

Creating a Legacy of Peace and Goodness

*“This is a very special place—a place
where God seems a bit closer.”* — Keith H.



Franciscan
Spirituality Center

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

Endowment Campaign

WHO WE ARE

All are welcome!

The mission of the Franciscan Spiritually Center is to “support 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.

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is a welcoming and inclusive place where spiritual needs are met, lives are transformed and people are deeply listened to and supported.

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is not a church and does not promote any one religion. We are truly open to all, regardless of religious or political affiliation. We are committed to making programs and services accessible to all through a generous pay-what-you-can scholarship policy.

For those with religious affiliation, we can be a complement to one’s personal faith tradition. For others who have no church affiliation, we are a place to experience community and find one’s “center.”

Our work has a profound impact on people’s spiritual health, which in turn leads to better physical, mental and emotional health, improved relationships, increased resiliency and overall happiness and satisfaction in life.*

We are a place for rest and renewal.

Connection Community

*Source: Psychology Today, 2016

MEETING THE NEED

We hold these core values:

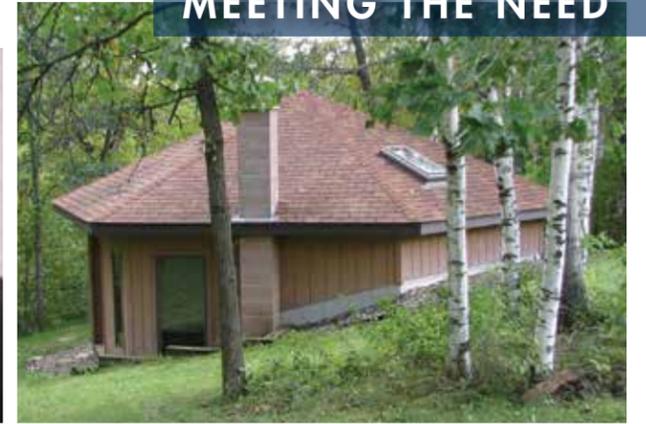
SACREDNESS: Believe that in every person and all creation lives the Sacred.

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.



Creating community

WE’RE NOT JUST MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS.

AS WE MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS, WE CREATE A COMMUNITY.

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is the only spirituality center in the Coulee Region. As the yearning for spiritual connection, wholeness, meaningful relationships and direction continues to grow, the demand for our services also will grow. We intend to respond to community needs just as we have since our inception 35 years ago.

Studies show, both nationally and regionally, that traditional religious affiliation is rapidly

declining. At the same time, locally, mental health issues, including suicide and substance abuse, are increasing (Source: United Way COMPASS Now 2018 Report).

The Franciscan Spirituality Center is in a unique position to respond to the ever-increasing need in our community for healing, compassionate listening, personal transformation, connection and spiritual growth.

Through spiritual direction (compassionate listening), healthy body movement classes, support groups, creativity workshops, guided and preached retreats and programs, **we offer opportunities to grow, heal, learn, explore prayer practices and new ideas, build resiliency, deepen listening skills and feel a sense of belonging.**

Compassionate Listening

The ripple effect in our community

The Franciscan Spirituality Center offers a key contribution to the health of the community. Today, health is viewed more holistically to include factors that contribute to our overall well-being. Our programs and services promote wellness in the community by addressing participants' emotional, social and spiritual needs as well as physical health.

The Franciscan Spirituality Center offers a countercultural response to many of society's expectations:

BUILDING RESILIENCE:

- Several of our programs and retreats incorporate mindfulness and holistic self-care practices, self-reflection and guidance on how to cultivate acceptance and self-compassion in our lives.
- We offer programs on forgiveness, dealing with change/life transitions, and coping skills for those who have depression and anxiety (*Depressed Anonymous, Meditation for Emotional Health*).
- We recently launched a series of programs to teach mindfulness and resiliency-building practices to families and girls ages 9-12 (*Living Calm in the Chaos, Girls Connect*).
- We partner with Viterbo University to make spiritual direction available to all students (at no cost) to help them navigate this busy, often uncertain time in their lives.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY:

- In our do-it-yourself society, we provide spiritual directors to accompany those on their journeys so they won't travel alone.
- In this politically and ethnically polarized climate, we invite people to come together and listen to each other through our *Listening Sessions*, our *Aging and Death Cafes*, and our *FSC Book Discussion Groups*.
- We teach compassionate listening skills through our Spiritual Direction Preparation Program and offer several groups for people to share ideas and learn from each other (*Finding God in All Things, Daring Companions, Art as Prayer*).

CREATING SACRED PAUSES:

- We are an oasis in this busy, hectic world for people who simply need to rest.
- We offer hermitage stays, self-guided labyrinth walks, *Franciscan Days of Solitude* and extended silent retreats.
- Our bookstore is open to anyone who needs a cup of coffee or tea and a quiet place to sit and just BE.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS HEAL:

- When those who have experienced loss are told to move quickly through their grief and "move on," we offer the opportunity to be accompanied through grief rather than hurry up, both through our *Grief Circle* groups and through individual spiritual direction.
- Our *Divorce Recovery* program offers support and a path for healing from divorce, separation or the end of a long-term relationship, by teaching practices based in self-compassion.
- Each summer, we invite survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and other sexual trauma to attend a weekend retreat FREE of charge.
- We provide meeting space FREE of charge to the Survivors of Suicide support group and the Mental Health Coalition of the Greater La Crosse Area.
- We offer several *Serenity Retreats* each year to men and women in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction and provide FREE Fifth Step meetings with a spiritual director.

There is a growing body of evidence indicating that spiritual practices are associated with better health and well-being for many reasons, including:

- Contemplative practice (meditation, prayer, yoga, journaling) is good for you.
- A spiritual community can improve your life.
- Having a strong spiritual outlook may help you find meaning in life's difficult circumstances.
- Spiritual people make healthier choices.
- Spirituality may help you live longer.
- Forgiveness is good medicine.
- Spiritual strength can help you overcome hardships.

(Source: University of Minnesota)



“As we learn more and more about the connections between the mind and body, it becomes clear that spirituality, religion and faith can help some individuals live well with mental health conditions. Some individuals and families turn to faith in times of crisis to help in their recovery, while others find that spiritual practices help them continue to manage their mental health.”

(Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness)



Partnering for good

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

Founded in 1985, the Franciscan Spirituality Center is the oldest of the three spirituality centers sponsored by the FSPA. The Franciscan Spirituality Center occupies the east wing of a complex that includes St. Rose Convent and the historic Mary of the Angels Chapel. We have our own separate public entrance, meeting rooms and guest bedrooms, and a staff of 11. Because we share the building, we receive in-kind support from FSPA through the maintenance, housekeeping and food service departments.

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration are known for their service and investment in this community. They have often partnered with others in the community to make good things happen.

We have been blessed by our long partnership with the FSPA. Now, as we work toward a sustainable future, we invite you to also partner with us to create a lasting legacy of peace and goodness, and do even more good in the community.



More than **500** people have been trained to provide nonjudgmental, redemptive listening through the powerful ministry of our Spiritual Direction Preparation Program, now in its **35th** year.

Your gift doubled

We invite you to be a part of this exciting opportunity to build a vibrant community of mentally, physical and spiritually healthy people. We've launched this **endowment campaign to reach a goal of \$3 million** to sustain the current programs and services we offer and to respond to future needs of the community.

For a limited time, you can **double** the impact of your gift. The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration will **match your donation or pledge through June 30, 2021**. With your generous donation, plus the match, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure the future of our region's only spirituality center.

The future needs we envision include our young adults, among whom the desire for spiritual growth and connection remains strong, even if they are not members of a church or congregation.

The time is right to create a legacy of peace and goodness in the La Crosse region for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



The rise in spirituality has been happening among both highly religious people and the religiously unaffiliated.

(Source: Pew Research Center)

Last fiscal year, **39** scholarships were awarded, totaling **\$9,787**, to help people attend programs and retreats. Plus, we gave out **280** scholarships totaling **\$7,188** for spiritual direction sessions.

We welcomed **4,435** participants to **184** programs and retreats in fiscal year 2018-19. During the same period, our meeting rooms were booked **124** times, allowing us to welcome another **1,843** guests.

Greetings,

For 170 years, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have endeavored to cultivate space that nurtures humanity's sacred relationship with the Divine. Thirty-five years ago, our sisters founded and staffed the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

They recognized that rapid changes in the Church and world called for new ways to engage. They moved beyond the hospitals, schools and parishes that they helped to establish and created new spaces for healing, learning and sacred community. The Franciscan Spirituality Center was one of the first of these spaces.

Time continues to call forth adaptation in us and our partners in mission.

FSPA is blessed with the dedicated staff, board and volunteers who cultivate an environment of respect and hospitality at the Franciscan Spirituality Center. Their mission is inclusive. Their vision is hopeful. They operate out of compassionate values that are palpable the minute you step through the door. We are encouraged by their growth, creativity and influence that reaches far beyond La Crosse.

Please join us in supporting the work of the Franciscan Spirituality Center to ensure that it continues to offer a sacred space to meet, heal and learn. Your gift will help create a pathway to make this available for years to come.

Sr. Eileen McKenzie, FSPA

A Letter from Eileen McKenzie, FSPA
President, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration



We have before us an incredible opportunity.

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration are matching the gifts we raise. Why are they doing this?

FSPA have demonstrated a long-term commitment to this spirituality center and are now inviting the community to join them in ensuring the ministry of the Franciscan Spirituality Center is sustained for years to come. They have done their part; it is time for us to do ours.

Along with our co-chair, Ken Ford, we want to be a part of this campaign because we believe in the value of the Franciscan Spirituality Center. Not only do we know people who have had life-changing experiences at the Franciscan Spirituality



Center, but we personally have been impacted in a very positive way here over the years.



We are honored to work with Ken and the campaign committee to help secure the future of the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

Barb & Joe Kruse



The Franciscan Spirituality Center is an unsung treasure in this community.

It's a place of quiet contemplation and of being deeply heard, and it helped me heal from a serious illness.

What initially drew me was a small-group experience with spiritual direction. The group provided me with intimacy, stimulation, spiritual growth and a sense of belonging in the hometown I'd been away from for 40 years.

I continued attending other programs at the Franciscan Spirituality Center that nurtured my growth and helped me meet other spiritual seekers. Eventually, I was invited to be a program presenter, which was especially satisfying because it was an opportunity to share about my own healing.

I was still somewhat debilitated by my illness when I began the FSC's Spiritual Direction Preparation Program, but I finished my training as a spiritual director in 2017. The combination of the weekend programs and coursework, the warmth and fellowship of my fellow students, and the loving, supportive staff produced transformative results. My creativity bloomed, my skills increased, my friendships flourished and my confidence took a giant leap.

The suffering I had experienced before I found the Franciscan Spirituality Center was long and intense, but I'm now having some of the best years of my life thanks to my experiences there.

Alice Holstein

Your gift will help create a legacy of peace and goodness by bridging the gap between affordability and the real cost of programs and services.

For every \$100 needed to fund a program or service at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, we are able to generate \$57 through fees, grants and donations. Fees are kept as low as possible so that everyone in the community can access them, from students to families to retirees. We also provide many low-cost and NO-cost support programs for people dealing with grief, divorce, depression and other challenges.

Another \$14 comes through in-kind support from our founders, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, in the form of our facility and services such as food service and maintenance.

That leaves a gap of \$29 needed to offer a \$100 program or service. Your gift will bridge that gap and sustain the future of the Franciscan Spirituality Center for years to come by generating additional revenue through our endowment. Earnings on the

contributions invested in our endowment will be used to fund our programs and services, keeping them affordable for all.

Your gift also will help us bridge the gap between the programs and services we offer today and future community needs. Today, for example, we provide much more programming in the area of mental health than we did when the Franciscan Spirituality Center opened 35 years ago. Your gift will allow us to keep dreaming and growing through the years, a true legacy.

Our founders, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, have seeded this endowment with a \$50,000 donation and will match donations and pledges received through June 30, 2021. The FSPA match will serve as a lead gift in our endowment campaign. As a further sign of their commitment to our mission, the FSPA are renovating our facilities, to be completed by fall 2021, as an in-kind gift to us.

WILL YOU HELP TO BRIDGE THE GAP?

FUNDING A \$100 PROGRAM



FEES, GRANTS & DONATIONS

\$57



FSPA IN-KIND SUPPORT

\$14



THE GAP WE NEED TO BRIDGE

\$29

Campaign Steering Committee

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS



Ken Ford Barb Kruse Joe Kruse

COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Annie Berendes Sharon Berger, FSPA Jane Comeau



Thomas E. Knothe, JD Jeff Lokken Mark Thorn



Tom Thompson, DVM Kristy Walz

COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS



Audrey Lucier Rika Beckley Stacey Kalas

The Franciscan Spirituality Center board and staff are dedicated to the well-being of the FSC and this campaign. Please contact any committee, board or staff member if you have questions.

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Mike Hesch • Vice Chairperson, Mayo Clinic Health System
- Joan Weisenbeck, FSPA • Secretary/Treasurer
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- Jean Pagliaro • Program and Retreat Coordinator
- Steve Spilde • Associate Director
- Laurie Swan • Office Manager
- Zoua Vue • Office Assistant

“All are welcome’ is not just a cliché.”
— Regina C.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

“You provide a warm, welcoming space to so many. Thank you all for being there.”

– Shirley H.

“The Franciscan Spirituality Center has been an integral part of my faith journey.”

– Greg L.

“I feel at peace when entering the doors of the Franciscan Spirituality Center.”

– Scott B.

“Your offerings are consistently worth the time to attend.”

– Sofia A.

“From the quiet of the chapel, to yoga class, to spiritual direction, the Franciscan Spirituality Center has helped me draw closer to God.”

– Mary E.

“I am moved to give because of the mission and outreach that the Franciscan Spirituality Center exemplifies.”

– Debra T.

“The time I spent on retreats has been invaluable in my life.”

– Rita L.

