministry continues in the new Monastery dining room as well as with the *Benedictine Spirituality Center*'s dining room in Rockhurst. "It was a delightful challenge to organize the new space and figure out the best placement for dishes, serving utensils, the organization of the tray line, and much more.

"The new, smaller dining room is very different from our older Rockhurst room. It has a sense of warmth and intimacy. The lower windowsills provide room for potted plants while allowing a view of the hillside meadow as it sweeps upward, with aspen and spruce along the edge. There are always amaryllis or orchids in bloom inside, and outside the meadow fills with a succession of wildflowers, followed by deep snow and blue shadows. We watch deer, birds, and other wild creatures while we eat."



Sister Mary Josephine organizing serving utensils in the new dining room.

Sister Mary Josephine also plants and cares for the Angelus Garden. She can no longer manage it alone; but in the same way the Sisters work together to set tables, she works beside volunteers and college students who help with the heavier work. Together they bring new beauty into the world, where no beauty is ever wasted. In the winter she can be found in her workroom, where she creates candles of every variety to sell in the Monastery Gift shop.

When asked what she might change if she could start over, she said, "If I were given that chance, I'd do it all the same way. An unexpected blessing of monastic life is that we don't need to make the big decisions ourselves. The Prioress, in consultation with each Sister, gives us our assignments and we run with them. I never had to look for the next ministry. That is one of the great blessings of obedience. We never have to worry whether we are choosing the right career. There is no worry that I chose the wrong path. My path is the way of obedience. It is out of my hands and rests in God's. That is the best way to live."



Students help prepare the gardens for winter on the annual College Community Day.

Sister Amata Mackett: the “Sister Lumberjack” Who Brought Healing to the Northwoods

by Lisa Roseth, edited by Heidi Johnson

In the rugged landscapes of northern Minnesota from 1893 to 1913, long before workers' compensation or modern health plans existed, loggers and miners faced dangerous work with little protection. Into this world stepped an unlikely pioneer of American healthcare: Sister Amata Mackett, a Benedictine Sister whose courage, creativity, and compassion earned her the unforgettable title of "Sister Lumberjack."

A BENEDICTINE INNOVATOR

At a time when workplace injuries could be financially devastating, Sister Amata developed a groundbreaking idea: affordable, pre-paid health insurance tickets. For a modest yearly fee — often between \$1 and \$9 — loggers and miners purchased a small card that guaranteed medical care at Benedictine hospitals if they were injured.

It was a radical concept for its time, providing security and dignity to laborers who often lived far from any town, much less a hospital. Her approach would become an essential source of funding for the Benedictine Sisters' expanding healthcare ministry.

LIFE IN THE LOGGING CAMPS

Sister Amata did more than sell insurance. Known for her strong build, determined spirit, and warm heart, she traveled deep into isolated lumber camps and mining communities—places few women of the era ever ventured. There, she met workers where they lived:

- Selling insurance tickets and explaining the program
- Offering practical wisdom and prayers
- Darning socks and baking pies
- Checking on the sick and injured
- And, when necessary, boldly confronting delinquent payers

Her ability to move so confidently through these rough environments earned her profound respect—and the nickname "Sister Lumberjack."

FUELING THE GROWTH OF BENEDICTINE HEALTHCARE

The income from Sister Amata's insurance program played a vital role in developing the Sisters' hospitals across northern Minnesota. Her work helped sustain and expand facilities such as:

- St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth
- St. Joseph's in Brainerd
- St. Vincent's in Crookston
- St. Anthony's in Bemidji, also known as the "Lumberjack Hospital"
- St. Benedictines Hospital in Grand Rapids

Her efforts allowed Sisters to offer compassionate, professional medical care to thousands at a time when the region desperately needed it.

A LASTING LEGACY

Sister Amata Mackett embodies the Benedictine spirit of resourcefulness, courage, and service to those most in need. Her story highlights the remarkable ways Sisters adapted to the challenges of their era, weaving together faith and innovation to build the foundations of modern healthcare in northern Minnesota.

More than a colorful historical figure, Sister Amata stands as a reminder that the heart of the Benedictine mission—to serve Christ in one another—often requires creativity, grit, and a willingness to go exactly where we are needed most.



Sister Amata Mackett 1861 - 1929.



The St. Mary's Hospital ticket, among the first healthcare insurance programs.



In the woods: Sr. Amata at far left with Mother Scholastica Kerst in the center.

Serving those without housing through Chum Duluth and the Damiano Center

Over the past decades, the Duluth region has lost manufacturing and commercial employers that provided a reasonable standard of living to its residents. Today, with mills and businesses shuttered, a growing number of our fellow Duluthians lack resources to pay rent or groceries. Some are lost in the transition from prison to independent living. These are the people we see in the medical district or camping in the urban woods, at the bare edge of existence.

But we also are blessed with many nonprofit agencies that help stabilize those in free fall. Two of the many are Chum Duluth and the Damiano Center, where caring people help those in need find medical care and addiction treatments, space in emergency shelters, drop-in centers in which to build community, training and employment services, and subsidized housing. They provide Benedictine-like hospitality, restore their dignity, and give them hope. As St. Benedict wrote in his Rule, "Care of the sick [in body or spirit] comes before all else, so they may be served as Christ."

Our Community has been a long-time supporter of Chum Duluth and Damiano Center, serving as volunteers and on boards, and providing them with financial support. Last July, we viewed a documentary with Pat Benson of Chum Duluth called *Under the Bridge: The Criminalization of Homelessness*. This is a 2015 documentary of a lively homeless tent city in Indianapolis. It explores the struggles, community building, and eventual clearing of the camp by city officials, and the grim realities of being without shelter in America. Police and neighbors call these encampments and their residents 'criminal public nuisances', ignoring that for most there is nowhere else to go.

Everyone must be somewhere. Everyone needs a place to sleep in safety, to shower, prepare food, build relationships, raise children, care for their sick and aged. Everyone, regardless of circumstances, is a child of God and deserves our respect and support. Each



"If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?" ~James 2:16

Sister was asked how many people they know are at risk for homelessness, at risk of losing their job and home for, as is often said, "We are all one medical crisis away from being homeless." After the movie, we shared our thoughts about how to end this stigma here in Duluth and work to lift them up out of poverty.

Then in November, Seth Currier from the Damiano Center visited us and described a holistic program to provide shelter, care, and stability to the impoverished. The top-down approach, he explained, does not work. We can't tell someone on the bare edge of existence that they must first give up narcotics or alcohol before they can come in out of the cold. Saying they must first become 'respectable' does not work. Instead, we meet people where they are, respect them for who they are, and acknowledge the courage and constant adaptation it takes just to survive. Beyond the basics of shelter, food, clean clothing, and friendship, they need the tools, training, opportunities, and support to find work and housing and thrive in life. To begin again. Shelters save lives and housing ends homelessness.

In March we will watch another documentary on cities that have effectively addressed homelessness. *Beyond the Bridge* uses Milwaukee as a case study to understand how a city that had one of the worst cases of unsheltered homelessness became one of the best at successfully housing their residents.

A Joyful and Successful Christmas Bazaar

S. t. Scholastica Monastery's annual Christmas Bazaar, held on December 4, was a joyful celebration of community and holiday spirit. Friends and supporters gathered to enjoy the festive atmosphere and thoughtfully prepared offerings.

Patrons enjoyed refreshments and the opportunity to visit with Sisters, reflecting the Monastery's spirit of hospitality. The Bazaar's success was made possible by

the many volunteers who generously gave their time and talents, as well as those who donated baked goods, handcrafted items, Christmas decorations, and more.

We are delighted to share that the proceeds from the Bazaar totaled \$7,546. We are deeply grateful for this outpouring of support, which helps sustain this cherished annual tradition and strengthens the mission of our community.



Sr. Donna Schroeder with her doll houses; Sr. Theresa Spinler and Kathy Bouschor; Sr. Josine Krausnick as Santa.

Christmas Cards for Refugees

For several years we have created Christmas cards filled with hope and prayers for families who are waiting on the border to be granted legal asylum or immigrant status, and be allowed into our country, as our own forebears did many years ago. The circumstances have changed, but they still come, and we continue to give words of hope and support. Sister Elizabeth helps translate our words into Spanish.



Sister Mary Josephine tells our story

Sister Mary Josephine was invited by Dr. Kevin Vaughn to share our Community's story with his Benedictine Tradition class. Using a PowerPoint of historical photos, she described how the Benedictine Order came to America in the 19th century; how communities adapted to the realities of a new country; and how we helped build the schools and hospitals that were so necessary on the frontier.



Sister Mary Josephine teaches community history.

Sister Agnes Atai graduates and returns home to Uganda

Sister Agnes came to us in 2022 from Uganda to study Nursing at The College of St. Scholastica. In December she completed her studies for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. In January she was pinned in a special ceremony with the other nursing graduates. At right: Sr. Donna Schroeder, Sr. Beverly Raway, Sr. Kathleen Del Monte, Sr. Max Nayanzi, Sr. Lois Ann Glaudel, Sr. Agnes Atai (laughing), Sr. Danile Lynch, Sr. Christine Nantaba and Sr. Jeanne Ann Weber. The two Sisters in white habit are from her Community.

And on January 14 we said goodbye in the monastery garage as Sister Agnes left for Minneapolis and a flight home to Uganda, where she will take her board exam and become a Registered Nurse. We will miss her smile and calm presence among us.



Left to right in the garage are Sisters Dorene King, Donna Schroeder, Jayne Erickson, Claudia Cherro, Lois Eckes, Theresa Spinler, Marie Therese Poliquin, April Kilstrom (lay employee), Mary Josephine Torborg, Agnes Atai, Danile Lynch, and Jeanne Ann Weber.

Benedictine Conversations: A Song, a Story, and the Spirit that Connects Us

The most recent installment of Benedictine Conversations offered a beautiful blend of reflection, memory, and music, featuring Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB. Her insights into Benedictine life were enriched by a remarkable story—one that has a connection to St. Scholastica Monastery with the gifted musical compositions of Sister Jayne Erickson, OSB.

A Song Rooted in Prayer

Among Sister Jayne's many contributions to the spiritual life of the community is her beloved song *Hiding Place*. With its gentle melody and profound expression of trust in God, the piece continues to resonate with listeners wherever it is sung. It is a song born from prayer—one that naturally lends itself to quiet reflection, comfort, and communal worship.



Hiding in bomb shelter.

From Minnesota to Ukraine

During the conversation, Sister Lynn shared a touching account of how *Hiding Place* became part of her own ministry. While serving abroad in Ukraine, she introduced the song to the Benedictine Sisters in Zhytomyr. Its message of hope and God's sheltering presence offered strength during a time of uncertainty, and it quickly became meaningful to communities far from where it was first written. In Sister Lynn's words, the song became "a place of peace" for all who heard it.



Rescuing children from a school.

Now Sung in Spain

The journey of *Hiding Place* did not end there. Sister Lynn reflected on how the song has continued to travel—now sung in Spain, where Benedictine communities have embraced its simplicity and beauty. From Minnesota to Ukraine to Spain, the song's path mirrors the deep interconnectedness of the global Benedictine family.



Recovering the dead.

A Conversation Shaped by Benedictine Values

Sister Lynn also spoke about the heart of Benedictine spirituality today—listening deeply, living intentionally, nurturing community, and responding to the needs of the world with compassion. Her reflections invited listeners to consider how the timeless values of The Rule of St. Benedict continue to guide and inspire monastic life across borders and cultures.



Full cemeteries.

Experience the Music

For those who wish to hear *Hiding Place*—including being sung in Ukrainian—please visit duluthbenedictines.org and click on *Melodies and Meditation*. There you can hear the song that has carried the Benedictine spirit from Minnesota to Ukraine, and now to Spain.

You may also view the full Benedictine Conversations video featuring Sister Lynn at: <https://retreatduluth.org/benedictine-conversations-archive/>

Through music, memory, and reflection, *Benedictine Conversations* remind us that the Benedictine spirit is alive, vibrant, and continually moving—carrying hope, peace, and connection wherever it goes.



Lviv War Memorial.



Stewardship in Action: A Conversation Between Essentia/St. Mary's Medical Center and St. Scholastica Monastery

by Lisa Roseth

In a recent recorded conversation, Dr. David Herman, President and CEO of Essentia/St. Mary's Medical Center, interviewed Sister Jeanne Ann Weber, OSB, prioress of St. Scholastica Monastery, to explore this year's organizational focus: Stewardship. Their dialogue highlighted the deep alignment between Essentia/St. Mary's Medical Center mission and the Benedictine values that have shaped the health system's roots for more than a century.

Sister Jeanne Ann reflected on Stewardship as a foundational Benedictine value, one that extends far beyond the responsible use of material resources. She shared that, in the Benedictine tradition, Stewardship encompasses care for all that has been entrusted to us — our communities, our relationships, our environment, and even ourselves. "Stewardship calls us to tend not only to things, but to the people we serve and the people we work alongside," she noted.

Dr. Herman and Sister Jeanne Ann discussed how this understanding of Stewardship translates naturally into the healthcare setting. For caregivers, Stewardship means honoring the dignity of every patient, recognizing the sacredness of their stories, and offering compassionate presence. It also means



Sr. Jeanne Ann Weber and Dr. David Herman in the chapel of St. Mary's Medical Center.

caring for oneself—ensuring balance, rest, and spiritual grounding so that one can continue to serve others with wholeheartedness.

Together, they affirmed that Stewardship invites a posture of gratitude, responsibility, and hope. Rooted in the Benedictine tradition, it remains a living value — guiding the work of Essentia/St. Mary's Medical Center and continuing the legacy of the Sisters who helped shape it.

Celebrating Sister Marie Therese Polquin's 100th Birthday

"On December 8, the Monastery joyfully celebrated Sister Marie Thérèse's 100th birthday, a remarkable milestone in the life of a woman whose faith, service, and gentle spirit have blessed so many. Sisters, friends, and family gathered to honor her century of life, sharing stories, gratitude, and the joy of being together.

Rooted in prayer and community, the celebration reflected the Benedictine values that have shaped Sister Marie Thérèse's vocation. The warmth of the gathering and the love shown by all who attended made the day a beautiful tribute to her years of devotion and the countless lives she has touched.



Sisters Marie Therese and Lois Eckes.

Lighting the Advent Wreath, Decking the Halls

We look back to our Advent and Christmas celebrations, just a few months ago.



Lighting the first candle.



A Sister's elegant and simple nativity scene.



Nativity below Fra Angelico's Annunciation.



Lighted Nativity in garden on Benet Hall.



Obergammerau Nativity in Chapel Gathering Space.



Simple wreath on bedroom door.

Caroling with College Choir and Guests

Each year our Christmas season is brightened by a visit from the choir of The College of St. Scholastica, who share their gift of music with Sisters at the Monastery. The choir fills the Community Room with beloved Christmas carols, offering melodies that stir memories, joy, and deep gratitude.

Then friends join us for the traditional caroling in the Monastery, once held at McCabe Renewal Center and now in Stanbrook.

Each year we pause the Advent season to listen as familiar songs of faith echo through the halls and hearts of those gathered. We and our guests are grateful for this expression of connection and generosity, and for the young College voices and our friends who help usher in the joy of Christmas through song.



St. Scholastica College choir.



Annual caroling event.



Jan Barrett, Director of Duluth Benedictine Ministries, helps Sisters Mary Susan Dewitt and Josine Krausnick make gingerbread houses.



Benet Hall caregivers give a party.

Christmas Joy on Benet Hall

Sisters gathered on Benet Hall for two festive celebrations in December — each offering its own expression of laughter and Benedictine hospitality.

On December 16 during the Third Week of Advent, Sisters on Benet Hall enjoyed a Holiday Happy Hour. The evening began with prayer and unfolded into a laughter-filled gathering. Snacks and beverages were shared as Sisters took part in holiday Mad Lib storytelling, a spirited round of Christmas carols with “name-that-tune,” and collaborative gingerbread house decorating. The simple fun and shared creativity helped them enter more deeply the anticipation of Christmas.

On December 22, Sisters gathered on Benet Hall for a quieter celebration. Special food, thoughtful gifts, and one another’s company marked the evening. The gathering offered a time to savor familiar flavors, share stories, and enjoy the warmth of community.

Together, these moments beautifully reflected the heart of Benedictine life: hospitality, gratitude, and shared joy. The Christmas celebrations on Benet Hall were a gentle reminder that it is often the simplest gatherings—good food, companionship, and presence—that become the most treasured memories of the season.

Employee Christmas Party



On December 16, we thanked our employees with a Christmas party, including the traditional banana split. Here, Erin Keeley and Sister Danile Lynch share a joyful visit, and Sister Donna Schroeder and Tim Orlowski bow heads for a blessing by Sister Jeanne Ann Weber.

A Sweet Melody Shared

On December 22, we were blessed by a performance from Wendy Grethen, whose hammered dulcimer filled the space with gentle, prayerful sound during the Christmas season.

The hammered dulcimer is an ancient instrument with roots dating back to Persia (modern-day Iran) where it is known as the *santoor*. Variations are found around the world, including the *cymbalon* in Hungary and the *yangqin* in China. Played by striking strings with small hammers, the dulcimer allows for a wide range of expression — from soft, meditative tones to richer, more resonant sounds. Its name means “sweet melody,” an apt description of its shimmering voice.

Wendy began playing the mountain dulcimer at age nine and later discovered the hammered dulcimer while in college. For nearly 30 years, she has taught dulcimer classes and private lessons, led a long-running Duluth dulcimer festival, and shared music widely. In 2007, she became a certified music practitioner, playing for hospice patients and in medical settings as a source of comfort and calm. Her repertoire focuses primarily on Celtic and American tunes, music that carries warmth, history, and hope.

Her performance at the Monastery was a beautiful reminder of music’s ability to create peace, connection, and quiet joy — especially during the sacred days of Christmas.



Wendy Grethen playing the hammered dulcimer.

Traditional Blessing of the House

The Feast of Epiphany honors the magi who recognized who this infant Jesus was: King, High Priest, and Sacrifice. Their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh symbolize this. They experienced an epiphany, a moment of sudden, radical insight. We also have an epiphany when we recognize the presence of Immanuel as God Within Us.

Each year we bless our Monastery, asking it remains a haven of hospitality, peace, and healing for all who enter. Drawing on the Rule of St. Benedict (RB), we ask:

May all of our guests be welcomed as Christ. (RB 53.1)

May great care and concern be shown to poor people and pilgrims. (RB 53.15)

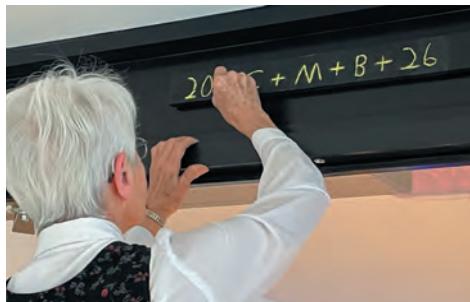
May all who come here be shown the courtesy of love. (RB 53.3)

May the peace we extend to each other be granted to all who enter here. (RB 34.5)

May we all be blest with the grace of a kind word, the best gift. (RB 31.13-14)

Over the entry into the Monastery is written the initials C + M + B, flanked by the year. The letters stand for the magi Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, but also *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless this house."

May God bless your own homes this year with joy, mutual love and forgiveness, and peace.



Sr. Theresa Spinler marks the lintel while Prioress Jeanne Ann Weber leads the prayer.



Frankincense and Myrrh

After the Blessing, we played with fire. Sister Beverly Raway received a gift of a beautiful, old, well-cherished incense bowl from Saudi Arabia, with *jawi* frankincense from Pakistan, *hindi* frankincense from India, and myrrh, an aromatic resin. The incenses were sent to America in 1968, so they were at least 58 years old, though the bowl is much older. After dinner on Epiphany, she lit charcoal and added a pinch of each incense. They produced an astonishing amount of smoke, requiring a dash outside to avoid a visit from the fire department. After admiring the combined scents, the fire was put out with a snowball.



Sr. Beverly Raway

Marce Wood

Marce (pronounced 'Mar-cee') came last fall as a live-in volunteer. A long-time friend of the Community, she brings a spirit of creativity and joy. On December 27, the Feast of St. John the Evangelist – our prioress's patron saint – Marce presented her an artwork of the traditional depiction of St. John as an eagle, soaring high in spirit above the other evangelists.

Marce has been a blessing for us. She enriches our lives with her calming presence and the lives of the Sisters on Benet Hall with arts and crafts and memory games and encourages them to tell their stories.



Marce and Sister Katie Doyle teamed up in a game. Katie shared many funny stories and poems with us, and we shared our own funny stories.

A Joyful Messiah Tradition

Several Sisters joined the wider community for The College of St. Scholastica's 43rd annual *Messiah Singalong*, a beloved Christmas tradition presented in collaboration with the CSS Music Program and the Borealis Chamber Artists.

Participants are invited to sing George Frideric Handel's timeless oratorio, bringing their own scores or borrowing copies at the door. Together we create an evening filled with shared joy. For the Sisters the evening is a celebration of faith, music, and community, and for some the season's high point.



Handel's Messiah in Mitchell Auditorium.

GiveMN Matching Gift Campaign Advances Monastery Storytelling



duluthbenedictines.org website homepage.

The Monastery Community is deeply grateful for the generosity shown during this year's GiveMN matching gift campaign. A generous donor offered a \$5,000 matching gift, inspiring widespread support and doubling the impact of many contributions. Together, donors raised a total of \$19,397 to support important Monastery projects.

Funds from the campaign will be used to update the Monastery website, enhancing accessibility, visual storytelling, and communication with the broader community. The refreshed website will more clearly share the Sisters' mission, history, and ministries with visitors near and far.

In addition, campaign proceeds will support the creation of another Monastery history board, continuing the commitment to preserving and sharing the rich Benedictine heritage of the community. These boards invite Sisters, guests, and volunteers alike to engage more deeply with the Monastery's story.

The success of the GiveMN campaign reflects a shared commitment to honoring the past while thoughtfully preparing for the future. The Sisters are sincerely thankful for every gift—and for the generosity that made this matching opportunity possible.

We give thanks to our generous donors whose gifts are received with gratitude and held in prayer.

St. Scholastica Monastery
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Monastery Books and Gifts, located in Stanbrook Hall, is a destination for books, gifts, icons, greeting cards, rosaries, medals, First Communion and Confirmation cards, and more.

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 1:00 to 3:30 pm.

For more information, please call (218) 723-7009

If you prefer an electronic copy of *Pathways*, please email us at monastery@duluthosb.org.