



**Franciscan**  
**Spirituality Center**

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

VOLUME 32 • NUMBER 1

SPRING 2024

# *At the Center*

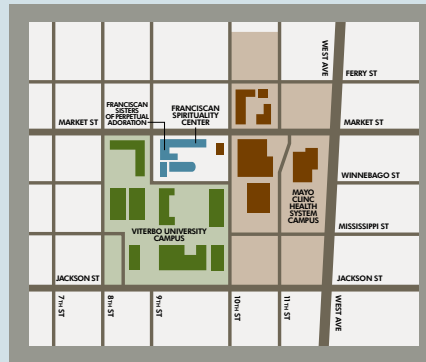
## IN THIS ISSUE:

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We welcome all who seek spiritual renewal, personal and professional growth, healing, community and connection.

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](http://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.



The Franciscan Spirituality Center respectfully acknowledges that our building occupies the unceded ancestral and traditional land of the Sauk and Meskwaki, the Ochethi Sakowin and the Ho-Chunk peoples. As our staff works to better understand the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people, we seek opportunities for relationship-building, growth and healing.

*At the Center* newsletter is published four times a year on earth-friendly paper with a higher recycled content.

### Franciscan Spirituality Center

920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-791-5295  
[www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) | [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto: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.

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[atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com](http://atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com)

# Bringing beauty and goodness into the world



A major focus for us these past few months has been the 800th anniversary of the creche, or Nativity scene, that St. Francis began in Greccio, Italy.

One piece of the project was a large, paint-by-number community mural that depicted a Nativity scene. At first, our staff members were a bit nervous that the mural wasn't going to be completed within the two-week timeframe that we had planned. Our worry was delightfully eased as soon as we started welcoming people to paint.



It was such a joy to walk down to Clare Room (our art space) and peek in to see who was painting: Franciscan Sisters, Viterbo students, children, tweens and teens, young adults and those in their second half of life. Lively conversation, laughter and music filled the room. People who walked in as strangers left knowing each other's names. The entire project was prayer in action. It now serves as a visual prayer for unity and healing, reminding us that we can each contribute, even in very small ways, to the goodness and beauty of the world.

You'll see in this newsletter that there are many opportunities to seek ways to incorporate goodness and beauty in your own life or to share it with others:

- John McHugh returns to the FSC to help us focus on the beauty and power of the *Seven Last Words of Jesus on the Cross*.
- Our annual *Justice and Peace Stations of the Cross* brings community members together for a walking prayer to reflect on the injustices and suffering in the community and in the world.
- Our annual *Art Dash* is truly a celebration of local artists and creativity as we dash for the many sought-after art pieces.
- Our first-ever *One World Listening* gathering seeks to help us all become better listeners, putting goodness in the world through deep, compassionate listening.
- We continue our weekly and monthly offerings such as *Art as Prayer*, *Meditation for Emotional Health* and all of our body movement sessions, all of which allow space for you to pray, meditate and reflect.

May you find inspiration to incorporate and share the transformative power of goodness and beauty in your own journey.

Peace and all good,

*Jean Pagliaro*

Jean Pagliaro, FSC Director

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# Art Dash

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER



**READY, SET, GOGH!** Tickets are on sale for our seventh annual *Art Dash*, March 21 at The Cargill Room at The Waterfront Restaurant and Tavern in La Crosse. This spirited night of food, fun and fine art not only provides much-needed support for our mission but also brings together local artists, business owners and community members for a celebration of creativity.

*Art Dash* is our signature fundraiser, not only providing much-needed support for our mission but also bringing together local artists, business owners and community members for a celebration of creativity and beauty. As art donations come in, we preview them on our website as well as maintain a rotating display near our conference rooms. We invite you check back often to see what is new.

The FSC has been transforming lives and creating welcoming spaces for connection, compassionate listening and healing for nearly 40 years. Your support will help us accomplish even more goodness in the community.

**HOW IT WORKS:** Everyone who buys a \$100 Dash ticket will go home with a piece of original art, but which piece is up for grabs. Your ticket buys you a spot in the Dash. After a preview of the art, we'll start randomly drawing numbers, three at a time. When your number is called, you'll dash to the piece you want. If someone claims your top pick before you do, you'll need to make a different choice. Depending on when your number is called and what pieces are available at that point, you might get your top pick or you might need to select a second or third choice.

Even though these are serious works of art, the Dash itself is meant to be a lighthearted competition. Plus, it's all for a good cause, so we recommend you have a game plan and an attitude of openness and surprise. You are bound to end up with the piece of art you were meant to have!

## WHERE ELSE CAN YOU GET A PIECE OF ORIGINAL ART AS A THANK YOU FOR YOUR \$100 DONATION?

If you'd like to support the Franciscan Spirituality Center but are not interested in receiving artwork, please consider purchasing a Spectator ticket. As a thank you for your \$50 donation, we'll invite you to the gathering to watch the fun, cheer on your favorite "dashers" and artists, and enjoy delicious appetizers.

**WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING TO BUILD YOUR ART COLLECTION, NEED A UNIQUE GIFT IDEA OR JUST WANT TO SUPPORT THE FSC, WE'D LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US.**

## ART DASH ■ Thursday, March 21

Cocktail hour: 5:30 p.m. ■ Dash begins: 6:30 p.m. ■ Appetizers included! Cash bar available.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS: Visit [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) or call 608-791-5295.

- \$100 Dash ticket (guarantees you a piece of art)
- \$50 Spectator ticket (donation to support our mission)

AS WE RECEIVE ART, WE POST PICTURES AT [www.FSCenter.org/artdash](http://www.FSCenter.org/artdash).

CHECK OFTEN TO SEE WHAT PIECES WILL BE AVAILABLE DURING ART DASH.



Lynne Burgess



Dan Henderson



Bruce Nuttall



Linda Steine



Timothy Hammond



Chris Kerbaugh



Constance Woodall-Thompson



Sharon Gleich



Phil S. Addis



Rick Ross



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THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS:

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Karen Kappell, FSPA



Colleen Shore



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Joni Welda



Joyce Diveley



Marcia G. Thompson



Laura Siitari

NEW THIS YEAR: All guests will have the chance to bid on a special package featuring the painting "Momentum" by Linda Steine and a cake designed by Meringue Bakery & Café in La Crosse to match it.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, May 4 • 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Franciscan Spirituality Center • 920 Market Street, La Crosse

Investment: \$65 (lunch included)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH

# Grit & Grace

In celebration of all women who have faced obstacles and ordeals yet persevered, kept the faith and emerged more resilient, we launched our first *Overcoming Challenges With Grit and Grace* conference in 2019.

Each year, this special event has grown, drawing together amazing speakers and guests for a day of inspiration, laughter and, often, tears.

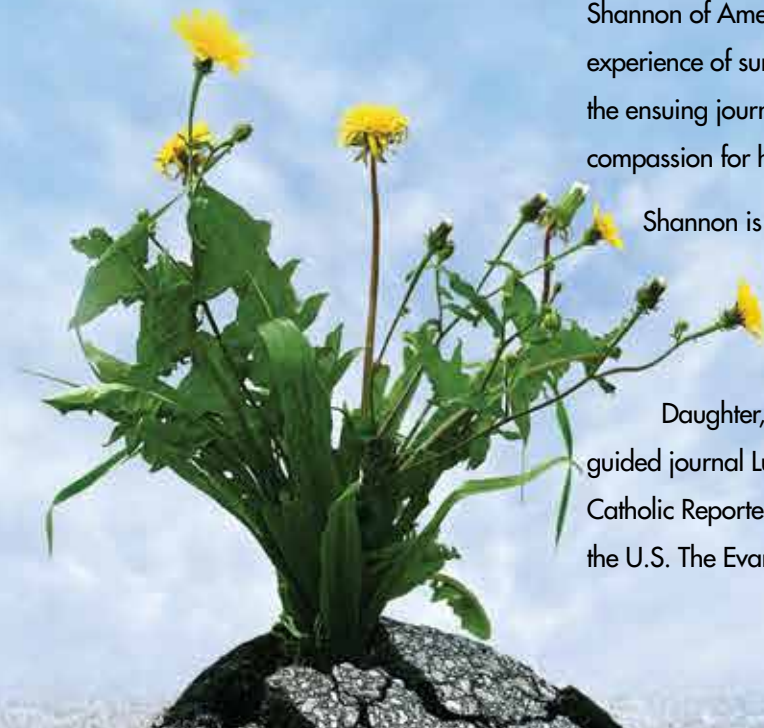
This spring, we are honored to feature these speakers:

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

SHANNON K. EVANS

Shannon of Ames, Iowa, will share her experience of surviving septic shock and the ensuing journey of learning embodied compassion for herself after medical trauma.

Shannon is a woman with a Catholic spirituality and an interfaith heart. Her passion is opening up deeper waters of contemplating God so that our experience of the Divine grows further loving and curious rather than static and complacent. She is the author of the books "Feminist Prayers for My Daughter," "Rewilding Motherhood" and "Embracing Weakness," as well as the guided journal *Luminous*. Shannon is the spirituality and culture editor for the *National Catholic Reporter*. She also writes and leads retreats for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S. The Evans family of seven makes their home on the prairie of central Iowa.



## ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS:



**JESSICA LEE PETERSON** of River Falls, Wisconsin, will share her tale of surviving the tragic loss of her children through the grace and compassion of a trauma-responsive community.

Jessica is first and foremost a mother. She gave birth to her first child, Amara, when she was 21 years old and built her life around raising children. She was subsequently blessed with Sophie and Cecilia, each daughter adding to her identity and fulfilling her dreams. While developing her family, she also pursued a career in social work and has been a licensed social worker since 2001. She has spent the past 17 years working with people and their families during every stage of life. She has found purpose in helping others navigate complex systems and work through the hardships that life has presented them with. Jessica faced many challenges in life but obviously none as daunting as losing her three daughters to domestic violence in July 2012. She has embraced a philosophy of choosing light over darkness and strives to use her grief as fuel to make the world a better place. Jessica's journey from victim to survivor has been borne upon a river of support from family, friends and her community. She's been blessed by a vast array of community groups, businesses and individuals who came together to build an all-inclusive playground in River Falls in honor of Amara, Sophie and Cecilia. She is employed by Washington County of Minnesota as an adult protection investigator.

**MARY THOMPSON** of Onalaska, Wisconsin, will share her story of finding joy and healing while expressing her voice and inspiration through teaching *Art as Prayer* at the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

Mary 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.



"Teaching *Art as Prayer* has become a ministry for me," Mary shared in a write-up for fellow FSPA affiliates. "It began years ago with a simple prayer asking God to enable me to share the joy I feel while creating art. Since then, *Art as Prayer* is an ongoing journey that combines teaching, learning and opening my heart to God's voice. It is a means of stirring our creative spirit."



**NIKI BERGLER** of La Crosse will share her fight to escape memories of an abusive childhood to help create a world worth fighting for. She resides with her devilishly handsome husband and two clingy, outspoken cats.

Niki started her business, Forward Focus LLC, in 2019 and uses her skills to help others achieve their goals through clarity, setting boundaries and developing healthy relationships. She is also a specialist in fitness nutrition, a motivational speaker and the author of "*She's Done Pretending!*"

When she is not lifting others with her abundant uncaffeinated energy, you will find her volunteering, managing Angler X, searching for comfort at a farm-to-table restaurant or hanging out in nature doing any number of adrenalizing activities.

Registration is open at  
[www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) or  
by calling 608-791-5295.

See page 16.



**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](mailto: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:** Freewill offering

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.**

**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. You may wish to share supplies and ideas. 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:** Freewill offering

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](mailto:therese.recovery.resources@gmail.com).

This group is for anyone seeking mental health wellness, connection and hope. We gather weekly to support each other in our 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 or mental health conditions, and experiencing homelessness.





MONTHLY PROGRAMS

OPEN WRITING CIRCLE (IN-PERSON)

MARCH 4, APRIL 1, MAY 6

First Monday of the month, 6-8 p.m. (unless there is a holiday or inclement weather)

**Investment:** Freewill offering

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

This monthly gathering is open to anyone who enjoys writing and wants to meet with others in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance. Based on Natalie Goldberg's basic principles of writing practice, we will write and listen. No critiques, no judgment. Sharing what you write is always optional. This is not a class, and it is not about learning "how to write." The goal is to set free the writer within you through simply practicing writing. No experience is necessary! Bring an open mind,

a fast-writing pen and a plain spiral notebook. If you wish, bring a snack and/or a beverage.



COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

MARCH 6, 20; APRIL 3, 17; MAY 1, 15

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

**Facilitator:** Robert Lynn

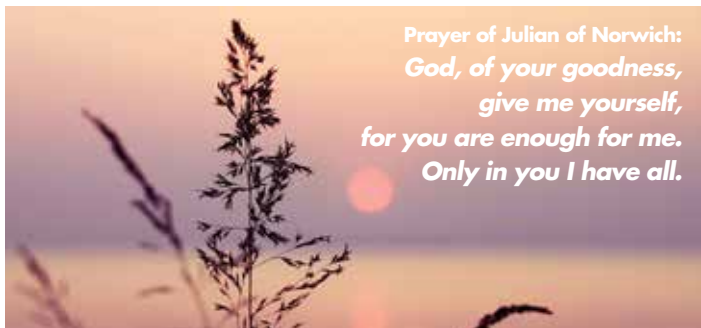
**Investment:** Suggested donation of \$3

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 one's heart 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** holds a Certificate in Theological Studies from Wartburg Seminary with additional studies at Nashotah House. He is a meditating student of Santikaro Upasaka and has been practicing meditation individually and in a variety of group settings for several years.



*Prayer of Julian of Norwich:  
God, of your goodness,  
give me yourself,  
for you are enough for me.  
Only in you I have all.*



MEDITATION FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH (ZOOM)

MARCH 7, APRIL 4, MAY 2

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](http://www.FSCenter.org/donate))

**Registration deadline:** March 4/April 1/April 29

Guided meditation is proven to reduce stress and promote relaxation. All are welcome to join us for a time of rejuvenation. 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 through videoconferencing; 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.



LISTENING TOGETHER:  
A MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP (IN-PERSON)

MARCH 11, APRIL 8, MAY 13

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

**Facilitator:** Laurie Swan

**Investment:** Free

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

This group 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.





## 2024 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### ART AS PRAYER (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

MARCH 18, APRIL 15, MAY 20 • Monday, 6-7:30 p.m.



**Instructor:** Mary Thompson

**Investment:** \$15 per session

**Registration deadline:** March 15/April 12/May 17

**Supplies needed:** Watercolor paints, paper and brushes; pencil, water container and paper towels.

Artistic expression offers the opportunity for spiritual growth, transformation and healing. This monthly open watercolor studio is a chance to play and learn new techniques without worrying about perfection or finished product. Meet new friends and practice listening to your heart as you paint.

Each month will feature a different theme. Please see the program calendar at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) for updates.

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. She has supported the healing of women in recovery through the practice of art therapy and 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.



## PROGRAMS AND RETREATS

### FOUR-WEEK SERIES

#### THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

FEBRUARY 27; MARCH 5, 12, 19 • Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.



**Presenter:** John McHugh

**Investment:** \$10 per session

**Registration deadline:** February 19

For hundreds of years, it has been a tradition in Christian churches to reflect on Jesus' final words from the cross on Good Friday and during the season of Lent. Join biblical scholar John McHugh as he explores those words of Jesus and how they were mirrored in his public ministry, and what they mean for us today. Although the program is meant to be experienced over all four weeks, participants may attend individual sessions.

**John McHugh** is the director of corporate communications, leadership development and training for Kwik Trip, Inc., based in La Crosse. Prior to joining Kwik Trip in 2004, John was an instructor and principal at Aquinas High School in La Crosse. He has degrees from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy.



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

#### SAY YES TO YOU: BREAKING FREE FROM PEOPLE-PLEASING (IN-PERSON)

MARCH 1-2 • Friday, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Maggie Bjorkquist

**Investment:**

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

**Registration deadline:** February 19

This is a sacred retreat specifically for individuals who struggle with people-pleasing behaviors. You will be guided toward authenticity, where spirituality intertwines with self-discovery. Break free from the compulsion to please at the expense of your needs, as we nurture a supportive environment for setting boundaries gracefully. You will begin to understand the mindset of those who derive their sense of worth and love from doing. Through journaling, small-group discussion and reflection, you will learn new tools to re-set thought patterns, say "no" without guilt and untie old belief systems.

Participants will have an opportunity to join a follow-up Zoom series with the presenter at an additional cost. Registration details will be given at the retreat. The virtual series is designed to offer a safe space to reconnect with others who attended the retreat to discuss what is working well and what has been difficult, and to ask questions.

**Maggie Bjorkquist's** spiritual journey centers on universal love. From creating parenting groups to becoming a spiritual director, she transitioned from 50 years in business to entrepreneurship. She developed this retreat after graduating from The Life Coach School and seeks to guide others to live authentically with less effort.

**INTRODUCTION TO WRITING PRACTICE:  
WRITING DOWN THE BONES (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**



**MARCH 2 • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon**

**Presenter:** Cynthea Gillespie

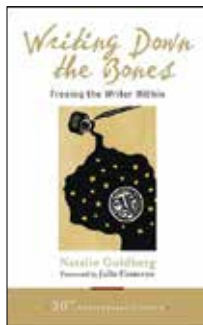
**Investment:** \$35

**Registration deadline:** February 23

In her seminal book, "Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within," author Natalie Goldberg encourages people to trust not only themselves but their first thoughts. The idea, she says, is that first thoughts have tremendous energy. Students learn to capture this marvelous energy by following Goldberg's simple and powerfully effective Rules of Writing Practice. If you are new to writing or simply looking for inspiration to jumpstart writing you have put on hold, this introductory workshop is a safe, judgment-free zone to explore your writing voice. Bring a fast-writing pen (no laptops), spiral notebook or inexpensive writing pad. Although it's not required, participants may want to read Goldberg's "Writing Down the Bones" to familiarize themselves with the structure of Writing Practice, as well as for inspiration, encouragement and personal and spiritual growth.

**Note:** The introduction is prerequisite to the three-week series, Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within (see page 11).

**Cynthea Gillespie** first studied creative writing with author Natalie Goldberg in 1998 at Clouds in Water Zen Center, St. Paul, Minnesota. She has been a professional writer for nearly 30 years and leads a variety of transformational retreats.



**SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT (IN-PERSON)**

**MARCH 3-8 • Sunday, 1 p.m.-Friday, 9 a.m. (after breakfast)**



**Facilitator:** Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Investment:** \$700, includes overnight stay and meals

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$420 to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code SILENT40 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

**Registration deadline:** February 18

Limited to 3 participants.

A silent directed retreat is an invitation to deepen your connection to the Sacred and to yourself through solitude and silence within 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 are always welcome to add additional overnight stays before or after your retreat for an additional \$65 per night.

**Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, is a Good Shepherd Sister and a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.



**SINGING BOWLS MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)**

**MARCH 4, APRIL 8, MAY 2 • 5:30-6:30 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Joan Filla

**Investment:** Suggested donation of \$10 (payable at the door or text FSC to 608-292-2999)

Registration is appreciated but not required.



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. A time for 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 have become an integral part of her healing journey, and she hopes to share these powerful tools with others.

**SIX-WEEK SERIES**

**MOVING THROUGH GRIEF (IN-PERSON)**

**MARCH 7, 14, 21; APRIL 4, 11, 18 • Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon**  
(March 28 is a break week)



**Facilitator:** Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Investment:** \$125

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$50 to anyone who would like financial help to attend. Please enter the code GRIEF60 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

Required book ("The Grief Recovery Handbook") is not included; you can purchase it on your own or at the FSC's Sophia Bookstore.

Adverse circumstances and difficult situations, especially those of great loss or grief, can derail us. It is during such challenging times that we might need assistance in healing. Asking for assistance is a sign of courage and strength. Healing grief takes desire, time and effort, often requiring support. If you are experiencing any type of grief—be it the loss of a person, pet, health or job—we will work together. You will receive encouragement and assistance, but the bulk of the work will be yours. It is important to be patient and compassionate with yourself during the grieving process.

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

**Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, is a Good Shepherd Sister and a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.





## 2024 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### FROM CALL TO RETURN: NAVIGATING YOUR PERSONAL HERO'S JOURNEY (IN-PERSON)

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

**Presenter:** Isaac Mezera



**Investment:**

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

Registration deadline: February 19

It has been almost 75 years since Joseph Campbell published his "Hero with a Thousand Faces." In the book, Campbell outlined the "monomyth," a pattern of storytelling he believed represented the universal human journey of self-discovery. By understanding stories that move us, we can better understand the path of human transformation. You are invited to embark on your own discovery journey. We will explore the stages of the monomyth, meet the archetypal characters who help or hinder us along the way and connect the stories that inspire us to move forward. By the end of the retreat, you will better understand the power and wisdom inherent in stories and see more clearly how your own story is unfolding.

**Isaac Mezera** has been analyzing and reflecting on the power of stories since he first heard about the Hero's Journey early in his teaching career. During the past 20 years, he has led classes on the monomyth to a wide range of ages and backgrounds. He has master's degrees in teaching and rhetoric and composition. He works at Western Technical College to help high school students raise their sights toward college and beyond.



### AGING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE (ZOOM)

**MARCH 9** • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon



**Presenter:** Elizabeth Lewis

**Investment:** \$35

**Registration deadline:** March 4

Open yourself to midlife and beyond as an unprecedented period of growth, fulfillment and inner renewal. We will frame aging as a spiritual practice that can help us to focus on positive aspects of aging that transcend culture, age and time.

Together, we will explore:

- How to let go of aging-related fears
- Practical guidelines and practices for choosing inner peace throughout life
- The role resilience plays in graceful aging
- Creative envisioning
- Redefining purpose
- How to relax, look deeply and let go during the death and dying process

**Elizabeth Lewis** is a certified grief support specialist, grief educator, trauma-sensitive HeartMath provider, stress resilience trainer, spiritual counselor and motivational speaker. She travels extensively in the United States and Italy, presenting talks and workshops on a wide variety of subjects including trauma healing, resilience-building, forgiveness facilitation, mindfulness, healing art and writing. Learn more at [www.elizabeth-lewis-coach.com](http://www.elizabeth-lewis-coach.com).

## REGISTER

**HOW TO REGISTER:** Go online to [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org). Payment for most events is due at the time of registration. To pay a portion now and the balance two weeks prior to 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.

FIVE-WEEK SERIES

**GRIEF CIRCLE (IN-PERSON)**



**MARCH 13, 20, 27; APRIL 3, 10** • Wednesday, choose 10 a.m-noon OR 6-7:30 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Karna Marks, Sarah Hennessey, FSPA and Julie Connelly

**Investment:** \$50

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

**Registration deadline:** March 6

Limited to 7 participants per session.

This group is for those who are 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 are also 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.*



**BOOK DISCUSSION: BRAIDING SWEETGRASS BY AUTHOR ROBIN WALL KIMMERER (ZOOM)**

**MARCH 14** • Thursday, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Staff from the Franciscan Spirituality Center, Marywood Spirituality Center, Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center and FSPA Integral Ecology Office.

**Investment:** \$5 (please purchase book on your own)

**Registration deadline:** March 7

All are welcome to participate in this virtual discussion and reflection. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, author Robin Wall Kimmerer shows how other living beings (asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae and sweetgrass) offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.

This book discussion was initiated in connection with author **Robin Wall Kimmerer's visit to University of Wisconsin-La Crosse**, where she will serve as the keynote speaker for the Environmental Studies Program. This event is open to the public at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 21, at Hesprich Auditorium (260 Graff Main Hall) on UW-L's campus. You will need to reserve a ticket to attend. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Find ticket information here: <https://www.uwlax.edu/calendar/?e=29620>

THREE-WEEK SERIES

**WRITING DOWN THE BONES: FREEING THE WRITER WITHIN (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**

**MARCH 14, 21, 28** • Thursday, 6-8:30 p.m.

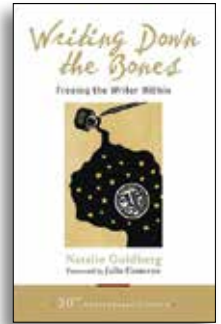


**Presenter:** Cynthea Gillespie

**Investment:** \$55

**Registration deadline:** March 4

**Required text for class:** "Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within" by Natalie Goldberg



Using writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for self-discovery, we return to writing's foundations from Natalie Goldberg's seminal book, "Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within."

In this three-week series, we will use the text to focus on:

- Living in the present moment—writing what is in front of you
- The power of detail
- Honoring our deepest dreams

Each evening session will begin with a simple, 10-minute meditation to quiet our minds, as we prepare to access the deeper aspects of our beautiful, creative selves. A series of timed writing prompts will follow. Bring a fast-writing pen (no laptops), spiral notebook or inexpensive writing pad.

**NOTE:** This series is for writers who have completed the *Introduction to Writing* workshop and are familiar with Natalie Goldberg's Buddhist-inspired Writing Practice.

**EXPLORING INTERFAITH DIALOGUE (IN-PERSON)**

*What My Buddhist Sister Taught Me About My Christian Faith*

**MARCH 16** • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon

**Presenter:** Robert Lynn

**Investment:** \$35

**Registration deadline:** March 4



In this time of ever-increasing awareness of religious pluralism and cultural diversity, interreligious dialogue helps us to better understand the religious perspective of others.

It is also transformative in deepening our understanding of our own religious beliefs. We will explore how selected Buddhist teachings can help us meet the occasional disconnect of Christianity that challenges us in relation to our experience in the world. Come prepared to help shape the discussion.

The works of Paul Knitter, "Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian"; Robert Aitken and David Steindl-Rast, "The Ground We Share"; and Kristin Johnston Lergen, "What Christians Can Learn From Buddhism," will help inform the presentation.

**Robert Lynn** studied extensively at Wartburg Theological Seminary and Nashotah House. He also facilitates Community for Christian Meditation at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. His biological sister, Susan Lynn, held a graduate degree in spiritual studies from St. Mary's University and was a practitioner of Nichiren Buddhism. Robert and Susan were lifelong spiritual friends.



## 2024 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### SPRING LABYRINTH WALK (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 19** • Tuesday, open between 4-7 p.m.  
(Please arrive by 6:30 p.m. to allow enough time for your walk.)



**Facilitator:** FSC staff  
**Investment:** Freewill offering  
Registration is not required but appreciated.  
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. As we enter into the season of spring, people of all faith traditions and spiritual backgrounds are invited to walk our indoor canvas labyrinth. This is a silent, self-guided practice suitable for older teens and adults. If you would like to bring younger children to experience the labyrinth, we ask that you visit between 6:30-7 p.m. A brief instruction is available for those new to the labyrinth.

### WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PREPARATION PROGRAM? (ZOOM)

**MARCH 19** • Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m.



**Presenters:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, and Steve Spilde

**Investment:** Free

**Registration deadline:** March 11

Have you ever considered training to become a spiritual director? Do you seek a transformative experience where you deepen your spirituality in a group of people on a similar journey? If so, the Spiritual Direction Preparation Program (SDPP) may be for you. During this brief, virtual introduction, FSC spiritual directors will describe the program and answer questions. If you have considered training



to be a spiritual director or simply desire to deepen your compassionate listening skills, this is a great opportunity to gather more information as part of your discernment.



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



### REAWAKENING TO THE SPIRIT WITHIN (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 22-23** • Friday, 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Gwen Pickering

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$175, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$105, includes lunch on Saturday

**Registration deadline:** March 11

Everyone says we are born in the image and likeness of the Divine. Yet, we all forget this truth and come to see ourselves as the homemade self we created as children—the self we pretended to be, in order to get our needs met. By the time we are 30, most of what we do is driven by these sorts of unconscious, habitual assumptions. It is as if we were sleep-walking through our own lives. Real spirituality is about waking up—waking up to who we were from the very beginning. During this weekend retreat, you will learn and experience the power of three practices—Deep Gratitude, The 5-Minute Examen and the transformational Welcoming Prayer—to help you reawaken and reclaim the truth about who you really are to know that you are, indeed, made in the image and likeness of your creator.

**Gwen Pickering** is a spiritual director and graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. In addition to maintains a private practice, she is part of the spiritual direction teams of The Benedictine Center and Sacred Ground Center for Spirituality in St. Paul, Minnesota.

### JUSTICE AND PEACE STATIONS OF THE CROSS (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 29** • Friday, 10 a.m.-noon

**Investment:** Free

**Registration deadline:** March 27

Meet at St. Rose Convent on the corner of Market and 9th streets.

This form of the Way of the Cross—recalling the journey of Jesus as he carried his cross to Calvary to be crucified—is a two-mile community prayer walk from the heart of the city to the Mississippi River. We'll stop at 10 stations along the route to sing, pray and reflect on injustices and suffering in our community and the world. Prayer leaders at each station will include people who work at or are otherwise affiliated with those stops. People of all ages and faith backgrounds are invited to participate. The entire event is outdoors, so dress for the weather.

**Please note:** You will have to walk back to the stations' starting point or arrange for a ride back from Riverside Park.



SIX-WEEK SERIES

**SISTER WATER AND THE SULTAN (ZOOM)**



*Exploring Our Spiritual Lives With Francis of Assisi*

**APRIL 3, 10, 17, 24; MAY 1, 8** • Wednesday, 6:30-8 p.m.

**Presenter:** Leonard Desroches

**Investment:** \$72 for the entire series or \$12 per session

**Registration deadline:** March 25 (For individual sessions, register at least two days in advance of each one you plan to attend.)

**APRIL 3:** *Francis*                      **APRIL 24:** *The Sultan and the Saint (film)*

**APRIL 10:** *Love of Earth*            **MAY 1:** *Power, Fear and Anger*

**APRIL 17:** *Love of Enemy*        **MAY 8:** *Perfect Joy*

This virtual series explores the spiritual life through the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi. We'll delve into themes of interconnectedness with nature, simplicity and contemplation, discussing how these timeless principles can enrich our modern-day spirituality. Share your reflections, experiences and thoughts on living out Franciscan values in today's world. Let's come together for an inspiring conversation on the path to a more meaningful and connected spiritual journey.

**Leonard Desroches** has been living in Toronto, Canada, for decades and is a resource person for the practice and spirituality of nonviolence. He is the author of "Allow the Water: Anger, Fear, Power, Work, Sexuality, Community and the Spirituality and Practice of Nonviolence" as well as his more recent book, "Jesus and Mature Love: Reflections on Love of Enemy."

**JOURNEY OF REMEMBRANCE: HONORING SERVICE AND HEALING THROUGH PILGRIMAGE (IN-PERSON)**

**APRIL 7-8** • Sunday, 1-9 p.m. and Monday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Facilitators:** FSC staff and guests

**Investment:** Free

**Registration deadline:** March 25

Service members, veterans and their families are invited on this guided journey that includes a meaningful exploration of experiences, a process of restoration and an opportunity to connect with others. Step onto a path that's safe, sacred and practical, designed to honor your service and offer a dedicated space for reflection and support. As part of the retreat, we'll visit the Highground Veterans Memorial Park in Neillsville, Wisconsin (transportation is included). You'll have the chance to form bonds with fellow participants who share similar stories. Through group activities, shared narratives and supportive conversations, you'll build a network of understanding and camaraderie. Whether you're seeking support, connections or a renewed sense of self, you are welcome to embark on a transformative pilgrimage of renewal and remembrance.



This retreat is a collaborative effort by the Franciscan Spirituality Center, Viterbo University, Tomah VAMC, past and present service members and members of the community. A private room, all meals and transportation will be provided. It is offered free of charge thanks to a generous donation made by a community member.

**SILENT RETREAT (IN-PERSON)**

**APRIL 9-11**

Tuesday, 3 p.m.–Thursday, 2 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Karna Marks and Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Investment:** \$350, includes two nights' stay, all meals and three spiritual direction sessions.

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$210 to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code SILENT40 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

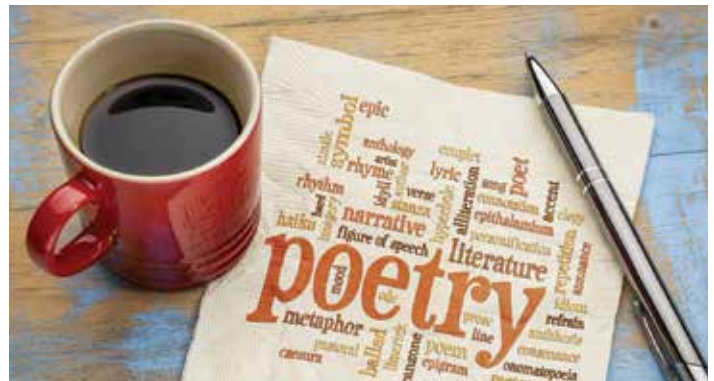
**Registration deadline:** April 2

Limited to 6 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.

Extend your stay for just \$65 per night! Call 608-791-5295.

**Karna Marks** and **Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, are spiritual directors on staff at the FSC.



**POETRY CAFE (ZOOM)**

**APRIL 15** • Monday, 6-8 p.m.



**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Investment:** \$5

**Registration deadline:** April 11

Bring your favorite poetry, either written by you or another author, for a time of sharing and reflection. After introductions and setting the scene, we each will share the poem we have chosen. After some silence, the rest of the group will identify words they really liked in the poem and other thoughts. All poetry lovers are invited to gather for a virtual evening of words and community.

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



## 2024 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### BOOK LAUNCH: FOR LOVE OF THE BROKEN BODY BY JULIA WALSH, FSPA (IN-PERSON)



**APRIL 11** • Thursday, 6-8 p.m.

**Presenter:** Julia Walsh, FSPA

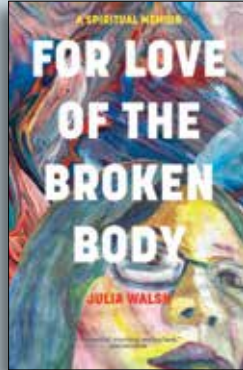
**Investment:** Free—enjoy refreshments and meet the author

**Registration deadline:** April 8

**Note:** Sister Julia will speak and read an excerpt from her book at 7 p.m.

Books will be available to purchase.

At the age of 25, just a month into her novitiate as a Franciscan Sister, Julia Walsh fell from a cliff and became disfigured. While working toward healing, she felt pulled to religious community life but also toward unresolved feelings regarding her own sexuality, identity and injustice. “For Love of the Broken Body” is a story of pain, questioning, recovery and discovery. What does it mean to exist as a broken body? Why would a young woman dedicate herself to the Catholic Church—to a life as a religious sister—while others are leaving churches in droves? The number of women choosing to enter religious life across the U.S. is shrinking rapidly, so Walsh encounters a lot of curiosity about her choice. In this memoir, she writes honestly about feeling drawn to men and to sex, as well as what it means, in this age of self-discovery and hook-ups, for a young woman—physically broken and still very much attracted to the world—to join a celibate, religious community. Readers will be moved to reflect on the universal human experiences of being broken and the pull to be part of something bigger than themselves.



**Julia Walsh** is a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and part of her congregation’s formation team, serving women who are discerning their vocation. She co-founded The Fireplace, an intentional community and house of hospitality on Chicago’s South Side that offers spiritual support to seekers, artists and activists. She has a MA in Pastoral Studies from Catholic Theological Union and is a spiritual director and secondary teacher. Sister Julia’s work can be found in publications such as America, Living Faith Catholic Devotional, National Catholic Reporter, Living City, The Christian Century, Chicago Sun-Times and St. Anthony Messenger. She hosts the Messy Jesus Business blog and podcast.

See page 17 for related retreat information.



### BREATH, BODY, BOWLS (IN-PERSON)

**APRIL 18** • Thursday, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Presenters:** Joan Filla and Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$15

**Registration deadline:** April 11

Join us for the opportunity to integrate conscious breathwork and restorative movements while being bathed in the soothing sounds and vibrations of Tibetan singing bowls. The body is a vessel of all life experiences and personal stories. Movement therapy deepens a person’s quality relationship with their own physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Qigong is a movement therapy that dates back thousands of years and is rooted in ancient Chinese medicine. Qigong brings awareness to the breath, postural alignment and intention to optimize energy flow throughout the body. The sound of Tibetan singing bowls vibrationally harmonize to promote deep relaxation on both sides of the brain.

**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.

**Bernice Olson-Pollack, M.S.**, is a Community Counseling YogaFit-trained instructor, Tai Chi for Health Institute Sun-style tai chi instructor and American Council on Exercise-certified personal trainer. Her accessible teaching style creates a comfortable learning environment for diverse abilities.



### GROUPS THAT MEET AT THE FSC (IN-PERSON)

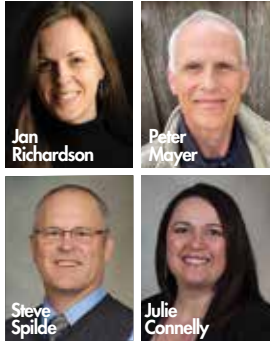
**Saturday Morning Men’s Group** meets to discuss a current book related to spirituality from 9-11 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. For more information, please call Joe Bodnar at 608-461-1836.

**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.



# ONE WORLD LISTENING

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER CONFERENCE



## ONE WORLD LISTENING (IN-PERSON)

**APRIL 19-20** • Friday, 7:30 p.m. concert; Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Keynote speaker:** Jan Richardson (Zoom) Includes concert with Peter Mayer (in-person)

**Facilitators:** Steve Spilde and Julie Connelly (in-person)

**Panelists/Presenters:** Kristy Walz, RaeAnn Thomas, Joan Filla, Walfsty Pierre and Marlene De La Cruz-Guzmán (in-person)

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$210, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$140, includes lunch on Saturday

Registration deadline: April 8

Anyone who is committed to being a better listener—spiritual directors, teachers, clergy, parents, neighbors and friends—is invited to this inaugural FSC conference. Listening can be scary when we are with someone who has a difficult story to tell. We are afraid that we might say the wrong thing. We will look at challenging conversations around issues such as grief, diversity, mental illness and spirituality in the workplace. What can we say? What should we not say? Our keynote presenter on Saturday is writer, poet and artist **Jan Richardson**, who will join us through Zoom and share how listeners can bless those who grieve with helpful messages while avoiding messages that are not helpful. Friday night will feature a social and concert with gifted singer/songwriter **Peter Mayer**, creator of such popular songs as “Holy Now,” “Japanese Bowl” and “All the World is One.” The concert will take place at the Capella Performing Arts Center, La Crosse.

**Kristy Walz** is a results-oriented consultant with more than 20 years of experience working with leaders in varied industries and roles to help them achieve their goals. She helps create change-ready organizations

and helps people find purpose in their work. In addition to her responsibilities with Confluence Consulting, Kristy is a spiritual director and serves as adjunct faculty for campuses within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. At the FSC, Kristy is a board member and a supervisor in the Spiritual Direction Preparation Program.



**RaeAnn Thomas** is the director of Ascension Wisconsin Employee Assistance Program and Consortium Management. She has worked in the mental health and employee assistance field since the mid-1980s and leads a team of 15 counselors. She also is a spiritual director. RaeAnn lives in Central Wisconsin, where the winters have been known to last more than 12 months each year, so she specializes in endurance and optimism.

**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 have become an integral part of her healing journey, and she hopes to share these powerful tools with others.

**Walfsty Pierre, BSW, MSW**, is a dedicated school social worker and outpatient clinical therapist based in La Crosse. Walfsty has extensive practice in working with youth and families in roles of care coordinator, rehabilitative mental health services and case management with a trauma-informed approach to care. Walfsty is also active on many boards and initiatives within the La Crosse community and has presented on topics of celebrating diversity, eliminating stigma and barriers to mental health, microaggressions at schools, collective trauma in the Black community and self-compassion in a pandemic.

**Marlene De La Cruz-Guzmán, Ph.D.**, is the vice president for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Viterbo University. An experienced facilitator with more than 25 years of professional experience in higher education teaching and administration, she has held leadership positions at Ohio University, Marquette University, Towson University, University of Notre Dame, Michigan State University, and Barry University. She is also a faculty member at Viterbo and serves on various community boards in La Crosse, including the FSC’s board.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JUST ATTENDING THE CONCERT, PLEASE CHOOSE THIS OPTION DURING REGISTRATION:

## ONE WORLD LISTENING CONCERT WITH PETER MAYER (IN-PERSON)

**APRIL 19** • Friday, 7:30-9 p.m. (doors open at 7 p.m.)

**Note:** This event takes place at Capella Performing Arts Center, 721 King St., La Crosse, WI 54601

**Investment:** \$35

**Registration deadline:** April 8

Stillwater, Minnesota-based folk musician **Peter Mayer** has been singing and writing songs for more than 20 years. He performs in venues across the United States and beyond, and we’re thrilled to welcome him to La Crosse for this special event. His songs celebrate the mysterious and wondrous fact of our existence. His music has been performed by artists Kathy Mattea, David Wilcox, Claudia Schmidt, Anne Hills, Priscilla Herdman, Darryl Purpose, Billy Jonas, and Ronny Cox, to name a few. His work has been included in songbooks, church hymnals and folk radio playlists across the country. He has 11 albums to his credit and has sold more than 100,000 of them. Learn more at [www.petermayer.net](http://www.petermayer.net).





## 2024 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### MAKING PEACE WITH THE BODY (IN-PERSON)

**APRIL 26-27**  
Friday, 7-9 p.m. and  
Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenter:**  
Laurie Cooper Stoll

**Investment:**

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

**Registration deadline:** April 15

Do you want to improve your relationship with your body in 2024? This workshop is designed to help you reconnect with your body physically and spiritually while developing strategies for maintaining a positive body image throughout your life. We will critically examine common assumptions about wellness and beauty; learn how to make peace with food and exercise using the principles of intuitive eating and Health at Every Size®; practice body gratitude; and develop strategies for challenging diet culture and creating a more inclusive society for all bodies.

**Laurie Cooper Stoll** is a certified body image coach. She received her Ph.D. from Loyola University Chicago in Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies. Her research, teaching and community service focus on understanding and dismantling systems of inequality, including weight stigma and fatphobia. She has published two books and several peer-reviewed articles based on her work. She often collaborates with institutions and organizations to create spaces where all bodies can thrive.

### WORLD LABYRINTH DAY (IN-PERSON)

**MAY 4** • Saturday, open between 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Investment:** Freewill offering at the door or text FSC to 608-292-2999  
Registration is appreciated but not required.

In honor of World Labyrinth Day—an international, annual event founded by The Labyrinth Society to create a rolling wave of peaceful energy—we invite you to walk the FSC's indoor, canvas labyrinth. A labyrinth is a single path that has been used as a walking meditation for prayer and reflection since ancient times. This is a silent, self-guided practice suitable for older teens and adults. For those new to the labyrinth, we'll provide a brief introduction. Plan on at least a half-hour, but you are welcome to spend as much time as you like. If you would like to bring younger children to experience the labyrinth, we ask that you visit between 12:30 and 1 p.m.



### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH GRIT AND GRACE

**MAY 4** • Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.  
(Doors open at 8:30 a.m., and the event begins at 9 a.m.)

**Presenters:** Shannon K. Evans, Jessica Lee Peterson, Niki Bergler and Mary Thompson

**Investment:** \$65, includes continental breakfast and lunch (Coffee, tea and water will be available throughout the day.)

**Registration deadline:** April 28

Extend your stay for just \$65 per night! Call 608-791-5295 for information.

Our annual women's conference features four inspirational women who will share their stories of resilience and faith.



**Shannon K. Evans** of Ames, Iowa, will share her experience of surviving septic shock and the ensuing journey of learning embodied compassion for herself after medical trauma.

**Jessica Lee Peterson** of River Falls, Wisconsin, will share her tale of surviving the tragic loss of her children through the grace and compassion of a trauma-responsive community.



**Niki Bergler** of La Crosse will share her fight to escape memories of an abusive childhood to help create a world worth fighting for. She resides with her devilishly handsome husband and two clingy, outspoken cats.

**Mary Thompson** of Onalaska, Wisconsin, will share her story of finding joy and healing while expressing her voice and inspiration through teaching Art as Prayer at the Franciscan Spirituality Center.



**SEE PAGES 4-5 FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESENTERS**





**WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION? (ZOOM)**

**MAY 8** • Wednesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Presenters:** Karna Marks and Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Investment:** Free



**Registration deadline:** April 29

Spiritual direction is an ancient Christian practice that is being rediscovered in our busy, modern world. During spiritual direction, you are guided to listen carefully to the voice of God in your life. A spiritual director listens with compassion and without judgment as you describe the milestones, detours and questions of your spiritual journey. This brief introduction is an opportunity to learn more about the process and ask questions. Depending on what you hear, you may wish to make an appointment to meet individually with a spiritual director, but there is no obligation.

**Karna Marks** and **Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, are spiritual directors on staff at the FSC.

**MOVING THROUGH GRIEF RETREAT (IN-PERSON)**



**MAY 16-18** • Thursday–Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day

**Presenters:** Cathie Boerboom, RGS, and Kay Kienetz

**Investment:** \$385, includes private bedroom and all meals

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$270 to anyone who would like financial help to attend. Please enter the code MOVING30 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

**Registration deadline:** May 6

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.



This weekend retreat is a concentrated version of the *Moving Through Grief* series we offer. Many of us have experienced losses and grief in our lifetime. If you would like to move through some of your grief, this retreat offers a process and equips you with the skills to help you do so. Your loss may be a partner, parent, child, marriage, pet, health or a job. This is an in-depth weekend including presentations and “homework” you will do privately, as well as small-group sharing that will support you in the processing of your grief. The work you will be doing requires a quiet, private space, which is why overnight accommodations are included. It takes courage and vulnerability to work with one’s grief. We welcome you to do so in this safe, confidential, respect-filled experience. This retreat is not therapy, but please check with your therapist if you have one to make sure this is a good match for you.

**Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, is a Good Shepherd Sister and a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.

**Kay Kienetz** is a spiritual director and recreational therapist in the La Crosse area.



**ZENTANGLE: TANGLED MUSINGS (IN-PERSON)**



**MAY 18** • Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenter:** Christine Isham

**Investment:** \$90, includes lunch and all supplies

**Registration deadline:** May 6

The United States has been observing Mental Health Awareness during the month of May since 1949. Each year, businesses, organizations, schools and individuals dedicate this month to raise awareness of mental health and present innovative ideas, events and programs that support mental health and the prevention and treatment of mental illness. Many individuals who suffer from mental health symptoms have found that creating art has a positive impact on their condition. Even those not suffering from mental illness have found that a regular practice of creating art relieves stress, increases confidence and supports general mental well-being. Together, we’ll explore the Zentangle Project Pack #14 “Tangled Musings,” which includes a journal pre-printed with encouraging words to tangle in. No previous Zentangle or art experience is required.



**The Rev. Christine Isham, PhD**, is a Certified Zentangle Teacher and hospice chaplain in the La Crosse area.

**FOR LOVE OF THE BROKEN BODY RETREAT (IN-PERSON)**

**MAY 31–JUNE 2** • Friday, 7-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.- 8 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m.-noon,

**Optional:** Tour of sites featured in the book from 1-4 p.m. Sunday



**Presenter:** Julia Walsh, FSPA

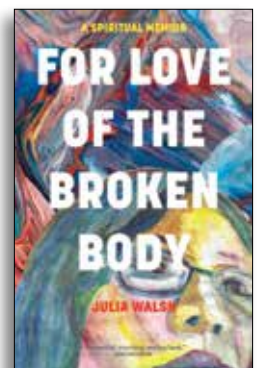
**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$330, includes private bedroom and all meals
- **COMMUTER:** \$236, includes lunch and dinner on Saturday, lunch on Sunday

We are able to offer discounted rates of \$198 and \$141 to anyone who would like financial help to participate. Please enter the code BROKEN40 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

**Registration deadline:** May 20

This retreat is based on author and Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Julia Walsh’s recently published coming-of-age story, “For Love of the Broken Body.” In a Church and society full of brokenness and injustice, we all are members—bodies—who are broken and part of the whole. Join Sister Julia for a weekend of reflection, community and spiritual practices centered on sharing our beautiful brokenness for the sake of the common good. The experience includes an optional tour of FSPA-related sites featured in the book, including the land at Villa St. Joseph.



**See page 14 for book launch information.**



**GOLDEN YOGA (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**

**SESSION 2: FEBRUARY 13, 20, 27; MARCH 5, 12, 19**  
**SESSION 3: MARCH 26; APRIL 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**  
**SESSION 4: MAY 7, 14, 21, 28; JUNE 4, 11**

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

**Instructor:** Amber Moesch

**Investment:** \$50 for each six-week session

**Registration deadline:** February 12/March 25/May 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. You will need a chair for 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.



**QIGONG (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**

**SESSION 2: FEBRUARY 13, 20, 27; MARCH 5, 12, 19**  
**SESSION 3: MARCH 26; APRIL 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**  
**BONUS SESSION: MAY 7, 14, 21**

Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Instructor:** Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$50 for six-week session; \$30 for three-week session

**Registration deadline:** February 12/March 25/May 6

The fundamental principle of qigong (pronounced CHEE-gung) is that everything in the universe is a form of energy, including every cell in our bodies. "Qi" means "energy" and "gong" means "to work with"—so, the mind-body practice of qigong translates to "working with the body's energy." Through the use of simple movements, breathing and meditation, you can experience improved health and wellness. Qigong sustains and improves the health of the immune system, nervous system and internal organs. Stress reduction occurs through the combination of breathing, movement and internal focus.

**Bernice Olson-Pollack, M.S.**, is a Community Counseling YogaFit-trained instructor, Tai Chi for Health Institute Sun-style tai chi instructor and American Council on Exercise-certified personal trainer. Her accessible teaching style creates a comfortable learning environment for diverse abilities.



**SLOW FLOW YOGA (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**

**SESSION 2: FEBRUARY 14, 21, 28; MARCH 6, 13, 20**  
**SESSION 3: MARCH 27; APRIL 3, 10, 17, 24; MAY 1**  
**BONUS SESSION: MAY 8, 15, 22**

Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Instructor:** Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$50 for each six-week session; \$30 for bonus session

**Registration deadline:** February 13/March 26/May 7

A simple definition of the word "yoga" means "to yoke or unite." An intentional and consistent yoga practice promotes a healthier connection between the body, mind and spirit. This union brings forth a greater sense of physical and emotional balance. Slow Flow Yoga is designed to guide the participant steadily from one aligned posture (asana) into another. It is an accessible style of fluid movements that encourages you to calmly focus on your body, to breathe consciously and to remain in the present moment. Meditation at the end of a yoga session can improve mental clarity and concentration, relax the mind and develop a sustainable feeling of calm.



**SLOW FLOW YOGA AND MEDITATION SERIES (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)**

**FEBRUARY 12, 19, 26; MARCH 4, 11, 18**

Monday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

**Instructor:** Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$50 for the series

**Registration deadline:** February 5

A regular Slow Flow Yoga practice in itself relieves stress and tension, strengthens the body and helps to develop more flexibility and stability. When Slow Flow Yoga and the gentle discipline of meditation are integrated together, they pair well to calm the mind, improve mental focus and promote an overall sense of well-being. As participants are in a restful position on the floor, Bernice will provide a 10- to 15-minute guided meditation near the end of each class.





Emmaus



Jacoba 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



Thea 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.

# 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.



# Spiritual Direction Preparation Program

**AN INNOVATIVE,  
THREE-YEAR  
TRAINING PROGRAM**

## **Are you looking to hone your deep, compassionate, nonjudgmental listening skills?**

WE INVITE YOU TO CONSIDER OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PREPARATION PROGRAM (SDPP).

Since 1985, we have trained more than 600 people in the practice of spiritual direction. This innovative training program provides a mix of workshops and real-life experiences to prepare individuals to share their compassionate listening skills as trained spiritual directors in their communities.

The program extends over three years, giving participants an opportunity to integrate theory and practice. While SDPP prepares participants to direct others regardless of their religious affiliation or background, the program has been developed within a tradition that is best described as Christian-Catholic-Franciscan. SDPP is designed to form and train candidates through practical workshops, verbatim, reflections, readings, quarterly meetings and one-on-one supervision.

### **SDPP IS DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO:**

- Are older than 30 and drawn to a deeper understanding of spiritual direction.
- Are preparing for a ministry of spiritual or retreat direction and/or the practice of redemptive listening.
- Would like to deepen spiritual and personal development.
- Have at least one year of experience receiving regular spiritual direction.



### **PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Those seeking admission to SDPP are asked to call 608-791-5295 or email [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto:FSCenter@fspa.org) for an application. Applications will be accepted until June 1, 2024, or until the program fills.

**THE NEXT COHORT STARTS IN SEPTEMBER 2024.  
FIND SCHEDULE AND TUITION DETAILS AT  
[www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org)**



## Franciscan Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

# Registration open for FSC listening conference

Imagine a world where we truly listened to one another.

Listening not to argue or debate, not to validate our own opinions or even to respond.  
But listening to understand. Listening with respect, compassion and curiosity.

Imagine what kind of world we would live in.

We believe listening holds hope for healing our broken world.

Anyone who wants to become a better listener is invited to the Franciscan Spirituality Center's inaugural *One World Listening* in-person conference April 19-20.



This special event features a concert by folk musician Peter Mayer, a keynote address by artist and writer Jan Richardson and a panel of experts in listening. **Details on page 15.**



### COMING THIS SUMMER



#### ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP (IN-PERSON)

JUNE 10 -15 • Presenter: Phil Zimmerman

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

JUNE 20-23 • Presenter: Heather Henry

#### HOLDING SPACE FOR HEALING AND RENEWAL (IN-PERSON)

AUGUST 23-24 • Presenter: Diane M. Millis

Follow us on :     

Visit [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) for links to our  
What is Spirituality? podcast episodes.