

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 Nazareth, 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 Margaret Mary Lacy who established the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth in Kalamazoo in 1889.

> Sisters Catherine McGuire, Gertrude Keenan, Elizabeth Vary, and Angela Kane during the 40th anniversary of their founding in 1929.



^ Sisters at St. John Hospital in Kalamazoo preparing for dedication day in 1952.



^ Sister Celestine Connor teaches an English class at Nazareth Academy in 1963.



^ Sister Mildred Werner reviews an x-ray at Borgess Hospital circa 1970s.



^ Sisters and friends attend a nuclear protest in 1984.



^ Sister Lenora Benda ministering to a child in Thailand in 1980.



^ Sister Judy Blake (right) and friends at St. Luke New Life Center in Flint in 2008.



< Sister Marie Benzing with children of adult learners at La Casa Guadalupe in Detroit in 2020. Sister Marie founded the adult basic education ministry in 2015 and it is still going strong today.

Jubilee

2025

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



Sister Mary Rene Poirier, CSJ

80 Years



Sister Patricia Dillon, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Bernita Marie
Gensterblum, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Barbara Kaufmann, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Patricia Mullen, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Mildred Werner, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Marjorie Bassett, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Patricia Whalen, CSJ

60 Years

*Congratulations to all our sisters celebrating jubilee from
around the congregation this year!*

IN THE COMMUNITY



Bishop Edward Lohse of the Diocese of Kalamazoo (left), celebrated St. Joseph the Worker Day on May 1st with our sisters in Nazareth.



This spring, Sister Erin McDonald again volunteered at the US/Mexico Border along with a delegation of Sisters of St. Joseph from across the country. Their time included serving in local shelters and learning about migration issues from local faith leaders and non-profits.



In February, several of our sisters attended the OutFront 2025 Gala to support the organization and the LGBTQ+ community in West Michigan. Pictured from left are Sisters Rita Ann Teichman, Betty Granger, OutFront Executive Director, Christopher Terkos, and Sisters Tami Schab and Pam Owens.



In March, Sister Christine Parks (center) read from her award-winning book of poetry, *Earth Borne*, during a poetry reading at the Kalamazoo Public Library. Her book was one of the winners of the 2025 Celery City Chapbook poetry contest. Pictured with Sister Christine are Sisters Wanda Wetli, Rita Ann Teichman, Marjorie Bassett, and Janet Fleischhacker.



In June, representatives from the congregation visited the YWCA Kalamazoo for continuing conversations around how we can continue to support and partner with the Y. The congregation supports the YWCA through granting and volunteerism. From left are YWCA staff members Lisa Rodriguez, VP of Advancement, Andre Carr, VP of Early Childhood Education, Emily Deering-Caruso, Director of Development, and Susan Rosas, CEO, along with Sister Rita Ann Teichman and Ed Sutoris, Executive Director of Advancing Mission and Partnerships for the Congregation of St. Joseph,

Life at *Nazareth Center*

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 at our Nazareth center are available to women and men who are looking for a licensed assisted living residence.

If you are interested in a unique kind of living experience for yourself or a loved one, we invite you to consider joining us!

For more information or to schedule a tour, contact **Tammy Nelson** at **269.244.3580**, or by email at **tnelson@csjoseph.org**.



Sisters gathered in January to help Sister Consuelo Alcala celebrate her 90th birthday! From left are staff member Marge Freundl, and Sisters Nina Rodriguez, Jeanne Gamache, Consuelo Alcala (seated), Lenora Benda, Marie Benzing, and Cathy DeSantis.



In observance of the Triduum and Easter in April, Nazareth sisters gathered for an Easter Vigil reception and traditional foot washing. Pictured here with sisters is Father Ken Schmidt.



In April, Sister Mila Sones (seated, right) showed sisters, staff, and lay residents how to make wax seals for Easter cards.



January is Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month, and on January 11th, sisters in Nazareth wore blue in support for and recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Day.



Sisters and friends in Nazareth enjoyed a Mardi Gras celebration in March that included a parade into the dining room, lunch, music, and games! Left are lay resident Jo Sullivan and Sisters Jeanne Gamache, Marie Benzing, and Pam Owens. Right are lay resident Peggy Klitch and Sister Bernadette Barker.



Sisters, residents, and staff at the Nazareth center celebrated Mother's Day with a lovely tea party! From left are Sisters Katie Tragesser and Betty Granger; Georgianna Simon and Pat Mullen; and Jeanne Marie Greenen, Goretti Germain, Mary Pung, and Pat Altermatt.

In Memoriam



Sister Mary Catherine Prunte, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on May 15, 2025, after 64 years of religious life.

Sister Sylvia Dimeck, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on February 22, 2025, after 74 years of religious life.



Sister Margaret Joseph Hornyak, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on January 12, 2025, after 75 years of religious life.

Sister Mary Claver Hickmott, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on September 27, 2024, after 77 years of religious life.



Sister Peggy Galloway, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on September 8, 2024, after 57 years of religious life.

Sister Mary Joan Walsh, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on August 26, 2024, after 72 years of religious life.



Sister Marilyn Nichols, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on July 23, 2024, after 74 years of religious life.

Diocese of Kalamazoo Catholic Jail Ministry

In 1986, Sister Marilyn Sullivan (right) launched a jail and prison ministry that provided for inmates educationally, culturally, and spiritually throughout the Diocese of Kalamazoo's nine counties.



Since then, the jail ministry has included Bible studies, Holy Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, education, visitation with inmates, and support for families. These services are available to male and female inmates regardless of religious affiliation.

Sister Marilyn served in this ministry for 18 years. After her death in 2010, operations were assumed by the diocese, but the jail ministry she began continued and is still going strong today. Several of our sisters, associates, and friends serve as volunteers (see below).

The Congregation of St. Joseph has a long-standing commitment to prison ministry, restorative practices, and to abolishing the death penalty in the United States. Along with the Kalamazoo Jail Ministry, this includes the work of Sister Helen Prejean, Catholic Mobilizing Network, a member of our CSJ Mission Network, and other sisters who minister to inmates. ●

To learn more, visit KalamazooJailMinistry.org.



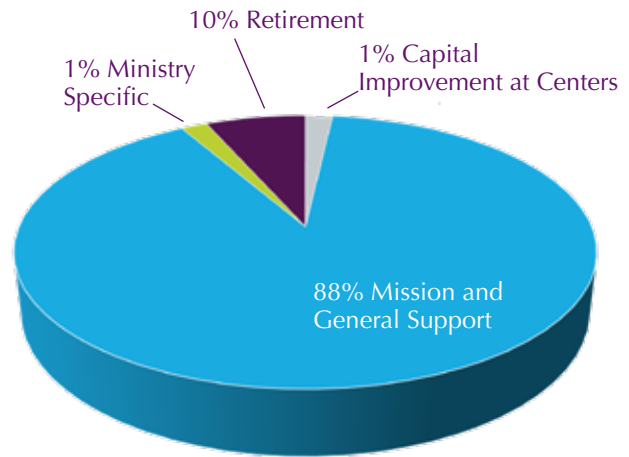
Standing from left are Sister Marjorie Bassett, Ann Davis, Sandy Morton, Associate Christine Tanis, Sister Wanda Wetli, and Lisa Irwin. Seated from left are Sisters Jeanne Marie Greenen and Mary Pung, Diana Godish, and Sister Rita Ann Teichman.

THANK YOU!

Dear supporters...

We are so very grateful to and for you and all that you do to support our sisters and mission of sharing God's inclusive love. We are awed and blessed by your continued generosity and love!

Here is how we used your charitable contributions from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024:



Other ways to support us...

● Become a Sustaining Donor

If you would like to stop writing checks, save time and resources, and enjoy the affordability and convenience of giving through an automatic, electronic monthly gift, join our Circle of Friends monthly giving program.

● Leave a Legacy of Love

By becoming a legacy donor, you can continue partnering with us in our mission of unifying love and service even after your lifetime and potentially reduce your current or future tax burden. Here are a few ways that you can include the congregation in your legacy of love:

- Include CSJ in your will or trust
- Name CSJ as an account beneficiary
- Invest in a CSJ charitable gift annuity (CGA) that will provide you with tax benefits and guaranteed income for life
- Establish a donor advised fund (DAF)

● Make a Charitable Distribution from your IRA

If you must take RMDs (required minimum distributions) from your IRA, but don't need the income and don't want to pay taxes on it, you can ask your plan administrator to use all or part of your RMD to support the congregation through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).



We have found our spiritual home with the Congregation of St. Joseph. They have welcomed and shared so much with us. And now we likewise share with them.

- Joel and Betty Chraska,
Monthly donors



Even though my contribution is small, I'm happy to be able to participate in this way with the sisters as they care for the 'dear neighbor.'

- Vi Powers, Legacy Donor

To Learn More:

Contact Melissa Haley O'Leary, Director of Development, at moleary@csjoseph.org or 216.688.3474.

Important Note:

When planning your gift, please use our legal name, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, EIN: 83-0481134.

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



2929 Nazareth Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit No. 2280

Spotlight Photo



Our summer residents are back! Each year, sheep from a local farm come to stay on our property to serve as natural lawn mowers and for our sisters, residents, and staff to enjoy. They are shown here with staff member Erin Andreucci.

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 **Tammy Nelson** at **269.244.3580**, or tnelson@csjoseph.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

