

## Earth Celebration 2024

On May 19th, the first day of Laudato Si' Week, the third annual "Earth Festival: Healing, Health, Hope" took place on the beautiful grounds of Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling. Co-hosted by the congregation and St. Joseph Retreat Center, this joyful experience celebrates Pope Francis' Encyclical letter, "Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home," and focuses on the seven goals articulated in the Laudato Si' Action Platform – Cry of Earth, Cry of the Poor, Ecological Education, Adoption of Simple Lifestyle, Ecological Spirituality, Ecological Economics, and Community Resilience and Empowerment.

The energy was high as attendees enjoyed live music, art, a yoga class, animal encounters, children's activities, and engaging with community partners who are actively working toward the Action Platform goals. These included Project Hope, Grow Ohio Valley, Wheeling Hospital, the Sisters Health Foundation, SSJ Heath and Wellness Foundation, Mother Jones Center for Resilient Community, and many more.

"The congregation is dedicated to caring for Earth, our common home," said Sister Kathleen Durkin, Spiritual and Retreat Director at St. Joseph Retreat Center. "By collaborating with others whose work inspires us to offer this event to the community, we hope to inspire, educate, and invite others to join us in this mission." ●



Life at  
*Mount  
St. Joseph*

There is always something going on at the Mount! Our sisters enjoy a diverse array of mind, body and spirit offerings and activities which provide opportunities to connect with one another, and contribute to an overall vibrant living experience.

Here are a few recent snapshots of life at Mount St. Joseph!



In May, sisters gathered in the Mount St. Joseph dining room for a fancy hat social where they enjoyed music, coffee, homemade coffee cake and visiting with each other. From left are Sisters Mary Clark, Alicia Weiskircher, Rosie Coughlin, Joan Kreyenbuhl, Mary Alice McMaster, Joan Singer, Ellen Poche, and Ruth Kettman.



Sisters Joan Singer, Mary Alice McMaster, Eva Marie Schlag (left), and Mary Clark (right) enjoy a golf cart ride around the beautiful grounds of Mount St. Joseph.



Sisters enjoy spending time with a variety of pets which regularly visit Mount St. Joseph. At left is Sister Joan Singer with Jumping Jack Flash, a Dachshund puppy and registered therapy dog. At right is Sister Caroline Benken with Deputy Remington (Remi), a four-year-old golden retriever who is a Comfort K9 with the Ohio County Sheriff's Office. Far right is Cpl. Nicole Seifert, Remi's handler.





Sisters celebrated World Labyrinth Day on May 4th by walking an indoor labyrinth set up in the chapel. Rev. Nancy Woodworth-Hill (right), Sister Mary Clark, Rose Mathes, Coordinator of Community Life, and Anna Marie Troiani, Director of St. Joseph Retreat Center, planned the event which included a Taize service and candlelight labyrinth walk.



Sisters Alicia Weiskircher and Joan Kreyenbuhl (left) started flower seeds in an indoor greenhouse earlier this year, which were then planted in Serenity Garden at Mount St. Joseph. Helping out with the planting were Sisters Rosie Coughlin (center) and Mary Clark (right).



Sisters gathered to put together reusable tote bags in preparation for the Healing, Health and Hope Earth Festival (left). The bags included an ecological education insert, pollinator seed packets, and free samples of Tru-Earth laundry strips, and were given out at the festival. Sisters also packed totes with toiletries for the women at the YWCA WIND (Women Inspired in New Directions) program (right).

# Jubilee

2024

The following sisters from our founding community of Wheeling, and others who live at Mount St. Joseph, are celebrating Jubilee this year. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister's entrance into religious life.

To view Jubilarian biographies, visit [CSJoseph.org/Jubilarians](https://CSJoseph.org/Jubilarians)



Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Doris Crinkey, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Alicia Marie Weiskircher, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Illeana Fernandez, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Mary Clark, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Janice Landwehr, CSJ

60 Years

## IN MEMORIAM

WE CELEBRATE THE  
LIVES OF ALL OUR  
SISTERS WHO PASSED  
AWAY IN THE LAST YEAR.



Sister Judith Ann Teufel, CSJ

Entered into eternal life  
on April 19, 2024,  
after 66 years of  
religious life.



Sister Theresa Metz, CSJ

Entered into eternal life  
on August 21, 2023,  
after 66 years of  
religious life.

# Bethlehem Farm

## Repairing Homes, Renewing Communities Program

The Congregation of St. Joseph has been a long-time supporter of Bethlehem Farm, a Catholic community in Alderson, WV, that seeks to transform lives through service with the local community and the teaching of sustainable practices.

One of the ways they do this is through the Repairing Homes, Renewing Communities Program, which improves housing conditions for low-income residents of Monroe, Summers, and Greenbrier counties.

Last year, Bethlehem Farm hosted over 300 volunteers during 15 service-retreat weeks. These dedicated young adults served the local community as volunteer labor on a variety of indoor and outdoor home improvement and repair projects. These included roof, gutter, window, door, and porch repairs, installation of wheelchair ramps, electrical and plumbing repairs, and indoor painting, flooring and more. This owner of the home below now has a safe and functional bathroom thanks to the program and the hard work of dedicated volunteers.



While this crucial and life changing work is being done, relationships with these neighbors are being established, drawing the community closer. The congregation is proud to partner with Bethlehem Farm, which embodies our mission of unity and service to the *dear neighbor*. ●



<Volunteers visit with a homeowner after repairing an unsafe floor.

To learn more about Bethlehem Farm, or to volunteer, visit [BethlehemFarm.net](http://BethlehemFarm.net)



## St. Joseph Retreat Center

### Looks Forward to Welcoming You!

St. Joseph Retreat Center located on the grounds at Mount St. Joseph serves the community as a means of extending the sister's mission of loving unity to which we are all called.

The center offers a variety of retreats, programs, and workshops year-round, and welcomes people of all faith traditions. Through our programming and natural, peaceful environment, the retreat center is a place where groups and individuals can nourish their spirit and spiritual lives. The center also offers spiritual direction, Reiki, therapeutic massage, and other wellness options.

### Upcoming Opportunities:

#### Finding Hope in Community

Join us for a day of reflection, creativity, peace, and respite with beadmaking led by Sister Mary Slattery, HM, in the morning and contemplative doodling led by Sister Carrie Vall, CSJ, in the afternoon.

**Date: Saturday, August 24, 2024. 10 a.m. - 3:30 pm.**

#### Dream Work as Spiritual Practice

Join us as we explore dreams, those night messages from the soul that bring insight and meaning into everyday life and help illuminate our path ahead.

**2024/2025 Dates: September 25, 2024, October 30, 2024, November 20, 2024, January 22, 2025, February 26, 2025, and March 26, 2025.**  
**All sessions 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom.**

#### Keeping a Journal for Spiritual Growth

Explore the intersection of journaling and prayer. Led by Cynthia Garcia, teacher, youth minister, and retreat director in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

**Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

To register or to learn more, visit [StJosephRetreatCenter.org](http://StJosephRetreatCenter.org)

## ABLE Families

On February 16th, Sister Rose Ann Hefner visited ABLE Families in Kermit, WV, to lead a prayer circle with the staff. ABLE Families, which stands for Affirming, Believing, Learning, Empowering, is a non-profit, faith-based agency founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1955 to help empower low-income families in northern Mingo County. From left are staff member Christina Cline, Sister Rose Ann Hefner, ABLE Families Executive Director Marlene Spaulding, Associate Judith Wilkinson, and staff member Will Newsome.



## Wheeling University Volunteers

In April, physical therapy students from Wheeling University's Student Leadership Academy volunteered to help clean up the property around St. Joseph Retreat Center. They were joined by Sister Kathleen Durkin (seated in front) and Anna Marie Troiani, Director of St. Joseph Retreat Center (not pictured). We are so grateful to these students and their teachers for so generously donating their time and energy to help us beautify our grounds and prepare for spring planting!

## Liza's Place

Sisters Marguerite O'Brien (second from right) and Kathleen Durkin, along with the Congregation of St. Joseph, were honored by Valley Hospice: Liza's Place, a 12-unit care and residential hospice center in Wheeling. Each sister received the Visionary Award at Liza's Place 15th Anniversary celebration in March. Both Sisters Marguerite and Kathleen were in leadership when Liza's Place was founded in response to a need for hospice care in the area, and supported the initiative. The award was presented by Andrea Hale (left center), CEO of Valley Hospice, to Sisters Marguerite and Ginny Yeager (right center), who accepted on behalf of Sister Kathleen Durkin who was unable to attend. Also attending were Sisters Mary Ann Rosenbaum (left), Mary Alice McMaster (seated), and Joan Kreyenbuhl (right).



## Bravo!

Congratulations to Sister Mary Ann Rosenbaum, one of the employees of WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital who was recently honored with a quality award. Sister Mary Ann, who was nominated by her colleagues, received the award in recognition of the quality of her patient engagement. Awards were presented at a luncheon at the hospital.



## Catholic Charities

In March, sisters and staff attended the Catholic Charities West Virginia Hope Gala in Wheeling.

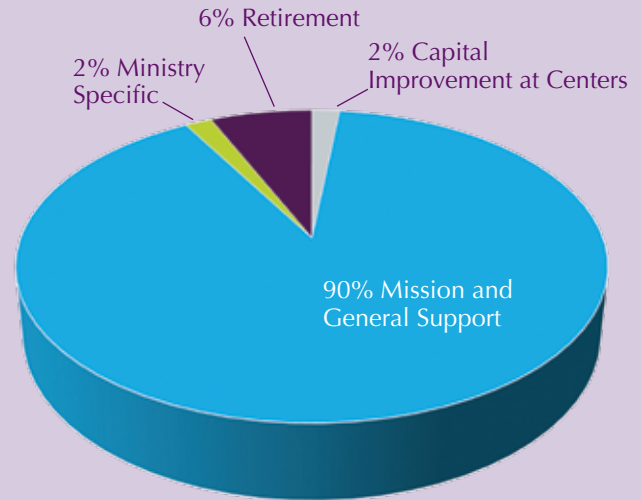


## Serra Club

In May, sisters attended an appreciation luncheon hosted by the Wheeling Serra Club at St. Alphonsus Parish Center.

# Bless You!

We are so very grateful for your kind gifts of financial support. Your kindness helps care for our retired and infirm sisters, continue our ministries, and fosters our mission as we live and work so *that all may be one*. Here is how we used your contributions for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023:



## Ways to Deepen Your Support

- Direct a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA to "Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph," EIN No: 83-0481134.
- Consider a charitable gift annuity (CGA). For gifts of \$10,000 or more, you receive tax advantages and a lifetime stream of income payments – often at above market rates.

### Single Life Rates

*American Council on Gift Annuities 1.1.2024*

| Age | Rate   | Annual Income<br>\$10,000 Annuity |
|-----|--------|-----------------------------------|
| 60  | 5.20%  | \$520                             |
| 70  | 6.30%  | \$630                             |
| 80  | 8.10%  | \$810                             |
| 90  | 10.10% | \$1,010                           |

**To Learn More**, contact Melissa Haley O'Leary, Director of Development at [moleary@csjoseph.org](mailto:moleary@csjoseph.org) or **216-688-3474**

*The Congregation of St. Joseph cannot give you financial or tax advice, so please consult with your financial advisor before making any final decisions.*



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## Spotlight Photo



*On April 8th, sisters, associates, staff, and friends gathered at Mount St. Joseph to watch the solar eclipse.*

*If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email [communications@csjoseph.org](mailto:communications@csjoseph.org).*

# BEYOND THE HABIT

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Hosted by Sisters  
Erin McDonald, CSJ  
and Colleen Gibson, SSJ