



Franciscan  
Spirituality Center

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

VOLUME 34 • NUMBER 1

SPRING 2026

# *At the Center*



## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

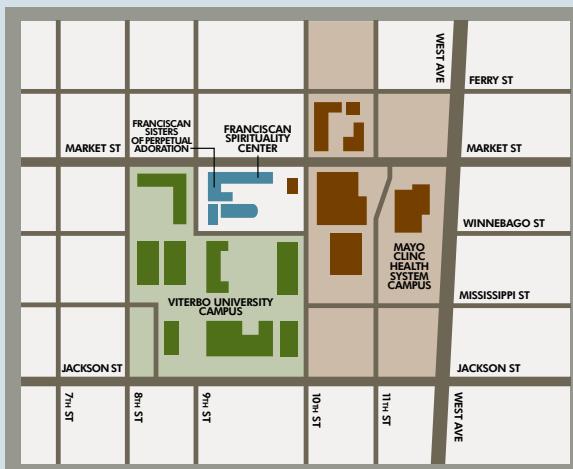
- One World Listening
- Overcoming Challenges With Grit and Grace
- John McHugh Lenten series
- Writing Through the Pain of Loss
- Money & You
- Tai Chi Retreat

Veterans and active duty service members receive a 15% discount off programs and retreats every day. Use code **MILITARY** when registering.



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 lending 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).
- 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 Ho-Chunk people. 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@fscenter.org](mailto:FSCenter@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.

[facebook.com/FSCenterLaCrosse](https://facebook.com/FSCenterLaCrosse)

[instagram.com/franciscanspiritualitycenter](https://instagram.com/franciscanspiritualitycenter)

[twitter.com/fs\\_center](https://twitter.com/fs_center)

[youtube.com/@franciscanspiritualitycenter](https://youtube.com/@franciscanspiritualitycenter)

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

# Awaiting new life and opportunities



As I write this, the days here in La Crosse have been dark and gloomy, and we've already received our share of sleet, snow and ice. Spring feels very far away. But we know what's stirring underneath the ground: new life, new birth, hope and resurrection.

As you look through our spring programs, you'll see that many of our offerings are shaped by the hope that new life emerges even in the midst of uncertainty and struggle. We will be offering a retreat focused on financial management and spirituality. We continue to offer body movement opportunities, including *Golden Yoga*, *Qigong* and *Slow Flow Yoga*. We also have a series on learning how to regulate our nervous system as we remember that our bodies are sacred places of wisdom. We will once again lead our Good Friday community prayer walk and renew our commitment to peace and justice. Programs such as *Writing Through the Pain of Loss* and our recovery retreats offer space for healing, courage and hope.

All of these offerings, and more, stem from our Franciscan roots. We trust that winter, even in all of its beauty, does not have the final word and new life is already taking shape! We hope you'll join us this spring as we walk this journey together.

Peace and all good,

*Jean Pagliaro*

Jean Pagliaro, FSC Director

## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

### Board of Directors

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## FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER STAFF



Steve Spilde  
Associate Director &  
Spiritual Director



Sarah Hennessey, FSPA  
Spiritual Director



Cathie Boerboom, RGS  
Spiritual Director



Karna Marks  
Spiritual Director



Stacey Kalas  
Communications &  
Marketing Coordinator



Julie Helgerson  
Program & Retreat  
Coordinator



Laurie Swan  
Office Manager



Kathy Holman  
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Partner Spiritual Director



Gabriela Caballero-  
Moersfelder  
Partner Spiritual Director



Alison Hendley  
Partner Spiritual Director



Katherine Krage  
Partner Spiritual Director



2026-2029

# Spiritual Direction Preparation Program



If you are interested in training to become a spiritual director or simply want to hone your deep listening skills, consider joining our program of spiritual formation. Founded in 1985, the Spiritual Direction Preparation Program provides a mix of workshops and real-life experiences to prepare individuals to share their redemptive listening skills in a variety of contexts within their communities. SDPP extends over 2-1/2 years, giving participants an opportunity to develop new capacities for deep listening.



*“It would be our joy to be in conversation with you.”*

Steve Spilde is the director of Spiritual Direction Preparation Program.  
Contact him at 608-791-5297 or [sspilde@fspa.org](mailto:sspilde@fspa.org)

## SDPP COHORT 19 SCHEDULE:

### YEAR 1

In-person in La Crosse: Thursday–Sunday  
September 10–13, 2026

Virtual weekends: Friday–Saturday  
November 6–7, 2026 | January 29–30 & April 2–3, 2027

### YEAR 2

In-person in La Crosse: Thursday–Sunday  
September 9–12, 2027

Virtual weekends: Friday–Saturday  
November 5–6, 2027  
January 28–29 & March 31–April 1, 2028

### YEAR 3

In-person practicum in La Crosse: Sunday–Saturday  
June 11–17, 2028

Virtual weekends: Friday–Saturday  
October 6–7, 2028 | February 2–3, 2029

In-person in La Crosse: Thursday–Sunday  
April 12–15, 2029

## NEW! TIERED PRICING FOR ANNUAL TUITION

Choose the amount that best fits your financial situation. Extra discount of \$150 if tuition is all paid at beginning of the year.

**TIER A: \$4,225** | Covers full program costs plus offsets facility expenses and support staff. This tier helps to support the long-range sustainability of the program and the FSC.

**TIER B: \$3,250** | Covers basic program expenses including meals, supervisor fees, presenter fees and a portion of staff time. This is the break-even point for the FSC to offer this program.

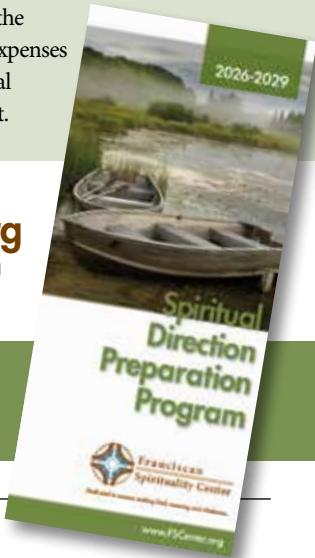
**TIER C: Modest subsidy \$2,850** | Thanks to funding from our generous donors, we can offer a subsidized tuition amount for those who need additional support.

**TIER D: Significant subsidy \$2,300** | We recognize that some participants have significant financial limitations. Thanks to funding from our generous donors, we can offer a significant tuition subsidy amount for those who would not be able to participate otherwise.

Fees include tuition for all in-person workshops, Zoom workshops, practicum in Year 3, quarterly meetings, annual review with supervisor and all administrative fees, meals and snacks. Payable in installments.

Housing is available at the FSC for all of the workshops for an additional fee. Other expenses include the cost of books, fees for spiritual direction and the required six-day retreat.

Please visit  
[www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org)  
for more information and a  
downloadable brochure.



### SDPP IS DESIGNED FOR:

- Those who are older than 30 and drawn to a deeper understanding of spiritual direction/redemptive listening.
- Those who have not had formal training in spiritual direction.
- Those who have at least one year of experience meeting with a trained spiritual director.

### SDPP PARTICIPANTS LEARN BY:

- Attending in-person and virtual workshops.
- Writing reflection papers on assigned books and articles.
- Processing experiences with fellow participants.
- Practicing listening skills using monthly verbatims.
- Receiving personalized support and guidance through regular meetings with their supervisor/mentor.

Participants process their growth through monthly meetings with their spiritual director and completing the individual retreat.

Those who satisfactorily complete the program will receive a certificate of completion.

In order to provide personal flexibility while encouraging deep experiences of connection and community, SDPP includes a four-day, in-person gathering every year. The remaining weekends will be virtual by Zoom. Students are welcome to participate in the virtual weekends from home or they may opt to stay at the Franciscan Spirituality Center.



### READY TO GET STARTED?

Call 608-791-5295 or email [FSCenter@fscenter.org](mailto:FSCenter@fscenter.org) to request an application.  
Applications will be accepted until June 1, 2026, or until the program fills.

2026

# Programs and Retreats



## 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.

**Before the program, you will receive a courtesy email with instructions and, if it's a virtual gathering, the Zoom link. 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.



### CENTERING PRAYER (ZOOM)

**EVERY TUESDAY** • 2:30-3 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Marcia Bentley

**Investment:** Free

Do you enjoy practicing Centering Prayer (Christian meditation) but wish you could do it with a group sometimes? Or are you curious to try it but don't know where to begin? Feel free to join our free virtual "drop-in" group. There's no obligation to attend every week; simply join us when you wish. We spend the first five minutes in conversation or reviewing the four simple guidelines for Centering Prayer. We then spend 20 minutes in silent prayer together.

You will receive the Zoom link upon registration.

**Marcia Bentley** is a spiritual director in Madison, Wisconsin, and is a former staff member of the Franciscan Spirituality Center. She can be reached at [marciambentley@msn.com](mailto:marciambentley@msn.com).



### OPEN ART SPACE (IN-PERSON)

**EVERY TUESDAY** • 5-6:30 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:** Free

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

For more information, please call Therese at 608-386-2965 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 listen to, and learn from, each other. We'll also share 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 2, APRIL 6, MAY 4** • First Monday of the month, 6-8 p.m.

**Investment:** Freewill offering

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions.

Do you love to write? All are welcome to meet with others who enjoy writing 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 not about learning "how to write." The goal is to set free the writer within you through simply practicing writing. No experience is necessary; just bring an open mind, a fast-writing pen and a plain spiral notebook. Feel free to bring your own snack and/or beverage.



### COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 4, 18; APRIL 1, 15, 29; MAY 6, 20**

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

**Facilitator:** Robert Lynn

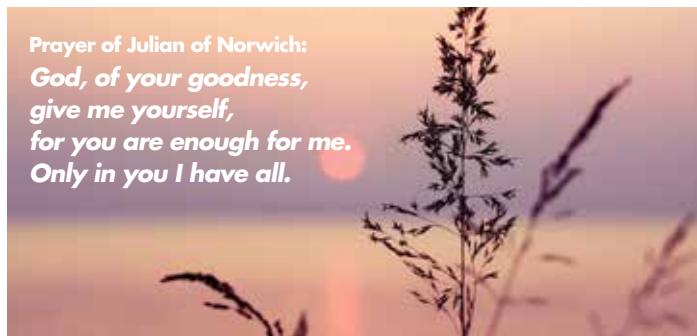
**Investment:** Suggested donation of \$3 benefits the FSC

Registration is not necessary; 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.

**Robert Lynn** is a graduate of Wartburg Theological Seminary with additional seminary studies at Nashotah House. He is lay-ordained, a postulant in the Benedictine Oblates and serves as a guest homilist at various regional churches. A longtime meditation student of Santikaro Upasaka, he 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 5, APRIL 2, MAY 7**

First Thursday of the month 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Investment:** Freewill offering (payable online)

**Registration deadline:** March 4/April 1/May 6

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 Zoom; 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 9, APRIL 13, MAY 11**

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

**Facilitators:** Laurie Swan and Julie Helgerson

**Investment:** Free

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions.

This group provides a safe place for those who are experiencing grief 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.

**Laurie Swan** has journeyed through her own grief experiences and is passionate about providing space for others to come together in their own grief process. She is the FSC's office manager.



**Julie Helgerson** is a certified grief educator through David Kessler and a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. She is the FSC's program and retreat coordinator.



## 2026 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### LIVING WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (IN-PERSON)



**MARCH 12, APRIL 9, MAY 14**

Second Thursday of the month, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kelsey Flock

**Investment:** Free

Registration is required; call Kelsey at 608-386-0767.

This free, monthly group offers connection and conversation for individuals experiencing mild cognitive impairment (MCI) due to a neurocognitive degenerative disease. Sessions include open discussion, education and practical tips for living well and maintaining independence. This group is facilitated by a local dementia care specialist from the Aging and Disability Resource Center of La Crosse.

This group is for individuals with MCI only; care partners do not attend. However, a free, no-registration-required Caregiver Support Group happens at the same time.

**New participants:** Pre-screen conversation is required before your first group to ensure a positive experience for everyone; please call in advance to allow sufficient time for scheduling.

**Kelsey Flock, BS, CTRS**, is a dementia care specialist at the La Crosse County Aging & Disability Resource Center, where she supports individuals living with dementia, empowers family caregivers and fosters dementia-friendly community initiatives. With a background in recreation therapy and experience across long-term care, mental health, and higher education, Kelsey blends

brain science and creativity to make complex information accessible. She is passionate about helping people live well with dementia and finding joy alongside them on their journeys.

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

## 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. There are no forms to fill out, and you do not need to disclose personal financial information.

### FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP (IN-PERSON)



**MARCH 12, APRIL 9, MAY 14**

Second Thursday of the month, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** ADRC/FSC staff

**Investment:** Free

Registration is not required. Attend any or all sessions.

This new support group is open to ALL family caregivers and is a partnership between the Aging and Disability Resource Center of La Crosse County and the Franciscan Spirituality Center. The focus will be on reducing the stress of family caregivers, not on a specific diagnosis. Meet other family caregivers and share the caregiving journey.

For more information, please contact Kristine Meyer at 608-386-0922 or [kmeyer@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:kmeyer@lacrossecounty.org).



### CREATION SPACE (IN-PERSON)

Our Clare Art Room is available to all community members for creative projects and drop-in making.

Participants 14 and younger should be accompanied by an adult.

**Creation Space hours are:**

- Monday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Tuesday: 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Thursday and Friday: 9 a.m.-noon

This space is open to people of all ages and backgrounds to discover, create and connect. The FSC has free parking and is wheelchair accessible. If you need accommodation for any reason, please call the library at 608-789-7100 or email [info@lacrosselibrary.org](mailto:info@lacrosselibrary.org).

## PROGRAMS AND RETREATS

## LISTENING AS SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (IN-PERSON)



## An Invitation to Explore the Spiritual Direction Preparation Program

MARCH 3 • Tuesday, 5:30-7 p.m.

Presenter: Steve Spilde

Investment: Free

Registration deadline: February 23

Do you long for deeper connections with your friends and loved one? Are you ready for personal transformation? Do you seek a deeper relationship with the Divine? Does your spirit yearn for something more?

The FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program is a three-year formation program that prepares participants to serve as spiritual directors in their communities or work settings, but many find it to be so much more than preparing for a role.

## Graduates of the program:

- Have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to deeply examine their beliefs and explore where they were being led to grow.
- Discovered an invitation to connect with God in new and more personal ways.
- Have treasured the strong and lasting relationships they developed with fellow members of their cohort.
- Found a supportive environment to examine the broken areas of their life, leading to healing and more freedom.
- Developed a greater capacity for remaining present to themselves and others in times of suffering.
- Nurtured a new appreciation for life and their place in the world.

Learn more about the role of a spiritual director and discern whether this training might be a welcome opportunity for growth in your life.

COMING HOME TO JOY:  
AN AT-HOME RETREAT (ZOOM)

MARCH 3-5

Tuesday-Thursday, 10-11 a.m. each day

Presenters: Cathie Boerboom, RGS; Sarah Hennessey, FSPA; Karna Marks

Investment: \$95

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$66.50 to anyone who would like financial help to attend. Please enter the code JOY30 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

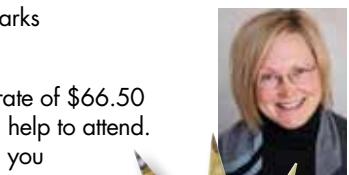
Registration deadline: February 16

Limited to 12 participants.

Joy is our natural state, which can be cultivated with awareness and practices. Often, it feels like daily life holds difficult emotions that hide our joy from us. With these daily reflections, learn how to come home to your own joy in the midst of life's complexity. Find renewed energy and a spirit of resilience, lightness and healing. These virtual interactive sessions will be easy to engage with from home. To complement your retreat time, you also may opt for a 30-minute individual spiritual direction session each day (included with your registration). Spiritual direction is a time for nonjudgmental, compassionate listening.

*Support for this retreat is provided by the Blanche Klein, FSPA, Scholarship Fund.*

**Sister Cathie, Sister Sarah and Karna** are spiritual directors on staff at the FSC.



## FOUR-WEEK SERIES

## COMPASSION-CENTERED SOUL CARE (ZOOM)

## Internal Family Systems as a Model for Spiritual Companions and Care Professionals

MARCH 3, 10, 17, 24

Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Presenter:  
Frank Rogers Jr., Ph.D.Investment:  
\$200 for entire seriesRegistration deadline:  
February 17

Limited to 12 participants.

Internal Family Systems is a contemplative, soulful and non-pathologizing approach to personal healing and spiritual transformation. A contemporary spiritual path, it deepens our connection to a sacred Source of loving energy. It tends, with care, the cacophony of emotions, impulses and interior self-chatter that so often swirl within us. It restores us to our true Self, that reservoir of personal power, expansiveness and compassion that dwells within every human being. This series is designed specifically for spiritual companions—spiritual directors, chaplains, pastoral counselors and other soul-care workers—who want to explore how IFS can be a model and a process for compassion-based soul care that keeps care providers grounded in their own compassionate essence and invites those to whom they provide care into a deeper connection with the sacred and with their own spiritual essence.

**Frank Rogers Jr., Ph.D.**, is a spiritual director, supervisor, certified IFS practitioner, retreat leader, writer and professor of spiritual formation at the ecumenical and interfaith Claremont School of Theology. He has taught and written in spirituality, contemplative practice and compassionate social engagement for more than 35 years and is the author of "Cradled in the Arms of Compassion: A Spiritual Journey from Trauma to Recovery," "Practicing Compassion" and "Compassion in Practice: The Way of Jesus." As the co-director for the Center for Engaged Compassion, he offers and teaches compassion-based approaches to spiritual direction and supervision.





## 2026 Programs and Retreats *continued.*



### way of the cross

#### LEADING OURSELVES THROUGH THE TRADITIONAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 6-7** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Michael Durnin

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$190, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$120, includes lunch on Saturday

**Registration deadline:** February 23

Explore how the Stations of the Cross—a Christian devotion tracing Jesus' final walk to crucifixion—as a pathway for leading ourselves in everyday life. Each station is paired with leadership concepts, Scripture, reflection questions and prayer to strengthen the foundation for Christ-centered leadership. This Lenten experience offers a unique opportunity to deepen your faith while cultivating the ability to lead yourself and others with courage and compassion.

**Michael Durnin, DMin**, is a transformational leadership expert, educator and coach with more than four decades of experience in higher education, athletics and faith-based leadership development. As founder and president of Via Crucis Leadership LLC, he integrates servant leadership, faith and his signature "Handful of L's" framework to inspire personal and organizational growth.

#### 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.



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



**MARCH 10** • Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Presenters:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA, and Karna Marks

**Investment:** Free

**Registration deadline:** March 9

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.

**Sarah Hennessey, FSPA**, and **Karna Marks** are spiritual directors on staff at the FSC.



#### FOUR-WEEK SERIES

#### CHRISTMAS IN LENT (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

**MARCH 10, 17, 24, 31** • Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.



**Presenter:** John McHugh

**Investment:** \$80 for entire series. Optional soup and salad dinner will be served starting at 5 p.m. (suggested donation of \$5 payable at the door).

**Registration deadline:** March 6

Out of the four Gospels, only Matthew and Luke narrate the details of Jesus' birth. The brilliance of those Gospels is that those infancy narratives about Jesus point spectacularly to his death and resurrection as the key moments of salvation. Biblical scholar John McHugh will explore both the obvious and hidden ways the Christmas story makes sense during our Lenten journey. Plan to attend all four sessions if possible.



**John McHugh** is the vice president of external relations for Kwik Trip Inc., based in La Crosse, Wisconsin. In his role at Kwik Trip, he has helped the company achieve recognition as a Top Workplace as listed by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the Des Moines Register. Prior to joining Kwik Trip in 2004, John was an instructor and principal at Aquinas High School in La Crosse. He holds degrees from University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. John serves on the boards of Trust Point, Betterlife Insurance and Viterbo University.

## MOVING THROUGH GRIEF RETREAT (IN-PERSON)



**MARCH 13-15** • Friday–Sunday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. each day

**Facilitator:** Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Investment:** \$225

We are able to offer a discounted rate of \$157.50 to anyone who would like financial help to attend. Please enter the code GRIEF30 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

**Registration deadline:** March 2

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 help 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.



## SINGING BOWLS MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

**MARCH 19, APRIL 23, MAY 21**

Thursday, 5:30–7 p.m.

**Presenter:** Joan Filla

**Investment:** Suggested donation of \$10 (payable at the door or online)



**Registration deadline:**

March 18/April 22/May 20

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

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH GRIT AND GRACE (IN-PERSON)



**MARCH 28** • Saturday, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.  
(Doors open at 8:30 a.m., and the event begins at 9 a.m.)

**Keynote speaker:** Sara Alvarado

**Additional presenters:** Sarah Smith, Heather Nisely, Bernice Olson-Pollack and Jolynn Brehm, FSPA

**Investment:** \$75, includes continental breakfast and lunch. Coffee, tea and water will be available throughout the day.

**Registration deadline:** March 16

You are welcome to extend your experience with an overnight stay for an additional \$75 per night. Call 608-791-5295 for details.

Our annual conference is a celebration of all women who have faced obstacles and ordeals yet preserved, kept the faith and emerged more resilient. Join us for an incredible day of wisdom, self-care and inspirational stories of grit and grace.

Keynote speaker **Sara Alvarado** is a writer, entrepreneur and fierce advocate for racial justice in real estate. She will share her story of how, at age 24, she bought a one-way ticket from the Midwest to Mexico, determined to heal from years of hard partying and sexual trauma. In 2023, Sara published her memoir, "Dreaming in Spanish: An Unexpected Love Story in Puerto Vallarta." She is the co-founder and director of Own It: Building Black Wealth, a groundbreaking initiative to increase generational wealth in Black and brown communities through homeownership. Through her speaking and workshops, Sara creates awareness and inspires change with her straight talk and loving ways.



**Sarah Smith** was a student in Viterbo's nursing program in 2001 when she was brutally attacked and stabbed by a stranger while jogging in the La Crosse River Marsh. She'll share her story of healing and how, as an avid outdoorswoman, she continues to find strength and solace in nature. As she worked through her trauma, Sarah completed college and now works at Emplify Gundersen and in the La Crescent School District. Her boyfriend at the time, Travis, became her life partner, and they share two adult children. When she's not at work, she is most often hiking with her dogs or writing a letter.



**Heather Nisely** is a proud veteran of the United States Army. Throughout her service, she faced significant challenges, including military sexual trauma and intimate partner violence during her 18-year marriage—experiences that tested her limits. It was her unwavering grit and dedication to cultivating inner peace that enabled her to navigate these hardships. Heather often hikes as a way to connect with something larger than herself and to practice mindfulness, a discipline that restores and rejuvenates her spirit. She looks forward to sharing her journey of resilience and strength, and is honored to be part of this empowering event.



**Bernice Olson-Pollack** is a yoga instructor and personal trainer who teaches classes at the FSC. She will lead guests in gentle body movement during a mindfulness break.



**Jolynn Brehm** is a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration and spiritual director. She will lead guests in a creativity activity.



# 2026 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

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

APRIL 3 • Good Friday, 10 a.m.

**Facilitators:** FSC staff and community prayer leaders

**Investment:** Free

Meet at St. Rose Convent on the corner of Market and 9th streets. No registration is necessary.

This form of the Way of the Cross is a two-mile silent prayer walk from the heart of the city to the Mississippi River, stopping 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. The walk, which recalls the journey of Jesus as he carried his cross to Calvary, will take about two hours. People of all ages and faith backgrounds are invited to participate.



**Note:** This is an outdoor event. Wear comfortable shoes, and dress for the weather. You'll have to walk or arrange for a ride back from Riverside Park.

## ONE WORLD LISTENING (IN-PERSON)

APRIL 10-11 • Friday, 6:30-8 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Diane Millis

**Investment:**

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

**Registration deadline:** March 30

Each participant will receive a box of Inner Active Cards as a spiritual tool to use (\$22 value).

How do we develop our capacity to listen deeply in an increasingly diverse and often divisive world? Learning to listen well begins by devoting more of our attention to the conversation happening within us. As renowned poet Walt Whitman reminds us, we hold multitudes. During this year's One World Listening gathering, we will explore the wisdom of Internal Family Systems as we practice listening from the inside out to more of the parts, voices and stories we hold within us.

**Diane M. Millis, Ph.D.**, aspires to deepen her capacity to listen through her ministry of spiritual direction, retreat facilitation and formation work with spiritual direction preparation programs throughout the country. She holds degrees in communication studies, family studies and human development, and certificates in spiritual direction, retreat direction, spiritual direction supervision and interfaith dialogue. Diane has taught at the University of Minnesota, St. Catherine University, College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University and United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. She is the author of three books: "Conversation-The Sacred Art," "Deepening Engagement" and "Re-Creating a Life." To learn more, visit [www.dianemillis.com](http://www.dianemillis.com).

**ONE WORLD  
LISTENING**  
FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER CONFERENCE

## SIX-WEEK SERIES

### TELLING THE SACRED TALE: THE STAGES OF MENOPAUSE (ZOOM)

APRIL 14, 21, 28; MAY 5, 12, 19 • Tuesday, 6-7:30 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Kristina Stone Kaiser

**Investment:** \$75 for entire series

**Registration deadline:** April 6



Is your body-heart-mind experiencing the perimenopause/menopause/postmenopause journey? During this time in our lives, it's common to feel a little thrown, under-resourced and/or meagerly supported. This six-week session is here for you! We will share our stories, using a model that we'll learn as we gather together. Each of us will become both the listener—holding compassionate space for others—as well as the storyteller. We gather to tell the Sacred Tale of our lives, to listen and to "with-ness" the journey. Recharge your batteries, and experience companionship. We have time for one another.

**Kristina Stone Kaiser** is a certified spiritual guide and supervisor with a Doctor of Ministry in interfaith/interspiritual guidance, a certified sound healer and an ordained pastor. Her lifelong passion is creating spaces for others to discover meaning and purpose through compassion, inclusion and social justice. She is the author of "Abundant Joy: A 90-Day Journey Toward Sustainable, Authentic, Life-Changing Joy" and serves on the faculty of the Spiritual Guidance Training Institute. Learn more at [www.tendingme.com](http://www.tendingme.com).

## CONNECT WITH COURAGE: A ONE-HOUR COURAGE & RENEWAL EXPERIENCE (ZOOM)

APRIL 16 • Thursday, 6-7 p.m.

**Presenters:** Mary Louise Peters and Amy Christianson

**Investment:** Free

**Registration deadline:** April 6

This virtual gathering offers a welcoming space for you to tap back into personal renewal. If the Courage & Renewal® approach is new to you, this is an opportunity to have a small taste of exploring personal renewal through story, music, poetry and self-reflection. A brief question-and-answer session will follow (10 minutes, optional).



**Mary Louise Peters** is a Courage & Renewal® facilitator, providing retreats and renewal experiences since 2010. She has worked as an educator and consultant at local, state and national levels to improve early childhood and special education for children and families, teaching practices and conditions for staff, and state educational systems.

**Amy Christianson** is a practitioner who has completed the Courage & Renewal® Practicum Program. She has been a participant in a number of seasonal and Circle of Trust® retreats, and her background includes educational leadership, organizational change and working with diverse populations.

**See page 13 for related retreat.**





## SUMINAGASHI: MEDITATIVE MARBLING WITH PAPER, INK AND WATER (IN-PERSON)

APRIL 17-18 • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Dawn Tevis

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$200, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, and supplies
- **COMMUTER:** \$120, includes lunch on Saturday and supplies

**Registration deadline:** April 6

Suminagashi is an artistic expression that invites participants into the contemplative practice of Japanese paper marbling or “ink floating,” an accessible art form with roots as early as the 12th century. Through breath, brush, ink and water, you will create one-of-a-kind monoprints that mirror the truth of the present moment and open pathways to deeper self-awareness and connection with the natural world. The dynamic dance of ink on water provides a peaceful, wonder-filled means to honor the sacredness of each person and nurture collective wholeness. Guided by an introduction to the history and practice of suminagashi, you’ll explore meditative and creative prompts that awaken intuition, curiosity and creative possibility. You’ll leave not only with beautiful, unique creations but with a meaningful practice you can carry into daily life, because ink inevitably spills into life. No artistic experience is needed.

**Dawn Tevis** is a librarian and paper marbler who has enjoyed suminagashi as a book art and contemplative practice for more than 10 years. She is passionate about creative placemaking and explores through her work the dynamic reciprocity of inner and outer landscapes. Dawn has been the recipient of Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council artist grants and holds a Certificate in Book Arts from the Minnesota Center for Book Arts.

## NOW ACCEPTING PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Are you interested in presenting a program or retreat at the Franciscan Spirituality Center? We'd love to hear from you! The first step is to submit a program proposal through our website. Programs and retreats should align with our mission of supporting anyone in their search for God, meaning and wholeness. You do not have to be Catholic to present here. Topics may include prayer and meditation practices, resilience-building, artistic expression, trauma-informed care or other processes that foster spiritual growth and transformation.

Visit [www.FSCenter.org/retreat](http://www.FSCenter.org/retreat) for an online form.



## THE ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY OF SALLIE McFAGUE (IN-PERSON)

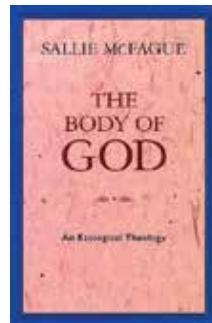


APRIL 18 • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon

**Facilitator:** Robert Lynn

**Investment:** \$25

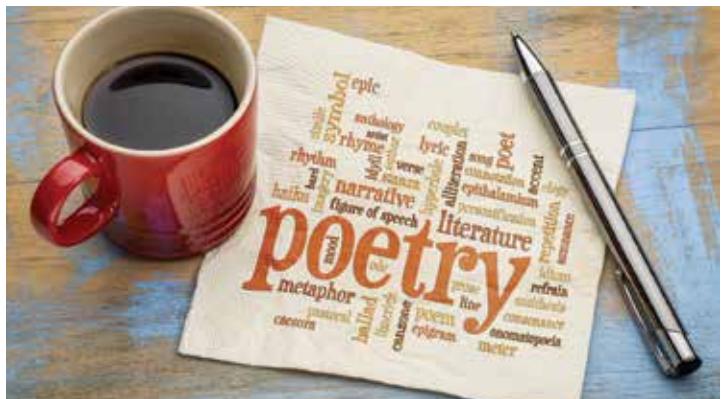
**Registration deadline:** April 6



What is the special contribution of Christian faith to an ethic for nature? This morning program will introduce the eco-theology of theologian and author Sallie McFague and her call to reimagine Christianity in an age of ecological crisis. Beginning with her book “The Body of God,” participants will explore McFague’s panentheistic vision and her early contributions to environmental ethics. McFague posited that human and natural salvation are inextricably linked. You will be invited into positive reflection on Christianity for our time, reimagining life in the Spirit as a way of living rightly in the world. We’ll also engage her enduring legacy: a vision of salvation that includes the whole planet and a Christian ethical response to climate change rooted in intentional kenosis and faithful action.

Ideal for those seeking greater understanding of the role of Christianity in creation care, this program will include time for wonderment and group reflection.

**Robert Lynn** is a graduate of Wartburg Theological Seminary with additional seminary studies at Nashotah House. He is lay-ordained, a postulant in the Benedictine Oblates and serves as a guest homilist at various regional churches. He first discovered Sallie McFague as an environmentalist in the tradition of Terry Tempest Williams and Rachel Carson. Later, he found the deep theology that informs her confidence in the role of the Christian tradition in creation care.



## POETRY CAFE (ZOOM)

APRIL 20 • Monday, 6:30-8 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Investment:** \$5

**Registration deadline:** April 17

Bring your favorite poetry, either an original composition or a poem from another author, for a time of sharing and reflection. After a time of 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 that they really liked in the poem and other observations. All poetry lovers are invited to gather for this virtual evening of words and community.

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



## 2026 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### 12-SESSION SERIES

#### THE REGULATED PATH: LEARNING TO REGULATE YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)



**APRIL 21, 23, 28, 30; MAY 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28**

Tuesday, 5:30-6:15 p.m. (IN-PERSON)  
Thursday, 5:30-6:15 p.m. (ZOOM)

**Presenter:** Leah Tanke

**Investment:** \$125 for entire series

**Registration deadline:** April 13

This series features a combination of in-person and Zoom gatherings.



Learn simple, science-based tools to regulate your nervous system and support your physical, mental and spiritual well-being. In this group, you'll practice becoming an active, compassionate operator of your nervous system—reconnecting with your inner wisdom and innate capacity for balance. Through brief, embodied practices, we'll cultivate

more ease, resilience, presence and joy in daily life. Expect short practices during sessions and just 5 minutes a day on your own. These gentle tools support lasting calm, a deeper sense of connection and a return to wholeness.

**Leah Tanke** has worked in the mental health field for 20 years, and her passion for this work grew out of her own healing journey, where nervous system regulation finally brought real and lasting change. For the past two years, she has been part of Trauma Healing Accelerated, guiding people through online programs in nervous system regulation and trauma healing, and she now offers these programs in person in the La Crosse area.

#### WRITING THROUGH THE PAIN OF LOSS (IN-PERSON)

**APRIL 24-25** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenter:** John DeDakis

**Investment:**

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

**Registration deadline:** April 13

Pain is a natural part of life, whether it's the loss of a job, a pet, a friendship, your innocence, your health or a loved one. Even though grief is a part of life, it doesn't have to be crippling or debilitating. During this spiritual retreat, you will learn strategies—including journaling, storytelling, prayer and meditation—to help you move forward, through and beyond the pain and fear into a future that can once again be filled with hope, and even joy. Guided writing exercises coupled with break-out sessions and seminar-style conversations will help you tap into your experience as a way to find catharsis and inner clarity. This will be a space where no one will be required to read aloud or share.

**John DeDakis** is a former editor on CNN's "The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer." Grief and loss are subtexts in all six of John's award-winning mystery/suspense/thriller novels. John is a writing coach and manuscript editor who regularly teaches novel and memoir writing at literary centers and conferences nationwide and abroad. Born and raised in La Crosse, John now lives in Baltimore, Maryland. Learn more at [www.johndedakis.com](http://www.johndedakis.com).



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

**MAY 1-2** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenter:** Isaac Mezera

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$190, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$110, includes lunch on Saturday



**Registration deadline:** April 20

It has been 75 years since Joseph Campbell published "The Hero With a Thousand Faces." In his seminal 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. During this retreat, you will embark on your own discovery journey. Through lectures, group conversations and personal reflection, we'll explore the stages of the monomyth, meet the archetypal characters that help or hinder us along the way, and connect the stories that inspire us to move forward. You'll be invited to chart two important journeys: one you have taken and one you are called to begin.



**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. He has led classes on the monomyth to a wide range of ages and backgrounds during the past 20 years. Isaac holds two master's degrees, one in teaching and another in rhetoric and composition. He works as a communications skills instructor at Western Technical College.

## COURAGE &amp; RENEWAL RETREAT

## ABUNDANTLY AVAILABLE GRACE: LIVING WITH WONDER AND HOPE (IN-PERSON)



**MAY 1-2** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenters:** Mary Louise Peters and Amy Christianson

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$190, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$110, includes lunch on Saturday

**Registration deadline:** April 20

**Note:** This is the final in a series of Courage & Renewal® weekend retreats, each one with its own theme and content.

See page 10 for presenter bios.



Personal renewal allows us to live with self-acceptance, gratitude, compassion and the acceptance of grace. The possibilities are in every moment, with each thought, in every action. Through individual written reflection and group interaction, you will have opportunities and time to recognize the grace that is always abundantly available. Our time together will include silence, guided discussion and experiences with poetry, wisdom tradition essays and art. Claim time for your own personal renewal while strengthening a sense of community with those present.

**There will be opportunities to experience the practices of the Courage & Renewal® approach to:**

- Revitalize your commitment to the core values that give meaning to your life and work.
- Learn reflective practices to become more self-aware and intentional.
- Discover a process for discernment to reach clarity around deep questions of identity and integrity.
- Expand your capacity to build trustworthy and authentic relationships.
- Improve your ability to listen openly and be present.
- Continue to find truth and healing in your own life and in your relationships.

## MONEY AND YOU: A SACRED MIRROR FOR HEALING AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH (IN-PERSON)

**MAY 15-16** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



**Presenter:** Teresa Romain

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$190, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- **COMMUTER:** \$110, includes lunch on Saturday

**Registration deadline:** May 4

Your relationship with money reveals more than numbers in a bank



account; it reflects your beliefs, wounds and deepest longings. For many, money is a source of constant guilt, fear, pressure or shame, in part because we subconsciously separate the financial from the spiritual. In this experiential, transformational retreat, you'll discover that money is actually a Sacred Mirror,

revealing opportunities for deep healing and growth—spiritually, emotionally and financially. Through a combination of experiential activities, prayer and meditation, journaling, reflection and meaningful discussion, you'll be supported to look into that mirror and say "yes" to the healing and growth it offers you.

**Teresa Romain** is an abundance coach, spiritual director and transformational speaker who has spent nearly three decades helping people heal the wounds of scarcity in their relationship with money, themselves and God. Teresa uses money as a catalyst for healing and growth, supporting people to access the resources they need to fully become who they were created to be and to share their unique gifts with the world.

## TAI CHI RETREAT: ENJOYMENT OF MOVING MEDITATION FOR MIND-BODY BALANCE (IN-PERSON)

**MAY 15-17** • Friday, 1:30-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m.-noon and 1:30-5 p.m.



**Presenter:** Hong Yang

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$380, includes private bedroom, dinner on Friday; breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday; breakfast and lunch on Sunday
- **COMMUTER:** \$220, includes dinner on Friday; lunch on Saturday and Sunday

**Registration deadline:** May 4

Tai Chi Quan combines slow, graceful movements with deep breathing and focused mindfulness. It is a form of moving meditation rooted in ancient Chinese philosophy of harmony with nature and the balance between opposing forces of yin and yang. The movements express the idea that softness can overcome hardness; a flexible, yielding approach can defeat brute strength. Dr. Yang will teach the most widely practiced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan-24 Forms and integrate with "tai chi" philosophy and traditional Chinese medicine. She will open the door and lead you to Tai Chi Chuan practice from basic mindful movements for beginners to further studies and practice this meditation in motion, such as Energy Circulation, along the meridians. Benefits of mind-body harmony include improved balance and coordination, enhanced circulation and flexibility, and reduced stress and anxiety. It also can help with arthritis, sleep disorder and high blood pressure or blood sugar. Tai chi and qigong teachers would deepen their understanding of tai chi core principles and improve teaching skills.

**Dr. Hong Yang, Ph.D.**, is an experienced Tai Chi Chuan master and an international Tai Chi Quan and tai chi sword champion. She holds a doctoral degree in integrative traditional medicine from Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine. She has been practicing tai chi since the age of 5 and has taught internationally for two decades. Her unique combination of traditional training and modern academic insights offers a deep understanding of tai chi principles.



## 2026 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

### ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP (IN-PERSON)

**MAY 18-23** • Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, 9-10 a.m.

**Instructor:** Phil Zimmerman

**Investment:**

- **OVERNIGHT:** \$700, includes private bedroom Sunday through Friday nights, all meals and all supplies
- **COMMUTER:** \$575, includes lunch and dinner Monday through Friday and all supplies

**Registration deadline:** May 4

**Note:** Icon to be determined.



Both a meaningful prayer practice and a technical art form, iconography traces its history to the beginning of Christianity. Icons are often referred to as "windows into heaven" and continue to be venerated by Orthodox Christians and others. Noted American iconographer Phil Zimmerman will guide participants step-by-step through the process of "writing" or

painting an icon in the Byzantine style, following ancient guidelines and techniques while using modern artist's materials (acrylic paints, gessoed board, gold leaf). All materials and supplies are included. By the end of the week, each student will have a beautifully completed icon varnished and ready to display.

**Note:** Beginners and advanced students are welcome. While previous iconography experience is not necessary, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of painting and color mixing. Class may extend into the evening hours on Friday for varnishing.

Overnight guests may check in Sunday between 5 and 7 p.m.

**Phil Zimmerman** is the owner of St. John of Damascus Icon Studio in Pennsylvania, having studied iconography with Richard Osacky (the late Bishop Job, OCA Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest). Phil has created hundreds of religious icons for churches and private collectors throughout the world and has taught more than 2,000 students, some of whom have become noted iconographers themselves. Phil has offered retreats at the Franciscan Spirituality Center since 2001.



### THE TWELVE STEPS AND THE SHADOW SELF (IN-PERSON)

**Letting Our Higher Power Transform Our Character Defects Into Character Strengths**

**MAY 29-30** • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Presenters:** Brian and Dawn

**Investment:** This retreat would typically cost \$190, but thanks to our generous Norman L. Gillette Sr. Scholarship Fund, we can offer it for just \$75. A private room and meals are included.

**Registration deadline:** May 18

This retreat is for adults who are members of any 12-step program and active in their recovery.

As we do the challenging work of "making a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves," we identify negative personality traits. We often see these parts of ourselves as something bad that needs to be fought against. But what if we could befriend our character defects and let them be our teacher? The spiritual concept of the shadow self gives us tools and a path for doing that. Through short presentations, group sharing and personal reflection, participants will share their experience, strengths and hope in working with their negative traits.

**Brian** is a retired ecclesial minister, author, presenter and certified spiritual director with 20 years of 12-step recovery.

**Dawn** appreciates contemplative practices. For the past 10 years, 12-step recovery has been a significant part of her spiritual journey.



### MEETING ROOMS

Whether you are leading a training session, council meeting, staff retreat, support group or book club, the right environment makes a difference. You'll find exactly what you are looking for at the Franciscan Spirituality Center:

- 8 distinctive meeting rooms that can seat from 2 to 90 people (St. Rose Dining Hall also can be reserved for large-capacity, special events)
- All-day, half-day and economical two-hour rates
- Professional, comfortable seating and flexible layout options
- State-of-the-art technology
- Free parking for guests in the lot across the street, plus accessible spots next to the building

We invite you to call us at 608-791-5295 to discuss your group's needs and how we can make your next meeting memorable.

## SILENT DIRECTED RETREATS (IN-PERSON)

A silent directed retreat is an invitation to deepen your connection to the Sacred and to your inner wisdom through solitude, silence, prayer and compassionate listening. You will have a private, comfortable bedroom, delicious meals and sessions 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 welcome to add overnight stays before or after your retreat for \$75 per night. Call 608-791-5295 for details.

**Note:** These retreats begin with a gathering of all participants.



### CHOOSE FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

#### MARCH 6-8

Friday, 2 p.m.–Sunday, 1 p.m.

**Facilitators:** Steve Spilde and Dawn Schweizer

**Registration deadline:** February 23

Limited to 6 participants.

Two nights' stay, all meals and three spiritual direction sessions are included.

#### MARCH 13-15

Friday, 2 p.m.–Sunday, 1 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Sarah Hennessey, FSPA

**Registration deadline:** March 2

Limited to 3 participants.

Two nights' stay, all meals and three spiritual direction sessions are included.

#### APRIL 19-24

Choose a three-day to six-day retreat option. The spiritual director will reach out to you to confirm your start and end times for the retreat.

**Facilitator:** Dawn Schweizer

**Registration deadline:** April 5

Limited to 3 participants.

Depending on the option, two to five nights' stay, all meals and three to six spiritual direction sessions (one session per day of the retreat) are included.

#### MAY 3-8

Choose a six-day or three-day retreat option. The spiritual director will reach out to you to confirm your start and end times for the retreat.

**Facilitator:** Cathie Boerboom, RGS

**Registration deadline:** April 20

Limited to 3 participants.

Depending on the option, two or five nights' stay, all meals and three or five spiritual direction sessions are included.

#### MAY 22-24

Friday, 2 p.m.–Sunday, 1 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Dawn Schweizer

**Registration deadline:** May 11

Limited to 3 participants.

Two nights' stay, all meals and three spiritual direction sessions are included.

### INVESTMENT:

#### TIER A:

**\$400 (three-day) | \$800 (six-day)**

Covers full program costs plus offsets facility expenses and support staff. This tier helps to support the long-range sustainability of the program and the FSC.

#### TIER B:

**\$375 (three-day) | \$775 (six-day)**

Covers basic expenses and a portion of staff time. This is the break-even point for the FSC to offer this program.

#### TIER C:

**\$262 (three-day) | \$542 (six-day)**

Thanks to funding from our generous donors, we can offer a subsidized payment amount for those who need additional support.

You also are welcome to call 608-791-5295 to arrange a customized retreat with a spiritual director based on your unique needs and schedule.

### SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

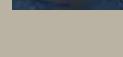


**Cathie Boerboom, RGS**, is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.



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

**Dawn Schweizer** is a spiritual director from Iowa and a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program.



**Steve Spilde** is a spiritual director on staff at the FSC.



## BODY | MOVEMENT CLASSES



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

**SESSION 1: MARCH 31; APRIL 7, 14, 21, 28; MAY 5**

**SESSION 2: MAY 12, 19, 26; JUNE 2, 9, 16**

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

**Instructor:** Amber Moesch

**Investment:** \$60 for each six-week session



**Registration deadline:** March 30/May 11

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 to offer 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.



A person in a seated lotus yoga pose, wearing grey leggings and a bracelet, with their hands resting on their knees in a meditative or resting pose.

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

**SESSION 1: APRIL 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; MAY 6**

**SESSION 2: MAY 13, 20, 27; JUNE 3, 10, 17**

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

**Instructor:** Bernice Olson-Pollack

**Investment:** \$60 for each six-week session



**Registration deadline:** March 31/May 12

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.

### QIGONG (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

**SESSION 1: MARCH 31; APRIL 7, 14, 21, 28; MAY 5**

**SESSION 2: MAY 12, 19, 26; JUNE 2, 9, 16**

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

**Instructor:** Pennie Pries

**Investment:** \$60 for each six-week session



**Registration deadline:** March 30/May 11

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.

**Pennie Pries** is a certified qigong instructor and certified Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instructor based in Rochester, Minnesota. She has a bachelor's degree from Luther College, having studied physical education, health and biology. Her own life challenges over the years have broadened her expertise in healthy lifestyle choices and healing opportunities for better overall health.



**Note:** Whether you choose to attend this class at the FSC or virtually, Pennie will teach by Zoom (other than an in-person introduction on the first day).

**Bernice Olson-Pollack** has a Master in Science in Community Counseling and is a 200-hour YogaFit-trained instructor and American Council on Exercise certified personal trainer. She provides a slow and steadily moving style of teaching that offers a comfortable yet quietly challenging yoga practice for her participants.



# Best wishes to Melissa and Hope on their next chapters!

Since our last issue of *At the Center*, we've said goodbye to two valued staff members. Melissa Bakkestuen, guest services specialist, was wooed back by her former employer in December for a new position that seems perfect for her. We'll miss her enthusiasm and attention to detail but look forward to seeing her at FSC events.

In early January, Hope Clements, director of community engagement, took a position at a local organization that makes a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Hope launched several new initiatives and partnerships during her time with us, and we know she'll continue to make positive contributions in the greater La Crosse community.



We wish them peace and all good, and are grateful for their friendship and the contributions they made while on staff.

Looking to unplug in a woodland setting?



We invite you to make a private or directed retreat in one of our three hermitages at St. Joseph Ridge, just a short scenic drive from our main center. Here you can enter into silence and contemplation, while connecting to nature and the Sacred.

Hermitages are one-room cottages that feature modern conveniences. We've named ours Chiara, Sophia and Thea. Each one has electricity, indoor bathroom and a kitchenette. During your stay, you can relax, pray, journal, knit, read or hike one of the many trails on site.



Towels and bed linens are provided. Please bring your own food and toiletries.

The hermitages are single occupancy and meant to be used for spiritual retreats only.

**Cost is \$80 per night (spiritual direction is an extra fee). Please call 608-791-5295 for more information.**



## Have you stopped by our Sophia Bookstore lately?

Tucked inside the FSC is a gem of a spot waiting your discovery. Our Sophia Bookstore features cozy seating; complimentary coffee, tea and snacks; a well-curated selection of books related to spirituality, resilience-building and self-care; and lovely selection of thoughtful gift items, including locally handmade earrings, Fair Trade bags, lotions made by survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse, essential oils, soaps made by monastics, FSC shirts and much more.

**STOP BY! WE ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**



**Shopping hours: 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. weekdays or while you are here on retreat.**



Franciscan  
Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

SECOND ANNUAL EVENT

# Save the date: June 4 Tables of Joy

Just as there is “room at the table” for everyone at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, all are invited to “Tables of Joy: An Evening of Generosity and Beauty” on Thursday, June 4.

This enchanted evening is an invitation to gather with friends of the FSC and the wider community for conversation and shared stories—all while raising support for the FSC’s transformative work.

Weather permitting, we’ll take the party outside into the St. Rose Courtyard. Guests will enjoy cocktails, food, music, silent auction and a few other surprises. Artists and staff members of local nonprofit organizations will paint accent tables that will be auctioned off during the event. It’s a meaningful way to add an original piece of functional art to your home or office!

TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE SPRING

COMING THIS SUMMER



LOVING-KINDNESS AND FRAGRANCE

QIGONG RETREAT

JUNE 5-6 • Pennie Pries

SINGING BOWLS AT SUNSET

JUNE 25 • Joan Filla

ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

JULY 13-18 • Phil Zimmerman

COURAGE AND RENEWAL: PEACE AND DIGNITY

AUGUST 14-15

Mary Louise Peters and Amy Christianson

Very soon we'll be announcing new  
COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE OPPORTUNITIES!

Look for details at [www.FSCenter.org](http://www.FSCenter.org) and on  
our social media channels.

Follow us on :

