

# *the Crookston* Benedictine

Vol. 37.2

Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston, MN 56716

Fall 2024



New Monastery Leader Sue Murphy & Pastoral Administrator Sr. Jennifer Mechtild Horner



Mount St. Benedict Leaders & Advisors

Seated: Sue Murphy, Sr. Jennifer Mechtild Horner  
Standing: Sr. Kathy Kuchar, Sr. Eileen Mohs, Sr. Kathleen McGeary, Sr. Anita Whalen

## **Sue Murphy Appointed Monastery Coordinator**

Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, Pastoral Administrator of our monastery, appointed Sue Murphy as Monastery Coordinator on July 1, 2024. Sue's family was invited to join us on September 19 for Evening Prayer and a Blessing Ceremony of Sue by Sister Jennifer. Following the reading from the Rule of Benedict, Chapter 72, Sister Jennifer offered a reflection in which she encouraged Sue and the Sisters to practice Benedictine hospitality not only to guests, but also to those with whom we live. We are to welcome one another as Christ "with every courtesy of love." As part of the Oath of Office, Sister Jennifer asked Sue a series of questions. Responding in the affirmative, Sue promised to carry out the duties of Monastery Coordinator. The Sisters, in turn, promised to listen to her guidance, to accept, to support and to pray for Sue. Sister Jennifer closed by offering a special prayer of blessing for Sue.

Sue began working for the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1997 at Sunrise Center, a child care center. She began as an aide and after a year moved into the role of teacher. Sue became the director in 2016. When Sunrise Center closed in 2019, Sue was hired as travel coordinator for the monastery. Reflecting on their years working together, Sister Judy Moen reminded Sue that she was Sue's "boss" at Sunrise Center but the tables have turned. Now, in her role as Monastery Coordinator, Sue is "boss" of Sister Judy (and all of us).

During these years of presence and employment, the Sisters have come to know Sue as a responsible, capable, warm and caring person and an effective leader. They are truly grateful for her enthusiastic acceptance of the position of Monastery Coordinator.



### FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Friends,  
I have always loved living in places that enjoy the four seasons. I cannot imagine living where I would never experience the gift each

season has to offer. It is because each season speaks of transition. We move from one season to the next with each season asking something different of us. Transitions are pivotal moments in our lives that mark the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

In this newsletter, you will read about several transitions that are happening at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. As we move into the future, we are called to let go of one way of being and allow other forms of leadership to grow. Transition teaches us that God is with us through it all. As we navigate through transitions, we learn to trust the process, finding balance between holding on to the lessons of the past and stepping confidently into the future.

As the sisters and co-workers move through these transitions, we count on your prayers. We want you to know of our prayers as you navigate the transitions happening in your life. May we all be open to God's grace that accompanies and sustains us through it all.

Jennifer Mechtild Horner, OSB  
Pastoral Administrator



### FROM MONASTERY COORDINATOR

Greetings! I started working for the Sisters of Saint Benedict in 1997, under the directorship of Sr. Judy Moen at Sunrise Center for Children and Families, a ministry of the sisters. When it was decided to close Sunrise Center in 2019, I was asked if I would like to come work for the Sisters as their Transportation Coordinator. I didn't have to think long to answer, YES!

Around two years ago, Sr. Jane Becker came into my office and asked me if I would be interested in continuing to work for the sisters, but in a different capacity. Sr. Jane said think about it, but I knew right away what my answer would be...YES!

Over the years as I have worked in different capacities for the sisters, they have always been welcoming me into their lives. I have been witness to their charity and love to all those around them. I am blessed the sisters have confidence in me to oversee their day to day living, along with their vision for the future.

As the Monastery Coordinator, I hope to continue the Sisters' mission of Prayer, Community, Hospitality and JustPeace, for the sisters, along with others that come into our lives.

Sue Murphy



### Sister Anne Marie Geray

Sister Anne Marie says her favorite assignment was serving as director of Mount Saint Benedict Center where the talent and encouragement of the Sister staff "...well, it made my job easier and very

enjoyable." She seems always to have had a low-key and graceful way of making our lives easier and enjoyable, too.



### Sister Karen Violette

Sister Karen recalls the moment she decided she wanted to be a Sister. She was a second grader serving hot cocoa to her classmates after Mass and noticed how good it felt to serve others. She has

done that in many roles and was—even at a small Benedictine community in Belgium. Sister Justina is her sister.

## Our Oblates see Parallels on the Journey

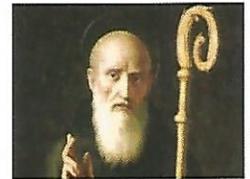
After 105 years of living out the vocation call of seeking God according to the Rule of St. Benedict, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Crookston are now into diminishment. The signs are: a) decreasing membership; b) an aging population; c) no new members; d) a lack of elected leadership.



In association with the Sisters of St. Benedict, the Oblates, too, have been living out the wisdom of Christ expressed in the Rule of St. Benedict. Although the Oblates' journey has been shorter (48 yrs.), they, too, are experiencing diminishment: a) fewer in number; b) many elderly and inactive; c) no new members; d) a lack of discerned leadership.

The Mount St. Benedict Oblate Program began with Sister Anne Marie Geray as the first director from 1978-1982. Other directors were: Sister Petronilla Hermann, 1983-1989; Sister Mary Ann Stuart, 1989 - 2004. After the sudden death of Sister Mary Ann Stuart in August of 2004, Sister Cathi Merck and Sister Lorraine Kraft were appointed interim directors for the year 2005-2006; Sister Marmion Karels, 2006 -2014; Sister Kathleen McGeary, 2015-2022; Dan & Beckie Conway, 2022-2024. During all these years the Oblates and Sisters were a support to one another through prayer, countless gatherings, newsletters and retreats.

While the Sisters would love to still host the Oblate Program, it is no longer possible to do so at this age and stage of community life. Without leadership and formal meetings at the monastery, the Oblates have been encouraged to find new ways of being Oblates as the Mount St. Benedict Oblate Program is now inactive from this point forward. Transferring Oblate membership to another Benedictine Community is an option. And, as the Sisters transition to the nearby Summit and Villa, the Oblates will have opportunities to visit the Sisters, pray with and/or for them and offer volunteer service. Whether Sisters or Oblates, St. Benedict would want his followers to age with grateful hearts and share in Community life until God brings us all together to Everlasting Life.



Sister Kathleen McGeary, OSB



### **Sister Marietta Geray**

Sister Marietta was a teacher and continues to be a lifelong learner. She has wide interests and values reverence for everything. She resides in a senior living center in St. Cloud where, just for the fun of it, she

organized a residents' bell/chimes choir.



### **Sister Louella Walsh**

Sister Luella was born in Greenbush, Minnesota. Her gentle heart took root in south Texas where she has ministered for decades. She is one of three of our Sisters

who also are members of the Benedictine Sisters of the Good Shepherd there. She welcomes Christ in the guests who come to their monastery.

## WRAC Visits MSB Archives

A team of three archivists from Women Religious Archives Collaborative (WRAC) of Cleveland, Ohio, were at Mount Saint Benedict July 26-28 to meet our sisters, learn something about our community's charism and see our archives collection. Mount Saint Benedict Monastery archives is an organized collection of textual documents, photographs, art and artifacts pertaining to this monastery's members and activities spanning more than one hundred years. Currently our archives is housed and managed here at the Mount.

In searching for a future home for our archives, our community and many others were impressed with the vision, initiative, inclusivity, professionalism and organization of WRAC. Our Benedictine community has decided to place our archives collection in the WRAC repository in Cleveland sometime within the next few years and to entrust its management to them.

The Mount Saint Benedict Crookston collection will remain separate and intact there, capable of receiving additional materials and accessible to vetted researchers. Real and virtual exhibits will be open to visitors in person and online.

Presently WRAC is engaged in a capital campaign to build a state-of-the-art repository and plan to break ground in the spring of 2025. Mount Saint Benedict has made a sizable contribution to the campaign. If you wish to join us in contributing to this worthy cause, you may contact

**Women Religious Archives Collaborative,  
2475 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street,  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115.**

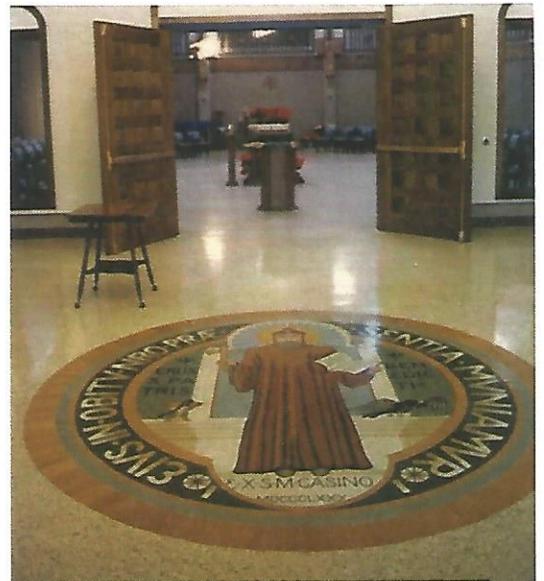
Check out their website ([archivescollaborative.org](http://archivescollaborative.org)) and Facebook (**Women Religious Archives Collaborative**), too.



From Left: Ellen Pierce, Sarah Lubelski, S. Susan Durkin, S. Anita, and S. Rachel



Top picture: 1922 Mount building entrance mosaic of St. Benedict



Right picture: 1994 Mount chapel entrance with same mosaic of St. Benedict

## Sister Kathleen McGeary and MSB Administration



Sister Kathleen McGeary has served in many capacities over the years as a Crookston Benedictine. She has been a teacher and a Special Education teacher in several grade schools, a parish Director of Religious Education, and a Pastoral Associate. For several years Sister Kathleen served at the monastery as Vocation Director, Director of Resident Volunteers, Oblate Director and a spiritual director. Recognizing Sister Kathleen's leadership skills, past prioresses and administrators called on her to be our Subprioress (Assistant Prioress). She served in that capacity for many years. With a change in our governance structure, Sister Kathleen was tapped for the position of local Monastery Coordinator.

Recognizing Sister Kathleen's need to slow down a bit, Sister Jennifer Mechtild, Pastoral Administrator, recently named her as Pastoral Care Assistant. In this role Sister Kathleen works with the Liturgy Committee regarding our liturgical life and she facilitates community life among the sister residents at the Villa and the Summit.

No matter the position, Sister Kathleen has served with energy and enthusiasm, with great organizational skills, and with a selfless outpouring of time, labor and love. With gratitude for her many years of servant leadership, we wish Sister Kathleen God's continued blessings in her new position.

---

## Heidi Whiting and the Development Office

Heidi Whiting began employment in our Development and Foundation Office in 2015 as Assistant to Sister Denise Schonhardt, Development and Foundation Director. Heidi immersed herself in the details of the job and in time moved into the position of Development and Foundation Director. In addition to the usual work of this position, she contributed to our centennial celebration, overseeing several events involving the public as well as other Benedictine communities. Heidi also had the job of assisting Sister Jane Becker and the Foundation Board in the closure of our Foundation. This momentous work involved numerous meetings regarding legal decisions and preparation of official documents. The closing of the Foundation, sadly, meant our saying farewell to Heidi, a valued employee and community friend. Our prayers, gratitude and good wishes are with Heidi as she brings her many gifts to a new development position for a non-profit in the Twin Cities as Senior Manager of Individual Giving.



---

## Sister Myra and MSB Business Office



Sister Myra Schmiege, our long-time treasurer and bookkeeper, continues to work in Mount Saint Benedict Monastery business office. But now she shares the work with Jolyn Rothgery of Mount Angel, Oregon, and Joann Remer of Grand Forks.

In the fall of 2022, Jolyn, a certified public accountant, was engaged by the Congregation of St. Gertrude to take on much of the financial operations of three of its monasteries including Mount Saint Benedict. And a year later, she took on further accounting duties for the Congregation itself. She says, "Working with Sr. Myra has been an absolute pleasure! One sharp gal and just such a pleasant person. I hope she can relax and just enjoy this phase of her life!"

Joann, a seasoned bookkeeper, pictured above with Sr. Myra, began working on site with Sister Myra one day a week learning the day-to-day operations of the monastery business office. Sister Myra says this about this new arrangement: "It's wonderful! I'm looking forward to reduced hours for leisure."



Mount Saint Benedict Monastery  
620 Summit Ave.  
Crookston, MN 556716  
phone: 218-281-3441  
www.msb.net

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Crookston, MN  
56716  
PERMIT NO. 20

***Check out our website, [www.msb.net](http://www.msb.net)***

## **Novena for National Elections**

Many Americans, it seems, are worried about the safety of our upcoming national elections. It is also a concern of Benedictine monasteries regarding matters of justice and peace. We are one of several Benedictine women's communities belonging to the Congregation of St. Gertrude. Each community in the congregation has agreed to offer prayers for our national elections, that they may be carried out with honesty, integrity and peace. Our monastery will have a novena (nine consecutive days of prayer) preceding the National Election Day of November 5. In addition, on Monday, November 4, we will offer a day of fasting and silence. We invite you to join your prayers to ours for these intentions.

## **All Souls Mailing**

You may recall that in past years we sent a letter inviting your prayer requests for deceased loved ones during November. This year we will not be sending what might be called an "All Souls" mailing. However, we want to assure you that we will remember your deceased loved ones in our Masses and prayers throughout the month of November.

- If you wish, you are welcome to send their names to our community email account: [crxbenedictines@gmail.com](mailto:crxbenedictines@gmail.com)
- Another option is to visit our website: [msb.net](http://msb.net) Click on the Prayer tab at the top of the page and slide down to Prayer Requests. Then click on Share Your Prayer Request.

Even if you do not contact us with a request, we will pray for all the deceased loved ones of our readers.