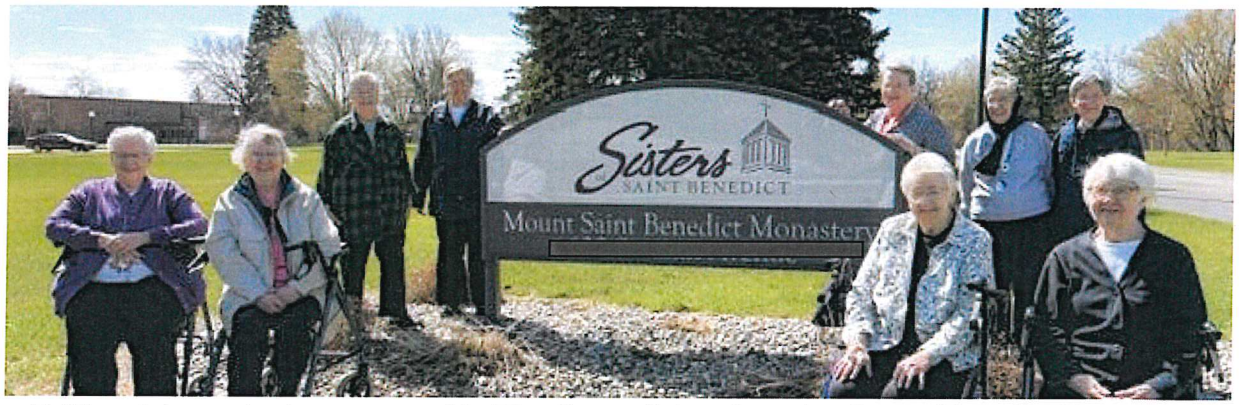
the Crookston Benedictine

Vol. 39.1 Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Crookston, MN 56716 Spring 2026



On May 7: The sisters who have moved to The Summit Apartments. Seated L to R: Sisters Eileen M, Rachel, Karen & Judy Standing L to R: Sisters Anita, Kathleen, Kathy, Anne & Eileen B.

Back in Lent Pastoral Administrator Sister Jennifer gave a spiritual boost, as it were, to the sisters in preparation for the move. On Ash Wednesday she offered a reflection at Evening Prayer calling the community to the practice of letting go. She noted that the sisters are leaving a place where they have lived and prayed for decades and that is no small matter. Sr. Jennifer stated, "The ashes on our forehead remind us that nothing stays as it was. And still, God accompanies the crossing." Toward the end of her talk Sister Jennifer offers these words of wisdom: "Let this Lent be a time of cleansing out that is not about loss alone, but about lightening the heart so it may travel toward Easter unburdened."

Matters became closer to home when Monastery Coordinator Sue Murphy appeared at the noon meal on March 7 under the guise of a professional mover, donned with hard hat and protective vest. Sue announced the Summit apartment number assigned to each sister and handed her the key. A map of the four floors of the Summit was posted so that sisters could see where each apartment was located.

In addition to the PLACE where sisters are moving, Sue provided a list of the DATE each sister was assigned to move. Everything worked out pretty much according to the plan. The first sister moved on April 13 and the last on May 7.

A delightful memento was at each place in the dining room crafted by Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom, a member of Sister Jennifer's community in Beech Grove, Indiana. The memento was a small box labeled MONASTIC MOVERS with an image of a professional mover rolling her cart of boxes. Part of the quote under the image is taken from the Rule of St. Benedict as follows: We treat your belongings as vessels of the altar 1-800-RESPECT. What was in the box? It contained hard candy, likely to provide a little energy toward the project.

Sue has been busy keeping things on task. She never missed a beat. Her very capable assistant, Teresa, also put out a great deal of energy, organizing and packing items in the general storage area, hauling boxes and items to the various apartments and whatever other needs came up. The local high school provided student volunteers on April 13 to load and unload heavier furniture into the U-Haul.

The Summit staff have been most helpful toward the sisters as they transitioned to their new living situation and the residents have been welcoming as they share their space with an onslaught of Benedictines. The sisters in turn hope to be good neighbors and residents.



FROM PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, our Benedictine community has entered a new chapter. After many years within the walls of our beloved monastery, the sisters have moved to the Summit, where they will continue their lives of prayer, hospitality, friendship, and service together.

For many of us, the monastery has long stood as a sacred place filled with memories — a place where countless prayers were offered, meals were shared, vocations were nurtured, and guests were welcomed. Leaving such a place is not easy. The farewell blessing held before the move was both tender and sacred, honoring all that the monastery has meant over many generations.

Yet even as we say goodbye to one home, we are reminded of an important Benedictine truth: the sisters are the monastery.

The spirit of this community has never been contained solely within brick and mortar. It lives in the women who have dedicated their lives to God and to one another. It is present in their faithfulness to prayer, in their quiet acts of kindness, in their listening hearts, in their laughter, and in the relationships they continue to build wherever they are planted.

This issue of our newsletter reflects both remembrance and continuation. You will read about the sisters' move and the farewell blessing that marked this transition. You will also hear the voices of students from Moorhead who spent time interviewing several sisters, discovering wisdom, humor, and stories that continue to inspire younger generations. We remember Sr. Dominica with gratitude as we celebrate her life and legacy in her obituary. And we continue our "Sister of the Day" spotlight, honoring the unique gifts each sister brings to our community.

Transitions are never simple, but Benedictine life has always taught us to trust that God is present in every season. While the setting may change, the mission remains the same. The community continues — rooted in prayer, grounded in love, and strengthened by the relationships that have shaped this Benedictine community for so many years.

Thank you for continuing to walk with the sisters during this time of change. Your prayers, support, and friendship remain a blessing to our community.

With gratitude and peace,
Sr. Jennifer Mechtild Horner, OSB
Pastoral Administrator



Sister Vivian Petersen

Sister Vivian, a settled, serene and loving presence at the Villa, now resides in the memory care unit. She enjoys looking at books and being read to. She also enjoys coloring pictures with markers.



Sister Rachel Beitz

Sister Rachel resides now at The Summit, the assisted living portion of Villa St. Vincent eldercare facility. She is a wiz at puzzles, especially those with a 1,000 pieces! For many years she was the lead in the Villa pastoral care department, so this is a familiar and friendly place for her.

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, MOORHEAD, SPOTLIGHT SISTER TEACHERS



Sr. Kathleen McGeary being interviewed by a St. Joseph student council member

In January three of our retired Sister teachers, Sisters Dianne Maresh, Kathleen McGeary and Kathy Kuchar, were interviewed by elementary students of St. Joseph School, Moorhead, Minnesota. Through thoughtful questions, videography, and reflection, students in grades 4–8 hoped to catch the wisdom, witness, and legacy of these retired Sister teachers.

Their purpose was to capture the impact the Sisters of Mount St. Benedict have had on Catholic education as a tribute to the Benedictine spirit alive in our Catholic schools today. The Moorhead team produced a video in time to share with others for Catholic Schools Week.

You may view the video on St. Joseph's School Moorhead Facebook page. You may also find it on YouTube as "Catholic Education in MN, St. Joseph's School Moorhead". The students did a fine job of it.

FAREWELL BLESSING



The sisters and staff saying their good-bye ritual in the dining room where many meals were shared, fellowship with one another and prayers were said.

On April 6 the monastic community gathered for a prayerful farewell to the Mount. Sister Kathleen McGeary, liturgist, prepared a special booklet for this bittersweet time of farewell to the monastery building. She noted that there are 14 stations and that they might be considered as the community's 14 Stations of the Cross, embracing the sadness and loss of this cherished space. The community walked through the monastery, pausing at each area to recall how the various spaces have been used and the blessings that they've received through the years. Before departing each area, the sisters prayed the following refrain:

"We thank you for your goodness, O God, your love is everlasting."



The sisters and staff saying good bye to their oratory. Daily prayers and feast days were celebrated here.

The sisters realize that the sadness of letting go of the campus that has been their home since 1919 will turn to joy and new life as the journey continues across the street. They look forward to living the Benedictine way of life in a new space with new friends and new opportunities.

The Sisters' new mailing address is:

(Sister's Name)

516 Walsh St,

Apt. 408

Crookston MN, 56716

To reach Mount St. Benedict Monastery by phone:

218-281-3441

Leave a message and Sue will forward it.

Check out our website:

www.msb.net



Sue & staff gifted the sisters at Christmas with matching flannel shirts! The sisters surprised Sue MURPHY and all wore their shirts on St. Patrick's Day! Front row L to R: Sisters Eileen M, Judy, Rachel & Karen. Standing L to R: Sisters Eileen B. & Kathleen, Sue, Sisters Anita, Kathy & Anne.



FROM MONASTERY COORDINATOR

Greetings!

Did you know when the sisters were first established here, in 1919, the sisters had over 1500 acres of land? Sr. Myra Schmieg told me they had land from the banks of the Red Lake River all the way out to County State Aid Highway 11, or Fisher Avenue. In 2022, when the sisters sold Mount Saint Benedict monastery to the Diocese of Crookston, around 39 acres were left of the original 1500 acres.

Membership peaked at nearly 300 sisters in mid-1960. About 40 years later, in 2001, 25 years ago, there were 126 sisters at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery. Today there are 15 sisters, 13 here in Crookston and 2 in Texas.

Ministries have been a big identity to the sisters. They have worked as teachers, healthcare workers and in business offices to name a few occupations. They have served in over 18 different towns or cities and even a couple countries.

With these 15 sisters their median age is 84.6 years or I'll rounded it up to 85 years old.

At the start of March, I asked the sisters to do a bit of "homework." I asked them, since entering the Monastery, how many times have they moved. Whether it is in a new town, building, or even move to a new room, either count or estimate the times moved. The total times all the sisters have moved it 188 times! With the average times each of the sisters moving is 21 times. Congratulations to Sr. Karen who has the most moves at 30 moves! I didn't add the upcoming move to the Summit, so you add another tally to their numbers.

Lastly, there have been hundred, thousands, but most likely millions of memories made by these sisters over the last seven decades of their lives, living, working and praying at Mount Saint Benedict. It doesn't matter if it was the first monastery built in 1922, or Marian Hall in 1962 or the current Mount built in 2015, the sisters will always have their memories.

Sue Murphy

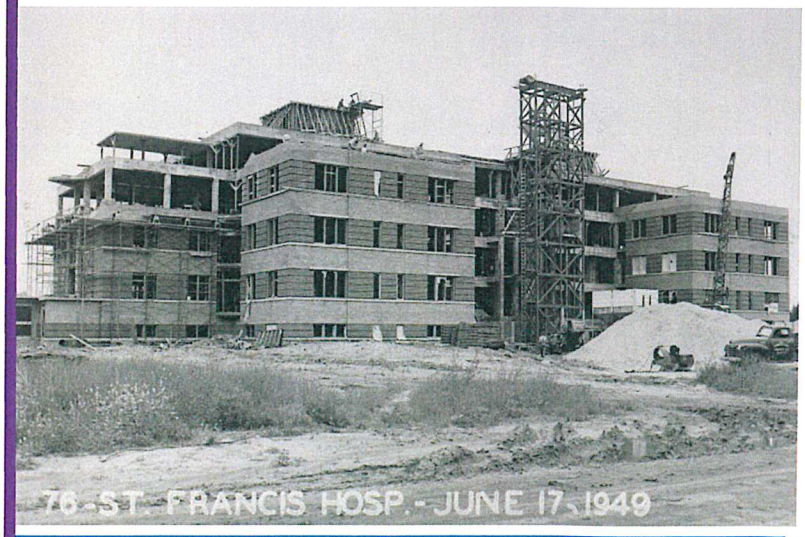
ONE GOES ON AHEAD



Since our last issue of The Crookston Benedictine, one of our Sisters has gone home to God leaving fifteen of us behind. The obituaries of this Sister can be found on our website www.msb.net



Sister Dominica Gerszewski, age 99, died on January 14, 2026 at RiverView Hospital, Crookston, Minnesota. The prayer service and Mass of Christian Burial were held January 22, 2026 in Sacred Heart Chapel, Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, with Bishop Andrew Cozzens presiding. Interment was at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery this past spring of 2026.



Archival picture of the St. Francis Hospital on June 17, 1949, under construction. It is now The Summit, where the sisters reside.



Sue dressed up in moving gear to announce apartments and give keys to the sisters. Sr. Karen was most excited about her new apartment!





TOP: March 9: Sister Veronica Kavanaugh's family came to pick up some paintings done by her; L to R, Sr. Rachel, Mary Dixon, Sisters Anita, Eileen M, Kathy, Ed Kavanaugh and Sr. Judy. Sister Veronica is their aunt.

BELOW: Two students from Crookston High School LEO Club volunteer their time and talent to help move the bigger and heavier furniture, along with a volunteer. The sisters are blessed to have many volunteers help move them over a period of time.





Furniture lined up in the hallway to be moved over to the new Summit apartments



Sisters all together before the big move! Seated L to R: Sisters Dianne, Judy, Eileen M, Karen & Rachel. Standing L to R: Sue Murphy, Sisters Eileen B, Kathy, Jennifer Mechtild, Kathleen, Anne, Anita & Teresa Cymbaluk