



**Franciscan  
Spirituality Center**

*Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.*

VOLUME 28 • NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

# *At the Center*

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Self-Compassion:  
Learn to Be Kinder to Yourself
- Being Franciscan Right Where You Are
- The Christmas Story in the Gospel of Luke
- Longest Night:  
An Evening of Prayer and Reflection
- Rising Strong for Spiritual Directors
- Winter's Rest

# Gifts for Goodness

A popular social media post from a few years ago made us think about those things we take for granted but are out of reach for others: a roof over our heads, enough to eat, good mental health, a safe place to sleep. It is that time of year when we remember the many reasons we have for feeling thankful.

We could just stop there with our gratitude to a gracious Creator, but why not let it inspire you to spread the goodness with a gift? This year, especially, the world could use it.

Your gifting could take the form of acts of kindness, practicing forgiveness or offering encouragement. We also would like to suggest supporting the Franciscan Spirituality Center with a holiday gift. The FSC contributes to goodness in the world:

- through its work for justice and peace
- by offering and teaching nonjudgmental and compassionate listening
- by bringing people together in programs that encourage spiritual growth and offer healing and wholeness.

This year, you may benefit from some tax law changes when you make charitable gifts to the FSC or other nonprofits. If you take the standard deduction and do not itemize, you can claim cash donations of up to \$300 per

taxpayer or \$600 for a married couple, reducing your taxable income. If you do itemize deductions, you may now claim the full amount of the deduction (up from 60% of adjusted gross income). Check with your tax adviser about your own situation.

Either way, you have the option of remembering someone special to you at this time of year. You can honor someone by making the donation in their name, or remember someone dear to you who has died. Their names will appear in our annual report for 2021, and, if you wish, we will send a letter to the person you are honoring.

This holiday season, our hearts are full of gratitude for all who have supported our mission with prayers, kind words of support and financial gifts. Thank you!

We've made it easier than ever to donate to the FSC.

You can still mail us a check or make a secure gift online at [www.FSCenter.org/donate](http://www.FSCenter.org/donate).





# We're on the move!



If you happened to read our last newsletter, you saw the headline *We're taking steps to reopen!* on this page. Well ... yes and no. Yes, we are reopening after the COVID-19 shutdown, but it will be in a new temporary location at **River Crossing Square**, at the corner of King and Second streets in La Crosse.

This move is necessary because remodeling of our permanent location is about to begin! The contractors have finished remodeling the west side of St. Rose Convent, and now they are moving the project toward the east wing, where the FSC is housed.

When the work is finished next summer, we will have a 21st century spirituality center housed within our beautiful, historic building. The new FSC will have increased accessibility for people of all abilities, additional guest bedrooms (all with private baths), expanded space for programs and meetings on two floors, updated technology and a new guest library. Our guests can seek inspiration and healing in the enhanced, private courtyard.

In the meantime, at our temporary location, we will have space for smaller programs and for individuals to meet with their spiritual director (as current health guidelines permit). Staff will have office space, and there will be a smaller version of our Sophia Bookstore. Our phone number will remain the same: 608-791-5295.

As you'll see in this newsletter, we are still offering most of our programs virtually. This gives people more options for participation. We're finding people appreciate the convenience (and safety) of logging in from home, and people have joined our programs from all over the country. But on occasion we will be able to meet face-to-face.

While a move is never easy, we are excited that our new temporary location at **500 Second St. S., Suite 201**, will make it easier to connect with the people we serve. This move also signals that we're very close to completing the St. Rose renovation project. In just a few short months, we hope to celebrate that event with you in our "new" spirituality center.

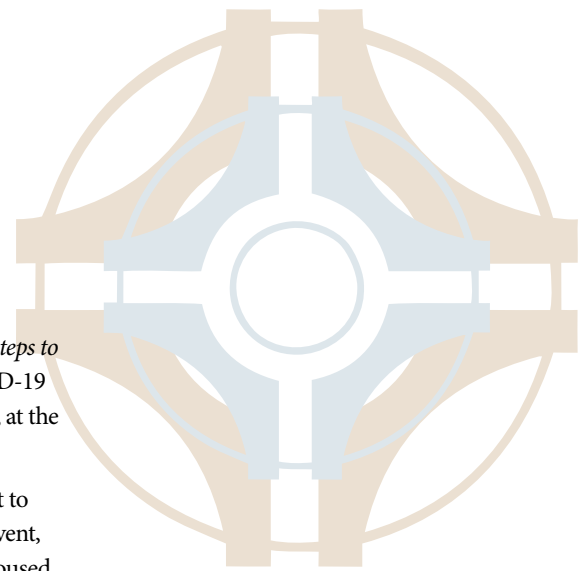
Peace and all good,

*Audrey Lucier*

Audrey Lucier, FSC Director



FSC temporary home on the corner of Second and King streets:  
500 Second St. S., Suite 201



## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER STAFF & ASSOCIATES



Steve Spilde  
Associate Director &  
Spiritual Director



Rose Elsbernd, FSPA  
Spiritual Director



Deb Hansen  
Spiritual Director



Sarah Hennessey, FSPA  
Spiritual Director



Jean Pagliaro  
Program & Retreat  
Coordinator



Stacey Kalas  
Communications &  
Marketing Coordinator



Laurie Swan  
Office Manager



Kathy Holman  
Administrative Assistant  
& Receptionist



Vince Hatt  
Associate Spiritual Director



John McHugh  
Associate Presenter



Bernice Olson-Pollack  
Associate Presenter



Tom Roberts  
Associate Presenter

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH

# Grit & Grace

Our annual women's conference celebrating resilience and faith will be presented in a virtual format. Though we won't be able to provide lunch and snacks, we invite you to brew a cup or two of your favorite tea to sip as you listen to these inspirational women share their stories. (This time of year is typically when we would have our annual tea party event, but we're adjusting as needed.)

Our keynote speaker will be **Kao Kalia Yang**, a Hmong-American writer, teacher and public speaker based in Minneapolis.

Kalia will reflect on her spiritual journey into writing. She comes from a people who are new to what is written; a long time ago, the Hun Chinese outlawed the Hmong written language. The women and girls tried to hide it in their clothing. Hmong women are celebrated the world over for their embroidery, but few know it was once a vessel for their stories, histories and lived experiences.

Kalia's talk will address the questions: What does it mean to reclaim something that is no more, in an entirely new language, in a new land? and How does her own journey help situate herself in the pains and sorrows of others, and speak to their fears and faith?

## ABOUT OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### KAO KALIA YANG • MINNEAPOLIS

Born in the refugee camps of Thailand to a family that escaped the genocide of the Secret War in Laos, she came to America at the age of 6. She has earned degrees from Carleton College and Columbia University, and is the award-winning author of *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* (Coffee House Press, 2008) and *The Song Poet* (Metropolitan Books, 2016), which has been adapted into an opera by the Minnesota Opera and will have its premiere in spring 2021. She recently debuted her first children's book, *A Map Into the World* (Carolrhoda Books), and a co-edited collection titled *What*

*God is Honored Here?: Writings on Miscarriage and Infant Loss By and For Indigenous Women and Women of Color* (University of Minnesota Press).

Her second children's book, *The Shared Room* (University of Minnesota Press), and a collective memoir about refugee lives, *Somewhere in the Unknown World* (Metropolitan Books), were published in 2020.

*"My grandmother Youa Lee used to say, 'Surrounded by wisdom, without the experience, you won't know how to use it.'*

*At 39—17 years after her passing—I'm only learning still of the depths of the words she left behind, the model of living she so generously shared, and the love that remains ... even when someone is gone."*



THIS EVENT IS  
SPONSORED BY:

**GUNDERSEN** AND  
HEALTH SYSTEM.





## ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS



### LISA MCCORMICK • TOMAH

As the parent of a sex trafficking victim, Lisa has made it her life's purpose to share her family's story so others understand the dangers of trafficking and how easily our vulnerable children can get caught up in it. Lisa's son, Jeffrey, was recruited into a sex trafficking ring out of Madison and exploited until his death, at age 17, in September 2016. Her faith and her desire to spare

other families the tragic consequences of trafficking, drug addiction and bullying put her on the path of advocacy. She frequently speaks to schools, churches and other groups on how to recognize and help at-risk youth. She is a member of the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Advisory Council and is featured in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families documentary film about youth sex trafficking in Wisconsin. Lisa walks alongside parents, grandparents, caregivers and all others, giving hope that they are not alone in this journey.

*"Since I began this journey of educating others on the topic of sex trafficking, I have realized that many people think it is not important to learn about something until it directly affects them. So many of us today just think that human trafficking does not happen in this area, so why worry about it. Well, I am here to tell you that it is happening here and it is happening to our youth—our future. My journey through my son's drug addiction, running away, sex trafficking and death has taken me through some of the roughest storms that a person should endure and all the while testing my faith. Trusting in a God that could take away my son, yet also give me the hope and strength to continue fighting for him and others like him, is the fuel that keeps me going. Together, each one of us can touch a life with our knowledge and experiences. Today, I hope to be a small part of that."*

### CAROLYN BOSTRACK • LA CROSSE AREA

Carolyn is a fierce mother of three, corporate leader, author (*F.I.E.R.C.E.: Transform Your Life in the*

*Face of Adversity, 5 Minutes at a Time!*), motivational speaker and life and business strategist. Carolyn's life story is one of personal and professional transformation.

Carolyn has gone from standing in line at the Salvation Army to earning her doctorate. Her life's purpose is to provide hope and inspire people to move from fear into focus. As she writes on her website "While my past has a permanent stamp on my life, it doesn't define me. My past trauma and abuse has positioned me to develop and leverage my grit so that I can serve other women who want to transform their lives, too."



*"We can only ask ourselves to be better than we were the day before. The next five minutes are a new five minutes that belong to no one else but you."*



### SARAH JOHNSON • WINONA

Sarah is a licensed professional counselor and has more than 25 years of experience working in the prevention, youth development and counseling fields. She is the mental health director at the La Crosse Area Family YMCA and will be speaking as a human being who happens to be a mental health professional. Incorporating some mindfulness practices into her talk, Sarah will share about what led her to integrate mindfulness into her professional and personal life and the profound impact it has had on her quality of life.

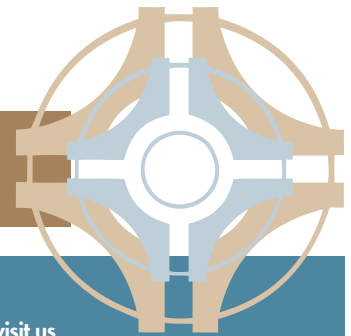
*"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to come together with others to talk about what it means to be a human in this beautiful and sometimes awful world of ours. I'm excited to share the story of my journey through tough stuff that has helped me to be more mindful, accepting and flexible—and ultimately happier."*

NEW DATE • NEW FORMAT

**JANUARY 16** • Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

through Zoom videoconferencing • Investment: \$50

Register online at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) or call 608-791-5295



## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

For your health, safety and peace of mind, we offer most of our programs through Zoom videoconferencing. You can visit us in person to make payments, meet with spiritual directors and browse the Sophia Bookstore in our new, temporary site at River Crossing Square, corner of King and Second streets in La Crosse (500 Second St. S., Suite 201). If you have questions, please call 608-791-5295 or email [FSCenter@fspa.org](mailto:FSCenter@fspa.org).

### MEDITATION FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH (VIA ZOOM)

**NOVEMBER 5 and DECEMBER 3** • Thursday, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Investment:** Freewill donations are appreciated at [www.FSCenter.org/donate](http://www.FSCenter.org/donate)

**Registration deadline:** November 4/December 2

Guided meditation is proven to reduce stress and



promote relaxation. Join us for a time of rejuvenation through videoconferencing. We'll start with a guided meditation that includes relaxed breathing, a body scan and a visualization. Afterward, we will have a brief discussion. Gatherings are on the first Thursday of the month, and you are invited to attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits. All are welcome.



### FSC BOOK GROUP: THE WISDOM PATTERN: ORDER, DISORDER, REORDER (VIA ZOOM)

**NOVEMBER 9** • Monday, 6:30-8 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Rose Elsbernd, FSPA

**Investment:** \$5 • Participants will need to purchase their own copy of the book *The Wisdom Pattern: Order, Disorder, Reorder* by Richard Rohr, OFM

**Registration deadline:** November 8



A universal pattern can be found in all societies and, in fact, in all of creation. We see it in the seasons of the year; the stories of Scripture; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; the rise and fall of civilizations; and even in our own lives. In this new version of one of his earlier books, Richard Rohr, OFM, illuminates the way understanding and embracing this pattern can give us hope in difficult times and the courage to push through messiness and even great chaos to find a new way of being in the world.



### A SHELTERED DAY OF SOLITUDE (VIA ZOOM)

**NOVEMBER 11 and DECEMBER 15**

Wednesday or Tuesday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Deb Hansen

**Investment:** \$25, includes optional spiritual direction session

**Registration deadline:** November 10/December 14

*A Sheltered Day of Solitude* gives you the gift of connecting to the Sacred, creation and others who are spending an intentional day of solitary reflection. We will begin our day by meeting together on Zoom for an opening blessing and suggestions for reflecting on the month's theme [November: *Abundance of Enough*; December: *Advent*]. You may choose to have an optional remote spiritual direction session during your day. To bring the day to a close, we will gather together once again on Zoom to reflect on our day and share a closing blessing. Reflections on the month's theme are sent with the Zoom link to provide a framework for the day. If you are not able to find complete solitude for the day, we recommend you create as peaceful of an environment as you can under your individual circumstances.

### SELF-COMPASSION: LEARN TO BE KINDER TO YOURSELF (VIA ZOOM)

**NOVEMBER 14** • 9 a.m.-noon

**Facilitator:** Elizabeth Lewis

**Investment:** \$20

**Registration deadline:** November 12

When we feel compassion for others, we feel kindness toward them, empathy and a desire to help reduce their suffering. It's the same when we turn compassion toward ourselves. Self-compassion means offering kindness and understanding to yourself during difficult times, when you make mistakes or notice something you don't like about yourself, rather than judging yourself harshly. It means realizing that suffering, failure and imperfection are part of the shared human experience. Self-compassion is not self-indulgence; it is self-care, confirmed by research as the cornerstone of emotional health and healing. In this virtual workshop, you will learn practices for cultivating self-compassion, such as affectionate breathing; compassionate body scan; loving-kindness meditation; soften, soothe, allow; and more.

**Elizabeth Lewis** is a spiritual coach, motivational speaker, writer, artist and teacher.



We are always adding new online experiences.  
Be sure to check our website, [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org), and Facebook page @FSCenterLaCrosse for updates.



**ART AS PRAYER (VIA ZOOM)****NOVEMBER 16 and DECEMBER 21 • Monday, 6-7:30 p.m.****Instructor:** Mary Thompson**Investment:** \$10 per session**Registration deadline:** November 15/December 20

Artistic expression offers the opportunity for spiritual growth, transformation and healing. This monthly open watercolor studio offered through Zoom videoconferencing 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. No art experience is necessary, but you will need watercolor paints, brushes and paper, plus a kneaded eraser.

*Art as Prayer* meets monthly; you are welcome to attend any or all sessions as your schedule permits. Here are the themes:



**NOVEMBER:** Fall is a season for balancing light and dark, letting go and accepting the impermanence of things. As we watch leaves gently fall to the ground, we are reminded that fall is a time for letting go and releasing burdens that have been weighing us down. It is the time to practice getting out of the way and letting Spirit take hold in our lives. This month's practice will incorporate the spirit of letting go and acceptance of unexpected images that will

appear on your paper. Using the timeless tradition of printing, we will paint and print with the leaves we have collected and dried. Our focus will be on exploring complementary colors and intuitive use of shapes to create a harmonious piece.

**DECEMBER:** This session will be about honoring the memories of our mothers, grandmothers or a special aunt; Mother Earth deserves some praise as well. During this month of quiet reflection, we will offer our gratitude by saying "thank you" for the lovely memories of Christmas celebrations and warm holiday traditions. Together, we will utter blessings and express appreciation for all that has brought us together on this day; by blessing, we are blessed. We will use watercolor to paint a Christmas ornament that has special meaning to you. I used my Grandma Hope's round red and white striped glass ball to practice painting shadows. Round shapes are good for practicing shadow work, so keep that in mind when you're digging out your treasures.



**Mary Thompson** has a degree in fine arts and a master's degree in education. She has 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.

**BODY | MOVEMENT CLASSES****GOLDEN YOGA (VIA ZOOM)****SESSION 2: OCTOBER 20, 27; NOVEMBER 3, 10, 17, 24****MINI SESSION: DECEMBER 1, 8, 15, 22**

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

**Instructor:** Amber Moesch

**Investment:** \$50 for six-week session or \$10 per class  
\$40 for the mini sessions or \$10 per class

**Registration deadline:** October 19/November 30

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 demonstrated through Zoom videoconferencing. Participants will need a chair to offer modifications and balance support. The last 15 minutes of each class will include stretching exercises and conversation (over Zoom) to help foster a sense of community.

**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.

**VINYASA YOGA (VIA ZOOM)****SESSION 2: OCTOBER 21, 28; NOVEMBER 4, 11, 18, 25****MINI SESSION: DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23**

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

**Instructor:** Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$50 for six-week session or \$10 per class  
\$40 for the mini sessions or \$10 per class

**Registration deadline:** October 20/December 1

Vinyasa flow is a moving meditation that guides you toward a sense of calm and links poses together with smooth sequencing. This practice also promotes the integration of breathing mindfully with the postures to deepen the relationship with your internal Self.

**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. She has a harmonious blend of mind/body, health and wellness experience that she shares with her participants. Her accessible teaching style creates a comfortable learning environment for diverse abilities. She encourages all to discover their own path toward a healthier way of living.





## 2020 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT (VIA ZOOM)

**NOVEMBER 16-20** • Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. start time



**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Investment:** \$200, includes five virtual spiritual direction sessions

**Registration deadline:** November 13

**Limited to 4 people.**

Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, is a trained spiritual director on staff at the FSC. She can provide spiritual direction to fit your own needs and interests for a silent directed retreat. She also provides an Ignatian-style retreat that uses Scripture and other sources to focus on the love of God and personal discernment.

During this virtual retreat, you can retreat in your own space and connect daily through Zoom videoconferencing for listening, guidance and suggestions for your prayer practice. Five sessions of virtual spiritual direction are included.



### RISING STRONG FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS (VIA ZOOM)

*A continuing-education event for spiritual directors based on the research of Brenè Brown*

**Choose NOVEMBER 19-21 or DECEMBER 3-5**

Thursday and Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.;

Saturday, 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m.

**Presenters:** Steve Spilde and Deb Hansen

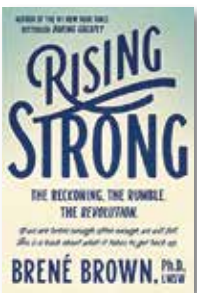
**Investment:** \$100

**Registration deadline:** November 15/November 30

**Limited to 13 participants each weekend.**



Millions of people worldwide have been touched by the work and books of research professor and author Brenè Brown. Her pattern of the Reckoning, the Rumble and the Revolution as outlined in her book *Rising Strong* is a helpful template for the work we do with many of our directees in spiritual direction. We will look at the power of shame and the fear of vulnerability. Understanding these powerful forces will add great insight to our work as spiritual directors.



### WINTER'S REST (VIA ZOOM)

**DECEMBER 1, JANUARY 5, FEBRUARY 2, MARCH 2**

Tuesday, 1-2 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Deb Hansen

**Investment:** \$25 for entire series

**Registration deadline:** November 30

Winter's darkness and cold can be dreary and depressing. But what if we befriended the darkness and slowness this season offers? What if we saw this season as an invitation to wait, rest and grow in contemplation? Each month of this three-part series will offer reflections and practices that invite us to slow down, rest and then look for stirrings of new life. We will begin each month with a Zoom videoconferencing gathering that introduces the month's practice. (Sessions will be recorded if you are unable to attend "live.") Each week, you will receive an email with reflection materials as well as simple practices that can foster a more contemplative season of life.



#### THEMES AND DATES FOR THE ZOOM GATHERINGS:

**December's theme: *Entering Into a Season of Rest***

Tuesday, December 1, 1-2 p.m.

**January's theme: *Winter's Rest*** • Tuesday, January 5, 1-2 p.m.

**February's theme: *Stirrings of New Life*** • Tuesday, February 2, 1-2 p.m.

**March's concluding session: *How Are We Awakening?***

Tuesday, March 2, 1-2 p.m.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

We are excited to bring back **Sharon Lukert** as a presenter. Sharon has been a practicing Tibetan Buddhist studying under Pema Chödrön for more than 25 years. Through Zoom videoconferencing, she will offer **TONGLEN: DEVELOPING COMPASSION DURING DIFFICULT TIMES** on **January 23** (Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon).

Tonglen, which translates from Tibetan as "giving and receiving," is a meditation practice of breathing in suffering and breathing out loving-kindness. This retreat will introduce you to the foundations of the practice and provide guided meditation periods, discussion, time for questions and extensive resources to prepare you to practice this ancient tradition with understanding and confidence. **Investment is \$20, and registration details are online at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org).**



### GROUPS THAT MEET AT THE FSC

**Depressed Anonymous** continues to meet every Monday, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., by conference call. 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 in this free meeting, please call Gayle at 608-406-7990.

**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 via Zoom videoconferencing from 7-9 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. To see whether the group meets your needs, contact Vince Hatt via email at [vjhatt@gmail.com](mailto:vjhatt@gmail.com). Registration is requested at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org).



**BEING FRANCISCAN RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE (VIA ZOOM)****DECEMBER 10** • Thursday, 6:30-8 p.m.**Facilitators:** Beth Allen and Sarah Hennessey, FSPA**Investment:** Free**Registration deadline:** December 9

How do we live out universal Franciscan values in practical and tangible ways? We will explore a values-based approach to life and discuss Franciscan pathways that can connect us to the modern-day mission and community of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual

Adoration. Join us for a rich discussion via Zoom videoconferencing.

**Beth Allen** has served as the director of affiliation for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration since 2018. Her educational and ministry background includes grief counseling, hospital

chaplaincy and bereavement services. As an affiliate of FSPA for the past 15 years, she is excited to collaborate more with the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

**Sarah Hennessey** is a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and a spiritual director on staff at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. Previously, she served as the adoration coordinator for the FSPA.

**SHELTERED-AT-HOME SILENT DIRECTED WEEKEND****ADVENT: AN INVITATION TO STILLNESS (VIA ZOOM)****DECEMBER 11-13**

Friday, 3 p.m.–Sunday, noon

**Facilitator:** Deb Hansen**Investment:** \$120**Registration deadline:** December 7**Limited to 5 participants.**

Each day, we will reflect together on the weekend's invitation to stillness. You are then invited to set aside time and space in your own home where you can enter into silence, solitude and personal reflection with the day's readings and suggested practices. Daily spiritual direction sessions through videoconferencing will provide a time for you to share what is personally unfolding within you with a compassionate listener.

The next silent directed weekend will be offered February 19-21, with a theme of *Lent: An Invitation to Being Loved*.

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (IN-PERSON AND VIA ZOOM)****DECEMBER 15** • Tuesday, 7-8 p.m.**Presenter:** John McHugh**Investment:** \$10**Registration deadline:** December 14

**A limited number of seats will be available to attend this program** in-person at the FSC's temporary home at River Crossing Square, King and Second streets. Participants alternatively may choose to attend via Zoom videoconferencing. Please indicate your preference at registration.

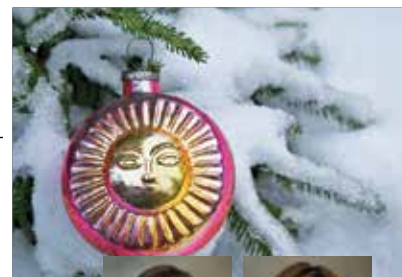
Many of us are familiar with the story of Jesus' birth in the Gospel of Luke. The actual text is even quoted line for line by Linus at the end of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Even though we have heard the story dozens of times, there are many details that are often overlooked that bring much deeper appreciation and meaning. Join biblical scholar John McHugh as he explores those details and what they mean for us today.



**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 earned degrees from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. John serves on the boards of Trust Point, National Mutual Benefit Society, Viterbo University and Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse.

**LONGEST NIGHT: AN EVENING OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION (VIA ZOOM)****DECEMBER 21** • Monday, 6:30-8 p.m.**Facilitators:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, and Jean Pagliaro**Investment:** Freewill donations are appreciated at [www.FSCenter.org/donate](http://www.FSCenter.org/donate)**Registration deadline:** December 20

The Winter Solstice is the longest night, and as the world is full of people proclaiming joy and light we pause to remember the darkness, grief and the sadness we hold in our hearts during this season. Through prayer and conversation through videoconferencing, we will embrace the longest night and remember that all of our feelings and memories are OK to have during this time.

**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 at the time of the event, please register by phone at 608-791-5295.

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

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

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

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION PREPARATION PROGRAM

# goes virtual

COMMENTS SHARED ON ZOOM'S  
CHAT FUNCTION DURING ONE OF  
THE SESSIONS:

"Getting to know people on Zoom is better than expected. Grateful everyone was willing to share. Safe place. Yay!"

"Great opportunity to honor the stories of others and to honor my own story."

"I am enjoying the small groups so much. The folks I have met go from being 'little boxes on the screen' to real, live, wonderful people!"

"It has been so beautiful to get to know one another in small groups. I am awed by the vulnerability. Thank you."

"I love, love, love it! I can feel the bonding beginning!"

"I'll take a piece of each of you away with me. Thank you for that."

"Love that everyone is so open, and the conversations have been warm and insightful."

"Really enjoying getting to know everyone in the group and seeing how important listening is :)."



### SDPP 16 PARTICIPANTS:

Mary Anderson, Medford, WI  
Joan Brincks, PBVM, Dubuque, IA  
Robert Caldwell, Viroqua, WI  
Susanna Cantu Gregory, Dubuque, IA  
Marianne Cotter, Baraboo, WI  
Anne Dreblow, Fridley, MN  
Barbara Hayden, Sabula, IA  
June Hershberger, Homestead, IA  
Marcia Huijens, Green Bay, WI  
Cathy Jordan, Des Moines, IA  
Shaun Kleitsch, Stoughton, WI  
Mary Fran McClimon, Waukon, IA  
Amy Mulhern, Fountain, MN  
Patty Nittleman, Trempealeau, WI

Julie Paladino, Waverly, IA  
Connie Palm, Dubuque, IA  
Tom Primmer, Ankeny, IA  
Margie Rauen, Marathon, WI  
Dawn Schweizer, Decorah, IA  
Brian Singer-Towns, Winona, MN  
Steve Smart, Waukesha, WI  
Joan Stevenson, Big Bend, WI  
Tim Sullivan, Harlan, IA  
Adonna Swart, Appleton, WI  
Kate Tyler, Cedar Rapids, IA  
Heather Watts, Cross Plains, WI  
Gerianne Wettstein, Onalaska, WI  
Charlotte Willenberg, Harlan, IA

When the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration founded the Franciscan Spirituality Center 35 years ago, they knew the importance of spiritual direction and the need to train compassionate listeners who could journey with others looking to deepen their relationship with the Divine and grow spiritually. Since that inception, the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program has trained and graduated hundreds of people into this important ministry. When COVID-19 threatened the ability to safely gather the new cohort for their opening weekend in September, FSC spiritual directors Steve Spilde, Deb Hansen, Rose Elsbernd, FSPA, Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, and adjunct staff Marcia Bentley worked overtime to figure out how to bring everyone (and the myriad components of this program) together through videoconferencing. With patience, creativity and a little help from our network of SDPP supervisors, this group is off to a great start. Way to go, SDPP Class 16!

### HERE IS DEB HANSEN'S REFLECTION ON THE WEEKEND:

Even under normal circumstances, SDPP is not for sissies, as it requires three years of intense and dedicated commitment to work and vulnerable openness. The times we are in certainly are not normal. The SDPP core team realized early on that our new cohort—SDPP 16—would need to begin via Zoom videoconferencing. After our first weekend together (September 12-14), we were so blessed by the 28 people who represent SDPP Class 16. They are flexible, courageous and grace-filled. They laughed, cried and connected by way of technology – and in spite of technology. They introduced themselves to each other Friday night with candor, passion and the inevitable questions of not being sure why they are doing this. When Zoom decided the small breakout groups should last one minute only rather than 15, these participants took it in stride. I can't imagine a better group of people with whom to spend the next three years. Welcome and blessings, SDPP 16!



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



### Franciscan Spirituality Center

920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601

608-791-5295

FSCenter@fspa.org • www.FSCenter.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.

## Welcome, Kathy!

Please help us welcome **Kathy Holman** to our staff. Kathy is the cheerful voice on the other end of the phone when you call our office. She started her role as the FSC administrative assistant and receptionist on August 31, 2020. Starting a new job in the midst of a global pandemic while your workplace is temporarily closed to the public is no easy task, but Kathy has settled in with humor, grace and flexibility. She is friendly, helpful and willing to jump right in wherever needed. Despite the challenging circumstances, the rest of our staff (many of whom are working remotely) have gotten to know her through Zoom and physically distanced visits to the office. She's a great addition to the team!

Kathy earned a bachelor's degree in hospitality management from UW-Stout and developed her customer service experience through food service management, human resources and quality service certification through the Disney Institute.

"I look forward to effectively supporting the mission of the FSC team," Kathy said. "There are many adjustments and new opportunities ahead. I am excited to be a part of this adventure."

Kathy also said she believes we can find peace when we treat each other with dignity, compassion and love. She finds solitude within the Catholic faith and enjoys creating a home with her husband, Tim, and their two rambunctious Labrador retrievers, Grace and Zella.



## Have you checked out our podcast yet?

FSC spiritual director Steve Spilde is guided by many questions in life. One of his favorites is: "What is spirituality?" In our new podcast series, he introduces some of the spiritual mentors in his life as they reflect on this question and share what they have discovered on their own personal journeys. So far, we've heard from Mary Kathryn Fogarty, FSPA; Jolynn Brehm, FSPA; Vince Hatt, Barb Kruse, Linda Kerrigan and Father John Heagle. More episodes are in the works! Visit our website, [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org), for a link to the podcast (<https://www.fsccenter.org/content/programs-retreats/podcast-what-is-spirituality>) and enjoy great conversation and spiritual wisdom.



### PEACEFUL HERMITAGE EXPERIENCE



Late fall is a lovely time to stay in one of our three hermitages set on the edge of woodland in scenic St. Joseph's Ridge. Book your stay before we close for the winter. These cozy cabins offer modern conveniences as well as peace and quiet. Enjoy nature hikes and solitude for reflection and prayer. Call 608-791-5295 or visit [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) to learn more. Hermitages may be reserved for single occupancy during weekends for \$60 per night.

## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER Board of Directors

**Jane Comeau**, Chairperson  
**Lyell Montgomery**, Vice Chairperson  
**Joan Weisenbeck**, FSPA, Secretary/Treasurer  
**Lucy Slinger**, FSPA, FSPA Liaison

Emilio Alvarez  
Annie Berendes  
Sharon Berger, FSPA  
Patricia Boge  
Teresa Clark  
Dan Henderson

Mike Hesch  
Jeffrey Lokken  
Karen Lueck, FSPA  
Glena Temple  
Mark Thorn  
Kristy Walz





## Franciscan Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601



Candace Bahr



Melissa Fannin



Nancy  
Herrens-Knudson



## Art Dash tickets make great Christmas presents

Limited tickets are still available for our signature fundraiser, scheduled Thursday, March 25, 2021, at The Cargill Room at The Waterfront Restaurant and Tavern. Don't miss out on this evening of food, fun and fine art! Your \$100 ticket guarantees you a piece of original art from a local or regional artist, but which piece depends on how fast you can "dash" to it. Each year, this event gets bigger and better. This time around, you can choose from 90 pieces of art. We'll also have delicious appetizers, caricatures and a wine pull to add to the experience. Details and pictures of the available art are at [www.FSCenter/artdash](http://www.FSCenter/artdash).

**Note: This event was rescheduled because of COVID-19; previously purchased tickets will be honored.**



Joy Davis Ripley



Linda Lewis



Dani McAlister

### COMING IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY



#### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH GRIT AND GRACE (VIA ZOOM)

**January 16** • with Kao Kalia Yang,  
Lisa McCormick, Sarah Johnson and  
Carolyn Bostrack

#### TONGLEN: DEVELOPING COMPASSION DURING DIFFICULT TIMES (VIA ZOOM)

**January 23** • with Sharon Lukert

#### SHELTERED-AT-HOME SILENT DIRECTED WEEKEND: LENT: AN INVITATION TO BEING LOVED (VIA ZOOM)

**February 19-21** • with Deb Hansen

Follow us on :



The Franciscan Spirituality Center is a sponsored ministry of  
the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

CURRENT OFFICE HOURS for the Franciscan Spirituality Center are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Phone and email messages left after 3 p.m. will be answered the next business day. Thank you for your patience and continued support. Peace and all good!