

A Milestone Anniversary!

Celebrating 375 Years of Service and Presence

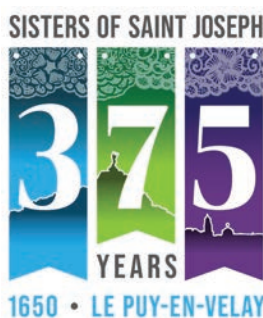
This year, the Congregation of St. Joseph joins with other communities of Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide in celebrating the 375th anniversary of our founding!



Art by Sister Mary Elizabeth Nelsen

In 1650, six ordinary women who shared a common desire to grow in their love of God and serve the unmet needs of the people around them, began meeting in a small kitchen in Le Puy-en-Velay, France. Under the patronage of St. Joseph and the spiritual guidance of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ, they went out into the city and among the people to minister to the poor and vulnerable whom they called their

dear neighbors. This was not common as most women religious of the time were cloistered and remained behind convent walls. They wore widows black in order to move about the city unaccompanied, and supported themselves by making lace. These first six sisters are represented by the six dots along the top of the logo along with lace and the skyline of Le Puy visible in the background.



From these humble beginnings, the order grew under the leadership of Mother St. John Fontbonne (left), later expanding to the U.S. and Wichita, and communities all over the world. Just as these first pioneering women did in 1650, Sisters of St. Joseph continue to respond to the unmet and critical needs of the world and the people around us. Our mission – to love God and neighbor without distinction – is at the heart of all we do. ●



< Mother Bernard Sheridan, foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita in 1900.

> Sr. Vivian Dicus teaching at St. Cecilia's Conservatory of Music circa 1950s.



< Sr. Virgil McFarland tends to a sick child at St. Joseph Home in El Dorado, KS.

> Sr. Veronice Born with students circa 1950s.



^ Sister Anne Dolores LaPlante with student circa 1960s.



^ Past leadership team members Sisters Jeannie Masterson and Christine Parks with sisters in Japan in 2016.



^ Sister Agnes Weber ministers to a resident of the Catholic Care Center in Wichita in 2017.



^ Sister Ann Catherine Burger and student volunteers from St. Joseph's Academy during Dear Neighbor Ministries' Hilltop youth summer program in 2017.



< Sisters Margaret Nugent, Anne Dolores LaPlante and Connie Beiriger at a food drive during our annual service days in 2024.

Life at *The Mount*

As Sisters of St. Joseph, we believe relationship is at the heart of who we are. This philosophy extends to our residential centers, which are vibrant places of activity that offer a warm and friendly community environment, places for gathering and quiet reflection, and activities for mind, body and spirit. There are also opportunities for service to others.

We invite you!

A limited number of apartments on our Wichita campus have recently become available to women and men who are looking for assisted or independent living, or skilled and short-term rehabilitation residence.

If you are interested in a unique kind of living experience and want to learn more, we invite you to consider joining us!

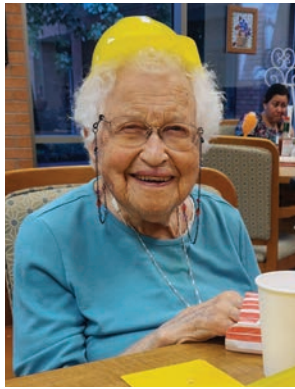
For more information, contact
Luke Sponsel at **316.686.7171**
or **lsponsel@csjinitiatives.org**.



On May 29th, the congregation celebrated our sisters' in Wichita who are observing jubilees this year with a special Mass followed by a reception. The Mass was celebrated by Most Reverend Carl A. Kemme and co-celebrated by the Reverend David J. Lies, who also serves as the sisters' chaplain. This year's jubilarians are, from left, Sister Ursula Fotovich (50 yrs), Sisters Zita Oberle, Martina White, Catherine Therese Paulie and Margaret Nugent (70 yrs) and Sister Jacklyn Duncan (60 yrs). Congratulations sisters!



On June 6th, Sisters in Wichita showed off their orange as part of Wear Orange Weekend, a movement to raise awareness about gun violence. Pictured here are (left to right) Sisters Arlys McDonald, Margaret Ellen Isenbart, Catherine Therese Paulie, Anne Dolores LaPlante, Irene Regan, Anita Germain, Janelle Ann Brittain, Teresa Waner and Mary Ellen Loch.



In June, sisters, residents, and staff held a party to celebrate the completion of construction to our center. Everyone in attendance enjoyed games, music, and sweet treats including freshly spun cotton candy! Construction has been going on in and around the center for over a year. From left: Sister Connie Beiriger enjoys a game of Skee-ball; Sister Margaret Ellen Isenbart is all smiles; Sister Lois O'Malley and Center Administrator Luke Sponsel play Cornhole; Sisters Jean Louise Diskin, Anne Dolores LaPlante, and Connie Beiriger.



In March, sisters celebrated Mardi Gras with a festive party complete with colorful beads, masks, music, and of course, King Cake! On the left is Sister Janelle Ann Brittain and right is Sister Irene Regan.

Also in March, sisters enjoyed a visit from Hapi Paws Therapy. It's wonderful to see the joy a furry friend can bring! Pictured here are Sisters Jean Louise Diskin and Mary Clare Doebel.



In April, The Mount welcomed a special visitor as part of the Easter Festivities! Sisters enjoyed visiting with and taking photos with the Easter bunny. From left are Sisters Joan Burger, Zita Oberle, and Sharon McCauley.

Jubilee

2025

The following sisters from our founding community of Wichita or who currently live in Wichita are celebrating Jubilee this year. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister's entrance into religious life.



Sister Margaret
Nugent, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Jacklyn
Duncan, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Zita Oberle, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Ursula
Fotovich, CSJ

50 Years



Sister Catherine
Therese Paulie, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Marie
Dolores Ohno, CSJ

50 Years



Sister Martina White, CSJ

70 Years

To view biographies
of all our sisters
celebrating Jubilee
this year, visit

CSJoseph.org/Jubilarians

PRESERVATION EFFORTS ON OUR WICHITA CAMPUS

In 2018, the Congregation of St. Joseph built the new **Mount St. Mary's Center** in Wichita. It is a wonderful addition to our campus where sisters and residents are able to comfortably age in place in a light-filled, energy efficient space that is right-sized for our current and future needs. Considerable time was spent discerning what would be best for the old motherhouse. For a few years we were able to offer local non-profits space there, however the cost of maintaining the building and later lack of interest in occupying it brought us to a decision – it was time to conserve resources and deconstruct the building. This process was completed earlier this year. During deconstruction, we carefully set aside special items that were gifted to us. With your help, we plan to move these items to new places of honor on the Mount Saint Mary's campus.

STATUE OF MARY THE BLESSED MOTHER

This statue of Mary the Blessed Mother graced the top of our former convent for over 100 years beginning in 1903. A gift of Reverend Felix Ward, C.P., and Miss Lelia Hardin Bugg, it miraculously survived a 1913 fire which destroyed the convent and even melted the statue's metal supports! In 1915, Our Lady was once again placed at the top of the new convent until she was removed and placed in storage prior to deconstruction. Now, with the help of donors like you, we will place Our Lady in front of Mount Saint Mary's Center where she can once again welcome all to our home.



SUNDIAL

After our Sisters arrived in Kansas in 1888, the first decade was a struggle as they moved from Abilene to Parsons to St. Paul. In 1898, the Most Reverend John J. Hennessy, DD called the Sisters to Wichita. In 1903, Bishop Hennessy gifted the Sisters this sundial to commemorate their arrival. Now, with the help of donors like you, it will be placed in front of Mount St. Mary's Center.

BELL

In 1939, the indigenous Mexican people of Del Norte, Colorado gifted a bell to the Sisters in appreciation for establishing and running the area's only hospital. It was placed at the top of the convent and rung for daily Angelus, funerals, and more. With the help of donors like you, it will be electronically enabled and placed in a new tower outside of the chapel at Mount St. Mary's Center.



If you would like to help with this effort, please use the enclosed envelope or go to **CSJoseph.org** and click on **"Donate Now."** Please mark your gift with a memo or note as **"For Historic Preservation."** For more information, contact **Melissa O'Leary**, Director of Development at **moleary@csjoseph.org** or **216.688.3474**.

SPONSORED MINISTRIES

StepStone

StepStone, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph's Mission Network in Wichita, responds to the critical needs of survivors of domestic violence by providing transitional housing and supportive services that help nurture lives of stability and hope. For nearly two decades, Angela LyDay-Burris has been a steady presence at StepStone, providing safety and support to survivors and helping them rebuild their lives.

“The most rewarding part is watching participants regain confidence and learn new skills—sometimes for the first time,” she said. She added that she’s witnessed tremendous growth from StepStone’s early days to its more recent expansion.

Angela says she dreams of a world where places like StepStone are no longer necessary, but remains committed until that day. After 18 years, her belief in the resilience of survivors remains as strong as ever. ●

To learn more, visit StepStoneKS.org



Angela LyDay-Burris, Client Advocate at StepStone.

Dear Neighbor Ministries

Fresh food shouldn't be a luxury—but for too many families in Wichita, it is. At Dear Neighbor Ministries, a member of the congregation's Mission Network, they work to provide access to nutritious food for all community members. To do so, they work alongside three incredible local farms—Firefly Farm, BirdSong Farm, and Anchor Farm—to bring fresh, nutrient-dense produce straight from the fields to the families they serve. This collaboration, known as the Dear Neighbor Farmers Nourishment Network, is more than just a food distribution effort. It's a commitment to well-being, health, and sustainability. It's about ensuring that when families visit the pantry, they're not just getting food, they're getting the best food possible. ●

To learn more, visit DearNeighbor.org



Mayra Jaimes, Operations Coordinator at Dear Neighbor Ministries.

ASSOCIATE NEWS



On February 16th, the congregation welcomed four new associates in Wichita during a Mass and commitment ceremony. From left are associate mentor, Sister Karen Salsbery, new associates Monica Ramirez and Doreen Demel, associate mentor Ginger Hartman, new associates Victoria Audley and Rita Snider, and associate mentor, Angie Urenda. Welcome new associates!

Interested in learning about how to become an **Associate** with the Congregation of St. Joseph? Find out how at CSJoseph.org/As-An-Associate

In Memoriam



Sister Rita Lambert CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 7th, 2024, after 75 years of religious life.



Sister Guadalupe Martinez CSJ

Entered into eternal life on June 8th, 2024, after 74 years of religious life.



Sister Virginia Watanabe, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on May 14th, 2025 after 69 years of religious life.

We Remember

We Celebrate

We Believe



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Spotlight Photo



Sister Frances Duos with Trooper, one of the adorable therapy Alpacas that came to visit the sisters from Peachy Farms in Towanda, KS.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email communications@csjoseph.org.

We invite you!

to join us in a truly unique living experience.

If you are looking for a licensed assisted living residence in a warm and friendly community environment for yourself or a loved one, we invite you to consider joining us!

Our residents enjoy:

- Modern, comfortable suites
- Beautiful grounds and walking paths
- Life enrichment and wellness programs
- Volunteer service opportunities
- Mass and prayer offerings

For more information, contact **Luke Sponsel** at **316.686.7171**, or lsponsel@csjinitatives.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

