NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

Franciscan Spirituality Center

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

VOLUME 34 • NUMBER 4

WINTER 2026-27

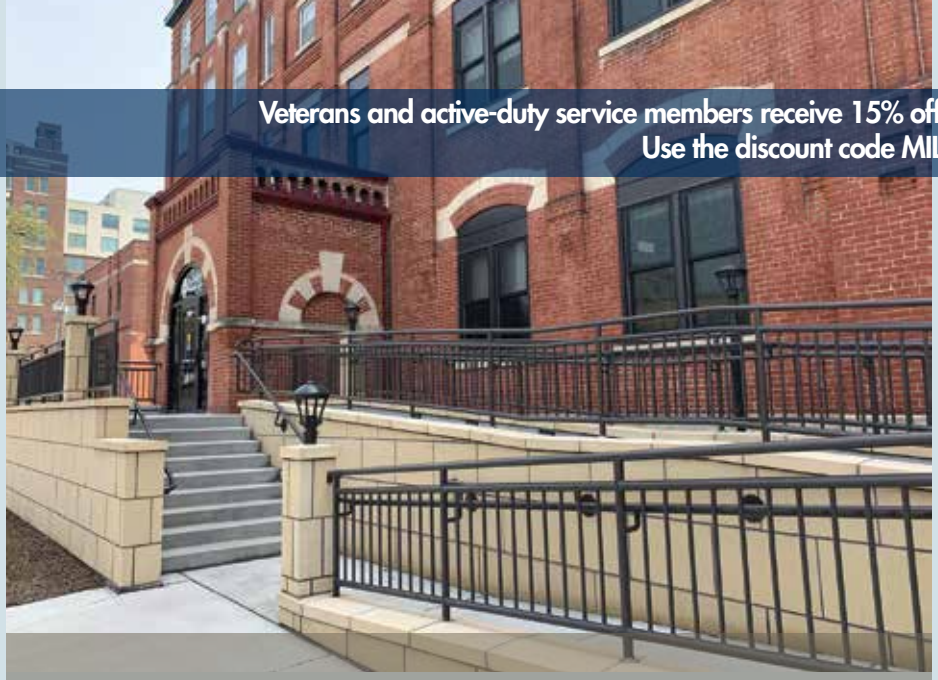
At the Center



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920 Market Street • La Crosse, WI 54601 • 608-791-5295 • www.FSCenter.org



Veterans and active-duty service members receive 15% off programs and retreats. Use the discount 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.
- 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 | FSCenter@fspa.org

Identity

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is a Catholic spirituality center sponsored by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. The FSC is rooted in the Franciscan tradition and the values of FSPA, including hospitality, simplicity and Gospel living. We welcome people of all faith backgrounds and traditions (or none).

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
instagram.com/franciscanspiritualitycenter
youtube.com/@franciscanspiritualitycenter
atthecenterreflections.blogspot.com

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A season and a place for hope



Recently, I have had the privilege of facilitating sessions with many organizations and groups as they discern who they are and where they are headed in the future. Some questions groups are focusing on include: Where are we going in this new world of AI? How do we stay grounded in our mission when the needs of the community seem to be beyond our capacity? Where do we find the holy in all of this busyness? And, perhaps most important, how do we hold onto hope in the midst of it all?

This is a very fitting theme as we draw closer to Advent and the winter season. "Hope" is the theme for the first Sunday of Advent. We light a candle of hope in the midst of all that we're experiencing in our own lives and in the world: joy, grief, fear, worry, sadness, life transitions. It is a stubborn defiance that the Light is present with us through it all.

The FSC is a place where you can explore more deeply how hope shows up for you. Our spiritual directors will listen to you and walk with you as you process. Our body movement offerings and community acupuncture sessions can help you connect more deeply with your physical self. Here are just a few of the programs and retreats we're offering that might be of interest to you:

- **December 4 – St. Nicholas Celebration: A Feast of Generosity. Bring the family!**
- **December 19 – Take Courage: An Advent Sound Immersion**
- **December 22 – The Longest Night**
- **January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4 – Trusting the Promptings of God: An Ignatian Approach to Discernment**
- **January 15-16 – Navigating Life's Transitions**
- **February 12-13 – Tending Your Grief With Gentleness and Creativity**
- **February 16, 23; March 2, 9 – The Gospel of Mark Lenten Series**

As you read through the pages of this winter edition of our newsletter, you'll find many more offerings and discover the ways our staff, facilitators and instructors are trying to spread hope throughout our community and beyond.

We invite you to visit us and spend time in this sacred space that has held so much for people throughout their journeys, including hope.

Blessings to each of you during this holy season!

Jean Pagliaro

Jean Pagliaro, FSC Director

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER STAFF



Steve Spilde
Associate Director &
Spiritual Director



Cathie Boerboom, RGS
Spiritual Director



Karna Marks
Spiritual Director



Julie Helgerson
Program & Retreat
Coordinator/
Spiritual Director



Lynn Wegner
Program Assistant



Laurie Swan
Office Manager



Chris Williams
Mission Advancement
Associate



Michelle Hemp
Administrative Assistant



Chris Gunderson
Guest Service Specialist

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER PARTNERS



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Partner Spiritual Director



Gabriela Caballero-
Moersfelder
Partner Spiritual Director



Alison Hendley, OSB
Partner Spiritual Director



Sarah Hennessey, FSPA
Partner Spiritual Director

STAFF NEWS

Welcome, Lynn and Chris!

Please help us welcome two new staff members: Lynn Wegner and Chris Williams. They've both jumped into their roles—newly created because we just keep growing! — and we appreciate all they bring to our team.

Lynn Wegner is our new program assistant, having started in September after moving over from the other side of the building, where she worked as the director of life enrichment for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration for the past five years. Her creativity, organizational skills and willingness to pitch in wherever needed are invaluable for making our programs and retreats run smoothly.



We've been lucky enough to collaborate on a few projects with Lynn in the past. She says she looks forward to participating in the many programs at the FSC and meeting our guests.

"I have enjoyed the warm, welcoming environment. Everyone is so supportive and helpful," she said. "The FSC's hospitality is very apparent."

Lynn also also serves as music director at Halfway Creek Lutheran Church and has been a church musician since age 14. Her professional experience includes creative worship planning. A native of the Appleton, Wisconsin, area, Lynn earned double majors in economics and music from Lawrence University. After living in the Milwaukee area, she moved to the Coulee Region in 2005. Lynn and her husband, Shawn, have two children, Jacob and Hannah. In her free time, Lynn enjoys reading, scrapbooking, traveling and spending time with family.

Chris Williams is the new mission advancement associate. This is a shared position with FSPA, focused on donor relations and database management. Chris is a "data guy," which we appreciate, and it has been fun getting to know him during staff meetings and lunches.



So far, he says, he has enjoyed "the unique, diverse, even joyful perspectives of everyone I interact with" and looks forward to "continuing to learn and grow into my role here. I'm excited for the future."

Chris came to the FSC in August 2026 after years of administrative experience in nonprofit and for-profit organizations. His background and skills include donor relations and database management, IT support, writing and public relations, analog and digital audio engineering and production, broadcast media and communications.

Chris is a native Floridian, having relocated to La Crosse from Orlando to be closer to family in La Crosse and Eastern Wisconsin. He is a sports fan, primarily football and baseball, and will watch almost any sporting event if it's an interesting matchup or high stakes — major tournaments, Olympics, etc. Other than sports, Chris enjoys historical and biographical documentaries, and spending time traveling, with family and at home with Kris and their dog, Minnie.

Be sure to say hello to both of these wonderful people when you are at the FSC!

Goodbye, Stacey



In late October, we accepted Stacey Kalas' resignation. She joined our staff in July 2014 and in that time has made a significant impact on the organization. Her time, presence and gifts for marketing and communications have been an integral part of the mission and hospitality that is so central to the FSC.

We have benefited from her deep appreciation for all things related to the arts and creativity. She played a significant part in creating and implementing our very popular Art Dash fundraisers!

We are grateful that she has been a dedicated member of our team, and we wish her every blessing as she begins a new chapter.

Thank you, Stacey. Peace and all good!

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH

Grit and Grace

Our 7th ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE celebrating incredible women who have overcome obstacles and ordeals yet persevered, kept the faith and emerged more resilient will take place March 20.

We've opened registration early so you can be sure to get this inspirational day of wisdom, self-care and stories of grit and grace on your calendar. Gather your besties and join us, or come solo and meet new friends. It's a day of connection and courage; we look forward to welcoming you!

Saturday, March 20, 2027 | 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Investment: $75, includes continental breakfast and lunch.

Complimentary coffee, tea and water will be available throughout the day.

Franciscan Spirituality Center | 920 Market St., La Crosse, WI 54601 | www.FSCenter.org | 608-791-5295

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:



DIANA ELENA SANCHEZ MORAN THUNDERCLOUD, Ed.D., is a teacher, explorer, writer, photojournalist, mother, grandmother and sister. She holds dual citizenship with Mexico and the United States, splitting her time between Baja California and La Crosse. She will share her spiritual journey through the lens of a seeker who lost two brothers within four years and how the past year of grief has shaped her life—how her own sense of belonging and safety shifted within this world. She will share her own "call to service" for the Greater Good.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTERS:



MELISSA BORGMANN of St. Paul, Minnesota, will share from her experience as a small café owner in Northeast Minneapolis moving through the height of Operation Metro Surge, drawing on her faith and communal resistance practices to protect immigrant staff, friends and family members, and keep her business alive.



CHRIS FISHER of La Crosse thought her greatest challenge was a liver cancer diagnosis. Instead, she would face a deeper journey, one that required confronting fear, uncertainty and the reality that her survival would depend on the generosity of another family during their darkest hour. After a life-saving liver transplant in May 2025, Chris discovered that faith did not remove her fear, but it gave her somewhere to put it. She has a moving story to share of loss, gratitude, spirituality and learning how to live again after being given a second chance at life.



HEIDI SVEE of Onalaska, Wisconsin, will share her personal journey as a survivor of domestic and sexual violence, reflecting on the challenges of healing, finding strength and reclaiming her life. Through her story, she hopes to offer hope to others, raise awareness and remind survivors that they are not alone and that healing, empowerment and a future beyond abuse are possible.

ACTIVITY LEADERS:

BERNICE OLSON-POLLACK will lead us in gentle body movement during a mindfulness break.

KELSIE SCHMIT will facilitate a meditative community singing experience.





2026-27 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. 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.

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.



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, mental health conditions and experiencing homelessness.

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 on the first and third Thursday and the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. If you are interested in joining this group, please call 608-791-5295 for more information.

MONTHLY DROP-IN PROGRAMS

MEDITATION FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH (ZOOM)



DECEMBER 3, JANUARY 7, FEBRUARY 4
First Thursday of the month, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Rebecca Kaldunski

Investment: Freewill offering (payable online)

Registration deadline: December 2/January 6/February 3

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.

Rebecca Kaldunski has maintained a personal meditation practice since 2022, using mindfulness and meditation to help navigate life's challenges and cultivate greater balance, resilience and inner peace. Inspired by nature, contemplative practices and personal growth, she guides participants through simple meditation experiences that encourage grounding, self-compassion and emotional wellness.



OPEN WRITING CIRCLE (IN-PERSON)

DECEMBER 7, JANUARY 4, FEBRUARY 1
First Monday of the month, 6-8 p.m.

Investment: Freewill offering

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

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.



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

BUDDHISM: MEDITATION AND SKILLFUL LIVING (IN-PERSON)



DECEMBER 8, JANUARY 12, FEBRUARY 9
Second Tuesday of the month, 6-7:15 p.m.

Facilitators: Frank Mauss and Robert Lynn

Investment: Suggested donation of $5 benefits the Franciscan Spirituality Center

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

There are many schools and traditions of Buddhism. Within those traditions are basic principles and wisdom teachings that serve as a guide for skillful living. Along with the teachings of Buddhism, meditation is a core practice. Each session will begin with a period of silent meditation, followed by a brief discussion of Buddhist teachings and personal reflection.



Frank Mauss has maintained a meditation practice for more than 30 years and is lay-ordained at Ruymonji Monastery.



Robert Lynn is a graduate of Wartburg Seminary with studies at Nashotah House. He is a novice in the Benedictine Oblates of Bonnevaux Monastery.

DRUMMING CIRCLE (IN-PERSON)



DECEMBER 10, JANUARY 14, FEBRUARY 11 • Thursday, 6-8 p.m.

Facilitator: Myquawn Bailey Sr.

Investment: Freewill offering

Registration deadline: December 7/ January 12/February 9



Come to any or all sessions; registration is required.

Join us for an evening of rhythm and community. These sessions are designed to introduce the La Crosse community to drum culture in a way that moves the spirit and relaxes the mind. No drumming experience is necessary. Feel free to bring your own drum or use one of the variety of provided drums.

Myquawn Bailey Sr., MS, is the founder of Drum Iowa, a therapeutic drumming initiative designed to increase awareness of mindful, community-based drumming across Iowa. Based in Waterloo, Iowa, he facilitates drum events for diverse populations, including nursing homes, memory care centers, art centers and community organizations. Originally from Waterloo, Myquawn was first exposed to drum culture as a young boy in his family church. Percussion has always moved him and relaxed his spirit. It wasn't until many years later, during his time in Egypt, that he was introduced to hand drumming. Upon his return to the U.S. in 2015, Myquawn began working with at-risk youth in residential treatment settings. Using his background in psychology and behavioral studies, he developed a behavior-focused curriculum aimed at helping young people understand cognitive distortion through drumming.

2026-27 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

***Family Caregiver Support Group* and *Living With Mild Cognitive Impairment* will not meet if the La Crosse County Meal Sites are closed due to inclement weather. You also may call the FSC at 608-791-5295 to confirm whether these groups are meeting.**

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP (IN-PERSON)

DECEMBER 10, JANUARY 14, FEBRUARY 11
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 as your schedule permits.

This 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 is 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.

LIVING WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (IN-PERSON)



DECEMBER 10, JANUARY 14, FEBRUARY 11
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 and 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.







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

DECEMBER 14, JANUARY 11, FEBRUARY 8 • 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 as your schedule permits.

This group meets on the second Monday of every month and provides a safe place for those who are experiencing grief over the death of a loved one to share their stories. Grieving comes with a variety of emotions that may arise shortly after a loss or surface even 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.

PROGRAMS AND RETREATS



BREATH, BODY, BOWLS (IN-PERSON)

DECEMBER 3 • Thursday, 5:30-7 p.m.

Presenters: Joan Filla and Bernice Olson-Pollack

Investment: $20

Registration deadline: November 30





Take a pause before the busyness of the holidays to reconnect with peace and presence. Through conscious breathwork, restorative movement, guided meditation and the soothing vibrations of Tibetan singing bowls, you'll be invited to release stress and restore balance in body, mind and spirit. This rejuvenating experience offers a nourishing space to slow down, create spaciousness and reconnect with yourself.

Joan Filla, M.D., is a local physician who was introduced to Tibetan singing bowls while recovering from the trauma of her past.

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.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT

ST. NICHOLAS CELEBRATION: A FEAST OF GENEROSITY

DECEMBER 4 • Friday, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Facilitators: FSC staff and volunteers

Investment: $20 suggested donation per family.

Registration deadline: November 23

Light supper and treats are included.

Join us for a joyous celebration of the beloved saint known for his generosity and kindness. All ages are welcome as we honor worldwide traditions related to St. Nicholas and start a few new ones. We'll hear a story about St. Nicholas' life, learn about the tradition of putting shoes out for him and make festive crafts. Shhh … don't tell the little ones, but we'll even be surprised with a visit from St. Nicholas himself! In the spirit of giving that embodies the true meaning of the season, we will take special gifts over to Mayo Clinic Health System in La Crosse during the last 15 minutes of our time together.



ZENTANGLE® HOLIDAY ORNAMENT (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

DECEMBER 7 • Monday, 6-8 p.m.

Presenter: Christine Isham

Investment:
- **IN-PERSON:** $35, includes supplies
- **ZOOM:** $30 (see supply list below)

Registration deadline: December 4





If you can draw a line, an S-curve, a circle and a C-curve, you are ready for this workshop. Escape the holiday hustle and bustle to discover the calming, creative benefits of the Zentangle Method. You'll be guided in the creation of a beautiful, abstract ornament to keep or give as a gift. No art experience is necessary. Drawing simple, repetitive strokes can help relieve stress, nurture creativity and support overall well-being. Unwind, recharge and discover your inner artist in our peaceful, welcoming space.

Supplies needed: Renaissance Zendala tile or 4.5-inch circle paper (mixed media is best), Micron 01 pen in dark green, tortillon, No. 2 pencil, Gelly Roll pen in color of your choice.

The Rev. Christine Isham has been tangling for more than 20 years and became a Certified Zentangle® Teacher in 2023. She was introduced to this spiritual practice when she was on retreat with other clergy women at a Benedictine monastery. She has been meditating through tangling and teaching tangling ever since. Christine works as a chaplain in Winona with LifeSpark Senior Living. She and her wife live in Holmen and are volunteer puppy raisers for Canine Companions.

HOW TO REGISTER

HOW TO REGISTER: Go online to 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.

2026-27 Programs and Retreats *continued.*



WHAT IS QIGONG? A RETREAT OF LEARNING AND PRACTICING (IN-PERSON)



DECEMBER 11-12
Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Presenters: Pennie Pries

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

Registration deadline: November 30

Learn how you can slow down and find calm in this hectic season through qigong.

Have you wondered …

Where did this ancient practice come from? What are some of the various styles of qigong? What is "qi"? For that matter, what does "gong" mean? Can I even physically do the exercises found in qigong? How is qigong different from other exercise programs? How will qigong help me, and what are its benefits? It seems like it moves so slowly; don't I have to move fast to get healthier? Most important, can this practice help calm my nerves, get me to slow down, be present with others and not stressed out about the future? What are "meridians" and "tan tiens"? Can these movements help relieve some of my stiffness and pain?

You'll find the answer to these questions and more during this weekend retreat.

We'll explore the history, main styles and basic principles of qigong, a Chinese mind-body practice that combines slow, gentle movements, deep breathing and meditation to balance life energy. Pennie will lead you in a variety of qigong movements. Whether you are brand new to qigong or have been practicing it already, this retreat will help raise your level of understanding and is suitable for all physical abilities. All movements can be modified or done while seated.

Pennie Pries is a Tier I Lee Holden Certified Qi Gong instructor with a background of teaching, coaching, Silent Counseling, ThetaHealing and real-life experiences, including health challenges. She leads qigong classes at the FSC and online through her business, Energy Shifts with Pennie, and teaches two exercise classes per week for the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program. She also works on an individual basis for deeper emotional clearing and tailored movement practices to meet specific physical/health challenges. Pennie has presented at workshops and retreats for the FSC, family gatherings, quilting groups and other venues.



TAKE COURAGE: AN ADVENT SOUND IMMERSION (IN-PERSON)



DECEMBER 19 •
Saturday, 5-6 p.m.



Presenters: FSC staff, English Lutheran Church staff, Joan Filla and Ben Rohde

Investment: Freewill donations support musicians participating in the service

Advance registration is appreciated; drop-ins are welcome.

Note: This event takes place at English Lutheran Church,1509 King St., La Crosse. Doors open at 4:45 p.m.

Advent is a season of waiting and a time when courage can take root in our souls. Join the Franciscan Spirituality Center, English Lutheran Church, Joan Filla and Ben Rohde for an evening of Taize-style prayer, paired with the beautiful sounds of Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, choirs and hymns. This is a unique opportunity to reflect on your spiritual journey in a gathered community that shares varied faith traditions.

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.

Ben Rohde brings his lifelong passion for rhythm and music to the world of sound healing, specializing in the profound vibrations of gongs. As an experienced percussionist and drummer, he intuitively guides others toward deep relaxation and stress relief through immersive sound experiences.



THE LONGEST NIGHT (ZOOM)



DECEMBER 22 • Tuesday, 6:30-8 p.m.

Facilitators: Cathie Boerboom, RGS, and Karna Marks

Registration deadline: December 20



The Winter Solstice is the longest night. As the world is full of people proclaiming joy and light, we pause to remember the longing, grief and sadness we hold in our hearts during this season. In this participatory virtual prayer service, we will embrace the longest night and remember that all of our feelings and memories are part of our story and are welcome as we gather together for this sacred time of remembrance.

Cathie Boerboom is a Good Shepherd Sister, a spiritual director on staff at the FSC and a trained grief recovery specialist.

Karna Marks, M.Div., is a spiritual director on staff at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. She earned her Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary and has shepherded many people through the grief process in her role as a pastor.

FIVE-WEEK SERIES

TRUSTING THE PROMPTINGS OF GOD: AN IGNATIAN APPROACH TO DISCERNMENT (ZOOM)

JANUARY 7, 14, 21, 28; FEBRUARY 4 • Thursday, 10-11:15 a.m. or 5:30-6:45 p.m. (choose morning or evening group)



Presenter: Katherine Piderman

Investment: $80 for entire series

Registration deadline: December 30

Limited to 8 participants in each group.



It is common to feel overwhelmed with the many decisions that confront us each day. We want to hear God's voice and follow, but we often struggle with which choice is best. The teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola about discernment can guide us to notice God's action in our lives and to make a Godly decision. Each session in this five-week virtual series will include a short presentation and time for discussion.

Katherine (Kate) Piderman, Ph.D., is a practicing spiritual director with master's degrees in education, pastoral studies and scripture, and a doctorate in psychology. A Catholic laywoman, Kate served parishes in rural Illinois for 20 years and worked at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for almost 30 years as a chaplain, researcher and educator. In whatever role, Kate has always felt blessed to accompany people seeking to explore and deepen their faith, especially in the midst of the complexities of life.

WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS: AN EPIPHANY CELEBRATION (IN-PERSON)

JANUARY 8 • Friday, 5:30-8 p.m.

Presenters: FSC staff

Investment: $65, includes meal and gift

Registration deadline: December 28

A wonderful tradition from Ireland has become a tradition at the FSC. On the Feast of Epiphany, Wise Women gather together for Nollaig na mBan, or Women's Christmas. As the busy Christmas season comes to an end, this is a time to set aside responsibilities and gather with friends to rest, give thanks, celebrate and reflect on the possibilities and invitations the new year brings. Join us for a delicious Irish dinner, great conversation and a fun, meaningful program. Each guest also will receive a gift!



Wise Women Also Came © Jan Richardson. www.janrichardson.com

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



MAKES A THOUGHTFUL GIFT!

WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY DAY OF REST (IN-PERSON)

JANUARY 8-9 • Friday, 5:30-8 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Presenters: FSC staff

Investment: $165, includes overnight stay, *Women's Christmas* event, breakfast and lunch on Saturday

Registration deadline: December 28

Extend your stay, and settle in for a comfortable and quiet night of retreat. This option adds an overnight stay and a relaxing day of rest after our *Women's Christmas* event. You'll have use of one of our beautifully appointed, private rooms to recharge however best suits your needs. Spend your time reading, knitting, meditating, napping or attending a sound meditation and gentle body movement experience. You'll also have access to our art room, lending library and massage chair. We'll also have a few optional activities planned. Unplug and relax in a quiet, sacred space after the busy holiday season.

WINTER LABYRINTH WALK (IN-PERSON)

JANUARY 11 • Monday, open between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Facilitators: FSC staff

Investment: Freewill offering

Advance registration is appreciated; drop-ins are welcome.

Begin the new year with a contemplative walk along the FSC's indoor canvas labyrinth. This silent, self-guided walking meditation offers an opportunity to slow down, reflect and enter the new year with intention. A brief introduction is available for those new to the practice. Please arrive by 6:30 p.m. to allow enough time for your walk. If you would like to bring younger children to experience the labyrinth, we ask that you visit after 6:30 p.m.





SINGING BOWLS MEDITATION (IN-PERSON)

JANUARY 11, FEBRUARY 8 • Monday, 5:30-7 p.m.



Presenter: Joan Filla

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

Registration deadline: January 10/February 7

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.

A PLACE TO LAND: A SIX-WEEK GRIEF JOURNEY (ZOOM)



JANUARY 13, 20, 27; FEBRUARY 3, 10, 17
Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Presenter: Teresa Quinn

Investment: $120 for entire series

Registration deadline: January 4

Limited to 12 participants.

You don't have to navigate grief alone. During this six-week virtual program, you'll learn more about grief, what you may experience along the way and practical tools to help you navigate life after loss. Through a combination of education, reflection and connection, you'll have the opportunity to develop strategies that support your emotional and mental well-being while connecting with others who understand the experience of grief firsthand.

Grief has no timeline, and there is no "right" way to grieve. Whether your loss happened five months ago or 15 years ago, you are welcome here. This is a space to learn, connect and be gently supported wherever you are in your journey.

Teresa Quinn, LCSW, (she/hers) is a licensed clinical social worker in Chicago, specializing in grief, trauma, illness and all of the complexities that accompany these life changes. Teresa is a 500-hour registered yoga teacher and a certified EMDR therapist with extensive training in grief, trauma, expressive arts and perinatal mental health. Teresa has worked in bereavement centers for children and families, on college campuses supporting young sexual assault survivors, with nonprofits to support women affected by cancer and those in hospice, and in private practice offering therapy to adults.



CONNECT WITH COURAGE: A 75-MINUTE COURAGE & RENEWAL® EXPERIENCE (ZOOM)



JANUARY 11, MARCH 8
(choose one) Monday, 6-7:15 p.m.

Presenters: Mary Louise Peters and Amy Christianson

Investment: Free



Registration deadline: January 4/March 1

CENTER for COURAGE & RENEWAL

This virtual Courage & Renewal® experience is a welcoming space 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.

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 related retreat on page 12.

NAVIGATING LIFE TRANSITIONS (IN-PERSON)

JANUARY 15-16 • Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Shannon Evans O'Brien

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

Registration deadline: January 4

Facing a new chapter of life can feel daunting. Whether you've finalized a divorce or gotten married, moved to a new city or gone back to school, become a parent or become an empty nester, it's all too easy to lose your bearings amid the chaos of big change. This weekend is an invitation to slow down and find space to breathe, reflect and listen deeply to the guiding Spirit within. Through prayer practices, journaling prompts and conversation, this retreat is designed to leave you feeling refreshed and re-envisioned for a meaningful and joyful turning of life's page.



Shannon Evans O'Brien is the spirituality editor at the National Catholic Reporter and author of the books "Rewilding Motherhood," "Feminist Prayers for My Daughter" and "The Mystics Would Like a Word." Since a recent divorce, she has found great meaning in gathering with others who are also trying to face change with openness to the Spirit through hope, curiosity and a holy acknowledgment of grief. Learn more at www.shannonkevans.com.

YOGA AND MINDFUL EATING MINI RETREAT (IN-PERSON)



JANUARY 30 • Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon

Investment: $35, includes yogurt bar

Presenter: Bernice Olson-Pollack

Registration deadline: January 18

When it comes to nutrition, yoga doesn't believe in fads. It favors balance, simplicity and seasonal living. To achieve mental clarity, lightness and peace, mindful eating becomes just as important as mindful movement. Through gentle yoga movements, reflection and resources for eating mindfully, we'll explore the yogic principles of sattva (lightness) and mitahara (moderation). You will have conscious space to slow down, listen to your body and practice eating with greater attention and intention. By creating a holistic relationship with real food, more energy, calm, clarity and overall well-being becomes attainable.



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.

ONE WORD RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

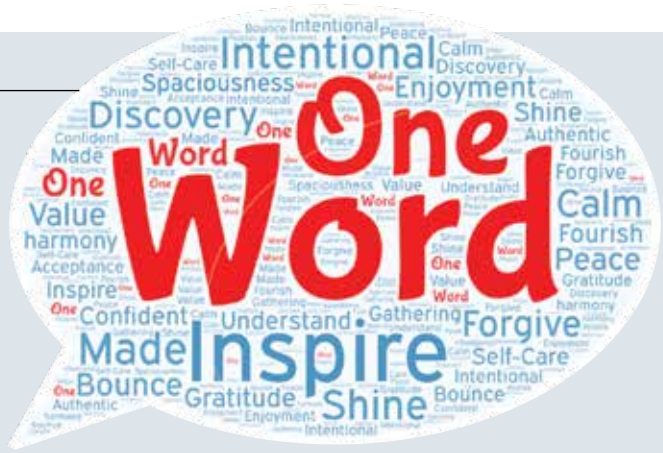
JANUARY 22-23 • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.



Presenters: Kirsten Shipler and Mary Holtorf

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

Registration deadline: January 11



Each year, resolutions are rarely kept, and goals are easily forgotten. But imagine living a single word that embodied your present life to guide you toward finding a renewed purpose and meaning. This retreat is a mindful practice of intentionality. One Word can motivate you to become the person you are meant to be; it can guide your year and have a positive impact on your life. We'll learn about the concept of One Word, the process of discovering your personal word and the best ways to authentically live it out.

Through meditation, journaling exercises and group discussions, you will see which word chooses you for 2027. You'll be invited to share your One Word with other participants and create symbols to take home and remind you of your One Word all year long.

Kirsten Shipler and **Mary Holtorf** are from Austin, Minnesota, and have been co-leading this popular retreat at their local spirituality center for a decade and at the FSC since 2025. They are best friends, avid readers and learners, life encouragers and travel companions.

2026-27 Programs and Retreats *continued.*



EXPLORING SIMPLICITY AND SERVICE: A COURAGE & RENEWAL® RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

FEBRUARY 5-6 • 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: January 25



Courage & Renewal® work aligns with Franciscan values of service, peace and justice, dignity of every person, community, contemplation and gratitude. With courage, we are able to more fully live with individual integrity and authenticity in our relationships. Through individual written reflection and group interaction, you will have opportunities and time to recognize how you are living with courage. 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 discernment process to reach clarity around deeper 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.

This retreat is one of several focused on the values of St. Francis. The next one in the series is April 30-May 1, 2027, with a theme of *Exploring Contemplation and Community.*

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



VOICES SERVING THE HOLY IN ALL: A SINGING RETREAT (IN-PERSON)



FEBRUARY 6 • Saturday, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Tiered pricing: $175 | $125 | $75 (lunch is included) Please offer at the highest level your budget will allow.

Presenter: Liz Rog

Registration deadline: January 25

When we sing together, we can create an island of connection, a place to be real and grounded, a place to make some peace in the here and now. Songleader Liz Rog will help us relax into the voices we were born to sing with. We'll learn songs that are relevant to the world we're tending and songs that are easy to carry home so we can keep singing in our everyday lives. Every voice is welcome. Whether you're an experienced or first-time singer, you can help raise up these simple, nourishing songs, all taught in the oral tradition, without written music. Through group singing, we experience joy, a sense of success and an expression of shared meaning. We deepen our sense of communion with each other and a sense of sanctuary for all our spirits. Join us to sing, socialize and relax — because singing is too important to leave to the professionals.

Liz Rog is a songleader in the global Ubuntu tradition. The Swahili word Ubuntu means "I am because we are." Ubuntu singing welcomes all voices, using the collective brain in the body to weave songs and community. Liz lives in the Driftless Region of northeast Iowa with her family, where she leads weekly community singing for all ages and hosts guests at Fern Hollow Cabin, her ancestral home. She enjoys traveling to other towns in the region to help in the re-seeding of group singing for the renewal of all.

LOOK FORWARD TO MONDAYS!

"The postings from *Reflections From the Center* seem to shock me into awareness more frequently. Thanks for these gifts." — Larry B.

Each Monday, we send a poem, prayer or short essay reflection written by community members to more than 3,000 email subscribers. If you'd enjoy having these free inspirational gems land in your inbox, please visit www.FSCenter.org and click on the blue "Join Our List" button.



NATIVE PLANT GARDENING FOR POLLINATOR CONSERVATION (IN-PERSON)

FEBRUARY 9 • Tuesday, 12:30-2 p.m.

Presenter: Leah Jakusz

Investment: Freewill offering. Lunch is included.

Registration deadline: February 1



In conjunction with the installation of a pollinator garden at the FSC, we'll explore gardening with native plants. We'll dig into the what, why and how of curating a sustainable, diverse garden that supports pollinators, beneficial insects and other wildlife right in your backyard. Whether you have acres of land or an apartment balcony, learn how you can enhance conservation efforts at every scale and budget! We'll also discuss the FSC's upcoming garden project and how it relates to care for creation and Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato si'. The program will consist of a 40-minute presentation with time for questions.

SAVE THE DATE: Site prep and planting for the FSC's native pollinator garden is scheduled May 10, 2027.

Leah Jakusz is the land sustainability coordinator for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Her work facilitates FSPA's commitment to care for creation by managing the land conservation, forestry and sustainability projects on the FSPA Land–St. Joseph Ridge. Her efforts also aim to engage and educate local community members and students. As a graduate of University of Wisconsin–Madison, Leah earned her BS in environmental sciences and conservation biology and has focused her early career experiences on ecological restoration, pollinator and avian conservation, and science communication.

THE ART OF CALM: A VALENTINE'S ZENTANGLE® WORKSHOP (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)



FEBRUARY 11 • Thursday, 6-8 p.m.

Presenter: Christine Isham

Investment:
- **IN-PERSON:** $35, includes supplies
- **ZOOM:** $30 (see supply list below)

Registration deadline: February 5

A Zentangle is a miniature, abstract piece of art created through simple, repetitive lines and patterns. As a spiritual practice, this process helps your mind quiet down, focus and find a sense of true calm. In the world of Zentangle, there are no mistakes — only beautiful, unexpected discoveries. In honor of Valentine's Day, we will weave our patterns into a beautiful heart design during this creative celebration of love, self-care and mindfulness. Whether you are a seasoned creator or haven't picked up a pen in years, you are welcome here. We'll walk through the basic steps, leaving plenty of quiet time to practice and explore at your own pace. No prior art experience is needed. Just bring an open heart and a desire to unwind, breathe and create.



Supplies needed: Renaissance Zentangle tile or 3.5-inch square paper (mixed media is best), Micron 01 pen in black, No. 2 pencil, tortillon, General's MultiPastel Chalk Pencil in burnt carmine or scarlet red.

The Rev. Christine Isham has been tangling for more than 20 years and became a Certified Zentangle® Teacher in 2023.

HOW DO I KNOW? DISCERNING TODAY FOR TOMORROW (IN-PERSON)



FEBRUARY 12-14
Friday, 6:30 p.m.–Sunday, 2 p.m.

Presenters: Julia Walsh, FSPA; Larry Schatz, FSC; Matthew Kotek, FSC







Investment: $250, includes private bedroom; breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday; breakfast and lunch on Sunday

Registration deadline: February 1

Scholarships are available to offset the cost of this retreat. For more information, email discerning@fspa.org

This prayerful discernment retreat is designed for young adults who are exploring their life purpose and where God might be calling them. Together, we'll quiet the noise and listen to God's guidance as we practice various prayer methods, such as Eucharistic Adoration, communal and private prayer, reciting the Rosary and more. This retreat is based on Catholic discernment methods, including Lasallian and Franciscan discernment. Sessions and presentations will include specific guidance and provide opportunities for both group and one-on-one conversations. All are welcome.

Sister Julia Walsh is a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration. She is the author of two books, including "For Love of the Broken Body: A Spiritual Memoir," and an experienced retreat leader, spiritual director and educator. She serves as the minister of discerners/vocation director for FSPA.

Brother Larry Schatz is a De La Salle Christian Brother living in community on the campus of Saint Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota. He serves in the vocation ministry as part of the brothers' vocation team and is a past provincial, campus minister, administrator and teacher.

Brother Matthew Kotek is a La Crosse native who joined the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 2015. During his time in the community, he has served in Lasallian Catholic schools in Tennessee, Minnesota, Lebanon and Egypt. He is a member of the brothers' community at DeLaSalle High School in Minneapolis and serves in vocation ministry with the Midwest province.

2026-27 Programs and Retreats *continued.*

TENDING YOUR GRIEF WITH GENTLENESS AND CREATIVITY (IN-PERSON)



FEBRUARY 12-13
Friday, 6:30 p.m.–Saturday, 4 p.m.



Presenters: Georgina Kingsley and Karna Marks

Investment: $230, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, and all supplies



We are able to offer a discounted rate of $92 to anyone who would like financial help to attend. Please enter the code GRIEF60 when you register online or call 608-791-5295.

Registration deadline: February 1

Sign up early! This retreat is limited to 7 participants.

Join us as we honor the sacred path of grieving together and individually, through quiet meditation, conversation and creativity. This will be a time to paint as process, making space for pain, remembering, honoring and expressing joy and gratitude. We'll follow a three-step process over the course of the retreat: reflection, creativity and supporting one another. Each participant will receive a kit of supplies, and there will be plenty of other mixed-media materials on hand to inspire. Within each of us is an artist. All levels of experience, including those with no art experience, are very welcome.

Georgina Kingsley has a bachelor's degree in fine art and is a graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program. She has painted professionally for 25 years, most notably, emotion-based abstract landscapes using the mixed mediums of oil paint and cold wax.

Karna Marks is a spiritual director on staff at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. She earned her Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary and has shepherded many people through the grief process in her role as a pastor.

Support for this program comes from the Mary Kathryn Fogarty, FSPA, Scholarship Fund.

SOULCOLLAGE® RETREAT (IN-PERSON)

FEBRUARY 19-20 • Friday, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.



Presenter: Jill McMullen

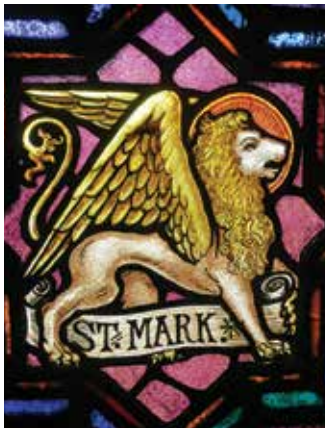
Investment:
- **OVERNIGHT:** $215, includes private bedroom, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, and supplies
- **COMMUTER:** $135, includes lunch on Saturday and supplies

Registration deadline: February 8

The depths of winter are a time of darkness but also of hidden potential. Seeds are saving their energy for spring, and ideas are waiting for the right moment to come into the light. Connect with your untapped energy and reveal what is getting ready to emerge through SoulCollage®, a creative process in which you make a personal deck of cards, one at a time. It offers a flexible, accessible and inclusive tool that can be used as a practice for your own healing and empowering evolution. Whether this is your first SoulCollage experience or you already have a deck underway, we will explore the collaging process together and make at least 10 cards. All supplies are included.

Jill McMullen, M.D., is the founder of Hayfork & Sickle LLC in rural Wisconsin. She leads workshops and hosts gatherings with an emphasis on kindling inner flames that may have become dimmed with time. The hayfork and sickle — hand tools of harvesting — symbolize the importance of recognizing when an idea is ready or when a journey is over so that we can reap the rewards of our efforts and prepare for the next season of life. Her mission is to allow healing to occur by connecting people with nature and with their own creativity.





FOUR-WEEK SERIES

THE GOSPEL OF MARK LENTEN SERIES (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

FEBRUARY 16, 23; MARCH 2, 9
Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.



Presenter: John McHugh

Investment: $80 for entire series

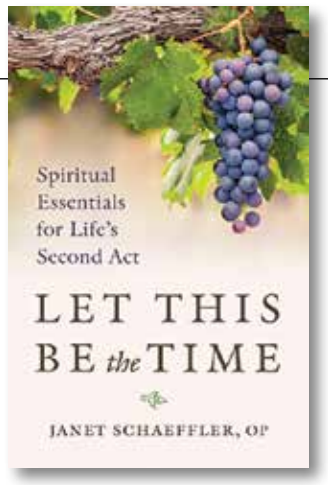
Registration deadline: February 8

Many churches throughout the world follow a three-year cycle of Scripture readings for their liturgical services. We are in the second year of that cycle, which means most of the Sunday Gospel readings are taken from the Gospel of Mark. Join biblical scholar John McHugh as he explores select passages of the Gospel of Mark and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. John's stories and examples will help deepen your Lenten journey. Participants are highly encouraged to attend all four sessions.

John McHugh is the vice president of external relations for Kwik Trip Inc., based in La Crosse, Wisconsin. 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 and his wife, Maggie, live in a log home near Sparta.

THREE-SESSION SERIES

'LET THIS BE THE TIME' BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP (IN-PERSON)



FEBRUARY 22, MARCH 22, APRIL 19
Monday, 1:30-3 p.m.

Facilitator: Esther Leis, FSPA

Investment: $10 for entire series

Registration deadline: February 15



Please purchase the book on your own and read the introduction and first four chapters prior to the first session.

Over three gatherings, we'll explore the gentle wisdom and practical suggestions in "*Let This Be the Time: Spiritual Essentials for Life's Second Act*" by Janet Schaeffler, OP.

From the book's publisher, Twenty-Third Publications: "The second half of life offers many opportunities for growth, discovery and new meanings. Janet Schaeffler helps you explore them with wisdom, prayer and a deep sense of appreciation for who you are and who you are still becoming. With insights from experts — those on the journey and those who study it — she describes 12 needs of people in their maturing years, always mindful of each individual's unique needs and realities."

Sister Esther Leis is a retired Sister living at St. Rose Convent after ministries in teaching, pastoral care chaplaincy, hospice chaplaincy, spiritual direction and caregiving. She has led grief groups, spirituality groups, 5th Steps and one-on-one sessions with those in AODA (Alcohol and other Drug Abuse).



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.

Add an overnight stay before or after your retreat for $75 per night.

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

CHOOSE FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

JANUARY 4-6
Monday, 1 p.m.–Wednesday, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Steve Spilde

Registration deadline: December 21

Limited to 3 participants.

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

JANUARY 29-31
Friday, 2 p.m.–Sunday, 1 p.m.

Facilitator: Dawn Schweizer

Registration deadline: January 18

Limited to 3 participants.

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

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS



Steve Spilde is a trained 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.

INVESTMENT:

TIER A: $400 (three-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) | 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) | 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.

BODY | MOVEMENT CLASSES



CHAIR YOGA (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)



BONUS SESSION: DECEMBER 1, 8, 15
Six-week session: JANUARY 5, 12, 19, 26; FEBRUARY 2, 9
Six-week session: FEBRUARY 16, 23; MARCH 2, 9, 16, 23

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

Instructor: Jamie Pedretti

Investment: $30 for the bonus session, $60 for each six-week session

Registration deadline: November 30/January 4/February 15

This style of yoga provides a safe approach to improved strength, balance and flexibility. Each class includes a gentle flow of seated stretches, standing poses and balance exercises. You will need a chair for modifications and balance support. The last 15 minutes of each class will include stretching exercises.



Jamie Pedretti is a 500 Registered Yoga Teacher who specializes in creating classes that feel empowering, fun and safe. She believes yoga is for everyBODY and has been teaching chair yoga classes for more than five years. When not teaching yoga, Jamie enjoys spending time with her two daughters and husband while being outside.

SLOW FLOW YOGA (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

BONUS SESSION: DECEMBER 2, 9, 16
Six-week session: JANUARY 6, 13, 20, 27; FEBRUARY 3, 10
Six-week session: FEBRUARY 17, 24; MARCH 3, 10, 17, 24

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



Instructor: Bernice Olson-Pollack

Investment: $60 for each six-week session

Registration deadline: December 1/ January 5/February 16

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.

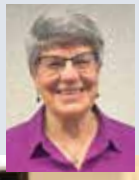
Bernice Olson-Pollack has a Master in Science in Community Counseling and is a 200-hour YogaFit-trained instructor and American Council on Exercise certified personal trainer. She provides a slow and steadily moving style of teaching that offers a comfortable yet quietly challenging yoga practice for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

PLEASE NOTE: You are welcome to attend any and all sessions; they do not necessarily build on each other. Start and stop as you wish!

QIGONG (IN-PERSON AND ZOOM)

Six-week session: DECEMBER 8, 15, 22, 29; JANUARY 5, 12
Six-week session: JANUARY 19, 26; FEBRUARY 2, 9, 16, 23

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



Instructor: Pennie Pries

Investment: $60 for each six-week session

Registration deadline: December 7/January 18



The fundamental principle of qigong (pronounced CHEE-gung) is that everything in the universe is a form of energy, including every cell in our body. "Qi" means "life-force energy" and "gong" means "skill, or to work with," so the integrated mind-body practice of qigong means "to skillfully work with your life-force energy." This ancient practice uses simple movements, mindful breathing, stretching, energy activation and intention to balance your entire being (mind, body, spirit and emotion). It helps to calm your nervous system, support healing of your internal organs, enhance circulation and build resiliency.

No experience is necessary. Every six-week session has a new focus or theme, balancing basic core principles with new information and movements. All exercises can be done seated or modified to accommodate physical challenges or medical restrictions. The recorded practice is available to be experienced repeatedly, as your weekly schedule allows. This encourages routine movement for emotional calm, better health and increased vitality.

Note: Pennie lives in Rochester, Minnesota, so she typically leads the first class of each series in person at the FSC and the remaining classes via Zoom. Participants may meet at the FSC for the entire series.

Pennie Pries is a Tier I Lee Holden Certified Qi Gong instructor with a background of teaching, coaching, Silent Counseling, ThetaHealing and real-life experiences, including health challenges. She leads qigong classes at the FSC and online through her business, Energy Shifts with Pennie, and teaches two exercise classes per week for the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program. She also works on an individual basis for deeper emotional clearing and tailored movement practices to meet specific physical/health challenges. Pennie has presented at workshops and retreats for the FSC, family gatherings, quilting groups and other venues.

Community Acupuncture offered twice a week



We've enjoyed a wonderful response to Community Acupuncture at the FSC. This is a fairly new service for us — launched in July — although practitioner Michael Kalebich might be a familiar face to those who previously sought treatment at Integrative Therapies.

Acupuncture is a Chinese medicine practice that involves the insertion of thin, sterile needles through the skin at strategic points on the body. It can be helpful for managing pain, minimizing nausea and digestive issues, and calming the nervous system.

A community setting makes acupuncture more affordable and accessible, allowing us to serve as many people as possible. It is safe, convenient and open to all adults.

Appointments are available between 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday; sessions are 30 minutes long and offered on a sliding scale fee ($20-$55). You can book your spot at www.FSCenter.org/acupuncture or call 608-791-5295.



"All someone needs to have a positive experience with acupuncture is an open mind, and sleeves and pant legs that can be rolled up easily," Michael said.

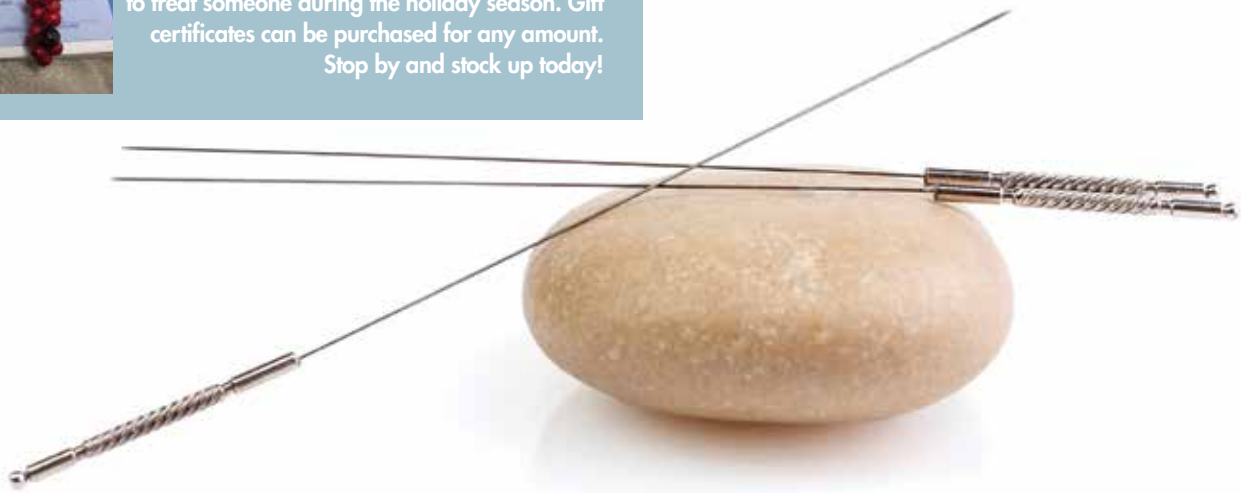


He has been practicing acupuncture since 2016 and is a graduate of the Midwest College of Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine. Michael's appreciation of how effective acupuncture can be for any number of conditions stems both from his experience having successfully treated many patients in practice and from having been a patient himself.

A great gift!



A gift certificate for acupuncture (or a retreat, spiritual direction, hermitage stay or our Sophia Bookstore) is a thoughtful and meaningful way to treat someone during the holiday season. Gift certificates can be purchased for any amount. Stop by and stock up today!



MISSION ADVANCEMENT MOMENT

Paying it forward through scholarships

As the season of thanks and giving is upon us, I can't help but pause in gratitude for those who make the Franciscan Spirituality Center all that it is throughout the year.

We have a wonderful staff who truly care for the guests and communities we serve, and who go the extra mile to demonstrate that level of care and compassion daily. We have an active and engaged board of directors who offer us steady guidance, a foundation and support that often goes unnoticed — thank you! Our wonderful guests, both as individuals and in groups, are at the very heart of the work we do at the FSC, and they make that work so meaningful, rewarding and worthwhile. And of course, none of this would be possible without the generous support of our neighbors at Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and our wonderful group of donors! We cannot thank you enough. All of you give us a sense of gratitude that sustains us throughout the year.

We have a number of wonderful scholarships here at the FSC that are worth supporting. In 2027, we'll be marking 20 years since the fund named in honor of Sister Blanche Klein was established. Countless individuals have been helped during these past two decades.

The Blanche Klein, FSPA, Scholarship Fund was started in 2007 to honor Sister Blanche Klein, who was on staff at the FSC from 1997-2003 as a spiritual director. (She continued to offer spiritual direction in La Crosse until 2016.) A generous donation from Peter and Marla Markham was the seed money for the fund, and then-Director Vince Hatt invited others to donate to it in appreciation of her. These funds can be used for Spiritual Direction Preparation Program and individual spiritual direction.

The Mary Kathryn Fogarty, FSPA, Scholarship Fund was started in 1998 by Sister Mary Kathryn Fogarty, who was director of the FSC at that time, to help Spiritual Direction Preparation Program participants who couldn't afford tuition. When Vince Hatt became director in 2000, he renamed the fund after her and invited donors to contribute to it in her honor. Today, these funds are available to guests who need financial assistance to attend any program or retreat.

The Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA, Scholarship Fund was started in 2021 with a donation from Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, and Celesta Day, FSPA, in honor of Sister Joan Weisenbeck's birthday and her service to the FSC (Sister Joan retired from the FSC staff in December 2012). People can request these funds to help pay for Spiritual Direction Preparation Program tuition or individual spiritual direction.

The Norman L. Gillette Sr. Scholarship Fund is used specifically for those recovering from addictions (5th step, programs, retreats, spiritual direction). This fund was started in 1999 with a substantial pledge from the N.L. Gillette Sr. Family Fund, administered by the La Crosse Community Foundation, to assist those in chemical dependency or alcohol recovery programs. Norman L. Gillette Sr. was a prominent La Crosse businessman, Pepsi-Cola bottling executive and major area philanthropist. He died in 1996.

The Catherine DeKrey Fund is available to SDPP participants who, due to a health crisis or other major life event, need help completing the program due to unanticipated expenses. This fund was started in 2021 by Gary DeKrey in honor of his wife and to help others like her. Catherine was a 2015 graduate of the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program who died in 2018.

I hope you'll keep us in mind on Giving Tuesday, December 1, and share with us in our gratitude for our spiritual directors, program participants and other beneficiaries of SDPP and the many other life-changing programs here at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. Thank you for being one of our partners in mission as we serve and support all those in search of God, meaning and wholeness.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Chris Williams, Mission Advancement Associate

GivingTuesday, the global day of giving, falls on Tuesday, December 1, this year. You can make a secure online donation to support our work at fscenter.org/donate.

GIVING TUESDAY

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER

Board of Directors

Teresa Clark | *Chairperson* | Kwik Trip Inc.
Brooke Newberry | Vice *Chairperson* | La Crosse Public Library
The Rev. Grant Van Lishout | Secretary/Treasurer
Peace of Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River, WI

Marlene De La Cruz-Guzmán | Viterbo University
Wade Hackbarth | Western Technical College
Joyce Heil | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration—Aging in Place
Scott Johnson | community member
Catherine Kolkmeier | La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium
Karen Lueck, FSPA | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Janie Morgan | community member
The Rev. Nate Oldenkamp | Mayo Clinic Health System
Corrina Thomas, FSPA | Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Mark Thorn | Altra Financial Advisors
Bridget Todd-Robbins | La Crosse County Human Services/
School District of La Crosse


Emmaus

Meeting Spaces


Jacoba Conference Room


Grace Hall

YOU'LL FIND EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR AT THE FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER:

- 8 distinctive meeting rooms that can seat 2 to 90 people
- State-of-the-art technology
- Professional, comfortable seating and flexible layout options
- Privacy and quiet
- In-house catered refreshments and meal options (dining room also can be reserved)
- All-day, half-day and economical two-hour rates
- Bedrooms that can be reserved for overnight retreats
- Franciscan hospitality and environmentally friendly service
- Historic charm and exquisite woodwork throughout the building



EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR NO EXTRA CHARGE:

- Large TV/display screens
- Computer access
- Microphones
- Listening assistance devices
- Flip chart with markers


Thea Conference Room


Francis Room

CALL US AT 608-791-5295 TO DISCUSS YOUR GROUP'S NEEDS AND HOW WE CAN MAKE YOUR NEXT MEETING MEMORABLE.

"The hospitality was outstanding."



"Staff went above and beyond to make us feel welcome."

Hosted groups find a home here, too



As you look through the pages of this newsletter, you see several programs and retreats that are offered by FSC staff or guest presenters who work closely with us to design an experience open to the public.

But sometimes a group has already lined up its guests and content, and simply needs space. That is what we call a "hosted group."



With 32 comfortable bedrooms with private bathrooms, eight distinctive meeting rooms that feature flexible seating arrangements and up-to-date technology, and on-site dining options, we look forward to accommodating you and a busload of your friends.

Recently, we welcomed a fun group from St. Joseph Parish in Appleton, Wisconsin, who indeed came to us by chartered bus. Our building is accessible (ramp, elevator, lift), and we have a large parking lot with free overnight parking. We're located near an Amtrak train station and regional airport, as well as the beautiful Mississippi River and La Crosse's scenic bluffs.

We'd love to welcome you and show you why we are known for our Franciscan hospitality.

If your group needs access to the historic Mary of the Angels Chapel or help from trained facilitators/ spiritual directors, please call 608-791-5295 to discuss possibilities.

"It was great to be in the same space that the sisters were praying."



Spiritual Direction Preparation Program

Cohort 19 is in full swing

Since the very beginning of the Franciscan Spirituality Center — a little more than 40 years ago — the training of spiritual directors has been a key focus of our ministry.

We are thrilled to welcome Cohort 19!

The group kicked off its three-year journey with an introductory overnight weekend in September. It's a fun mix of people with diverse backgrounds and with Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa pretty much evenly represented. Our innovative Spiritual Direction Preparation Program features in-person and Zoom gatherings, readings, verbatims and lots of practical, hands-on experience in building deep, compassionate, nonjudgmental listening skills.



We are also pleased to introduce our SDPP Care Team. Each cohort has a group of SDPP alumni who help with weekend gatherings. Cohort 19's dream team is Andrea Fluegel, Stacie Lowman, Jody Nowland and James Salimes. Words our staff used to describe them are "thoughtful," "well-spoken" and "kind." We are grateful for them.





Cohort 18 will graduate in July 2027, and then Cohort 20 will start in fall 2028. If training to become a spiritual director is something you are discerning, it's not too early to prepare. If you are not already meeting with a spiritual director, that is a good first step. You can read about our program online at www.FSCenter.org/SDPP. You are always welcome to contact Steve Spilde, who directs the programs, at sspilde@fspa.org.



Franciscan
Spirituality Center

FSPA • 912 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Visit us at Jinglefest in Holmen

On Saturday, December 5, in Holmen, Santa Claus is comin' to town.

And so is the Franciscan Spirituality Center!

We're excited to announce we'll have a booth at Jinglefest, the community celebration in downtown Holmen showcasing local businesses, area artisans and crafters. This will be the seventh year for the event, but the first for us. We have a few surprises in store and look forward to connecting with visitors.

In addition to a variety of vendor booths (indoors and outdoors), there will be food trucks, appearances by Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Grinch, a holiday lights parade, a petting zoo and other activities.

The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by the parade at 5 p.m. Vendors will be set up at Holmen Village Hall, American Legion Post 284 and Holmen Public Library, with activities taking place on both sides of Main Street.

For a list of vendors and more information, visit www.jinglefestholmen.com.

JINGLEFEST
Downtown Holmen

Follow us on :

COMING THIS SPRING



LIVING AWAKE IN A BENEVOLENT UNIVERSE
MARCH 5-6 | Gwen Pickering and Jayne Krim

COMPASSION-CENTER SOUL CARE: INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS
MARCH 12-13 | Frank Rodgers, Ph.D.

JUSTICE AND PEACE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
MARCH 26 | FSC staff and community leaders

INTUITIVE PAINTING WITH COLD WAX AND OIL: CELEBRATING CREATIVITY
APRIL 10-11 | Rick Ross

COMPOSTING WITH CREATION: A FRANCISCAN APPROACH TO RENEWAL
APRIL 12 | Traci Evans

HUG ME WITH WORDS FROM YOUR HEART RETREAT
MAY 22 | Suki Kraemer

SACRED STORIES: THE TREASURE WITHIN US ALL
APRIL 23-24 | Katherine Piderman

ICONOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
MAY 24-29 | Phil Zimmerman