

# Serving the Dear Neighbor

NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

## Building Global Citizens

### Young adult voices reach the United Nations through sister mentorship

In March, Sister Erin McDonald (far left) attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York City. With her were three young adults – Maryam Qoda, Molly Sutter and Holly O’Hara – who had the opportunity to explore global issues related to women.

Each year the Congregation of St Joseph offers the opportunity for young adults to enter into an experience of global citizenship, interculturality, leadership and dialogue at the United Nations. Our young adults are fascinated to learn that Catholic sisters work at the UN and engage in forums on global policy, social justice, peacebuilding, education and resource management. The US Federation of Sisters of St Joseph currently has two sisters working at the UN as advocates and ambassadors of our charism and the needs of our communities around the globe.

Young adults selected to participate in this experience learn about our congregation’s history, charism, prayer style and CSJ mission prior to heading off to New York City. Once at the UN our sisters greet and orient our delegation to the UN and the current context of women religious serving in this global network.

The UN Commission for the Status of Women strives to ensure and strengthen access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers. This year, our delegation attended an incredible variety of presentations, panel discussions, and art for justice sessions. For example, a global panel on empowering female farmers and access to land justice, a global youth forum on women’s equality, and the impact on war and displacement on women and girls. We also attended the UN Symphony which, in honor of the Commission for the Status of Women, hosted a concert that featured female conductors and female composers from around the world.



The young women who attended the UN Commission shared that it was an incredibly transformative experience. It provided them an opportunity to see how the sisters’ charism is alive in the world today and to reflect on ways in which Christ’s unioning love is still so needed in our country and our world. ●

# Jubilee

2026

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 Grace Scola, CSJ

80 Years



Sister Melanie Filipac, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Phyllis Mary Tousignant, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Goretti Germain, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Jeanne Gamache, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Jacqueline Wetherholt, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Mary Rita Sayers, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Betty Granger, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Elizabeth Fallon, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Janet Chadderdon, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Theresa MacIntyre, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Christine Gretka, CSJ

60 Years

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

To view biographies of all our jubilarians, visit us at [CSJoseph.org](http://CSJoseph.org)

# IN THE COMMUNITY



On May 31st, Sister Erin McDonald, associate Leah Hinman, and Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck took part in a “Prayer Walk for Peace, Justice, and Dignity of Immigrants” at the Michigan state capital in Lansing. The event was hosted by NETWORK and Strangers No Longer and was a multi-faith public witness.

In February, sisters from Nazareth attended the Winter Gala fundraiser to support OutFront Kalamazoo. The congregation is proud to partner with OutFront and support their efforts to create a just, inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment for people in the LGBTQ+ community in West Michigan. Pictured from left are Sisters Wanda Wetli and Janet Fleischhacker, Executive Director of OutFront Christopher Terkos, Sisters Susan McCrery and Mary Ellen Gondeck, and associate Janet Frayer.



Recently, sisters and staff attended several gatherings in Detroit to discuss local efforts being taken around immigration including, “Witness to Hope: Pastoral Care of Immigrant Communities” sponsored by the Archdiocese of Detroit. They also met with individuals from organizations we support in the area. Pictured left are Bill O’Brien, Executive Director of Strangers No Longer, Sister Cathey DeSantis, and Lonnie Ellis, Executive Director of In Solidarity.

# 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 **Yewande Okolo** at **269.381.6290**, or by email at **yokolo@csjinitatives.org**.



Sisters and residents recently had the opportunity to view mock ups of history wall panels that will soon be installed on walls at the Nazareth center. The panels will tell the history and story of the sisters and congregation to all who come to the center and will be enjoyed for years to come.



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



In March, sisters, associates, and friends of the congregation made over 100 loaves of sweet bread in several different flavors for the annual St. Joseph Day Table. After being blessed by Father Ken Schmitt (left), the bread was taken and given to people who come for the evening meal every Wednesday at the Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church.



Sisters, residents, and staff at the Nazareth center celebrated Mother's Day with a lovely tea party! From left are John Yellich, a friend of Sister Grace Scola, serving Sister Pam Owens tea; Sisters Katie Tragesser and Georgianna Simon; and Sisters Theresa MacIntyre and Betty Granger.



## Powering Our Future

### Investing in a greener tomorrow through solar expansion

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The Congregation of St. Joseph has a long-standing commitment to care of Earth, sustainability, and to practices that help reduce our carbon footprint at each of our properties.

This summer, the solar array field at our Nazareth center in Kalamazoo is being expanded to add 400 kW-dc solar panels to the field currently on site. When complete, the expanded arrays will produce an additional 540,700 kilowatts per year to power the center which will save approximately \$66,000 in utility costs and avoid 528,000 lbs of CO2 emissions each year.

Yewande Okolo, Center Administrator at the Nazareth Center and a key part of the project, said, “We are excited for the opportunity to be part of the congregation’s decarbonization efforts through the expansion of the solar arrays at Nazareth. The Sisters remain deeply committed to environmental stewardship and have chosen to invest in long-term clean energy solutions.”

While the expansion represents a significant investment, the project is expected to deliver meaningful long-term benefits. By increasing on-site clean energy generation, it is expected to lower utility costs, reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy sources, and create savings that

can be redirected to support the congregation’s mission and community initiatives.

“By generating more clean energy on-site, we hope to lower utility costs, reduce our reliance on nonrenewable energy sources, and create savings that can be redirected toward supporting our mission and community,” said Okolo. “I am grateful to play a small role in this effort, which reflects both environmental stewardship and long-term financial responsibility.” The expanded solar array is projected to be operational in August. ●



# In Memoriam

Sister Sally Callahan, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on May 19th, 2026 after 70 years of religious life.



Sister Lois Barror, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on February 9th, 2026 after 72 years of religious life.



Sister Rita Schafer, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on October 24th, 2025 after 68 years of religious life.



Sister Patricia Whalen, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on October 2nd, 2025 after 60 years of religious life.

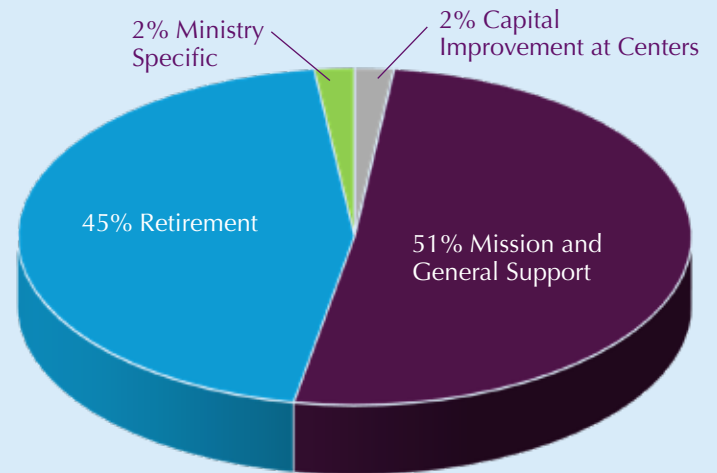


*We Remember We Celebrate  
We Believe*

## TO OUR SUPPORTERS

### Thank You!

Your gifts of support are a blessing! Thank you for partnering with us in mission and helping us provide for our retired sisters. Here is how we used your charitable contributions July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025:



### Other Ways to Give

#### • Qualified Charitable Distribution

Did you know that you can direct unneeded required minimum distributions (RMDs) to us through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA? If you don't need the income, or the taxes it may incur, ask your advisor about a QCD.

#### • Donor Advised Fund

If you have a donor advised fund (DAF), please consider including us in your grant recommendations this year. We welcome DAF gifts!

#### • Leave a Legacy of Love

You can continue to partner with us in our mission of unifying love and service even after your lifetime by including the congregation in your plans. A planned gift may also reduce your estate taxes. Request our Legacy of Love brochure today.

**To Learn More**, contact Melissa Haley O'Leary 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 a financial or tax advisor before making any financial decisions.*



2929 Nazareth Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

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## Spotlight Photo



*In honor of Earth Day on April 22, Sister Betsy Meagher (left) and friend of the congregation, Michele Gossman took part in a spring cleanup near the Nazareth center in Kalamazoo.*

*If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email [communications@csjoseph.org](mailto: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 **Yewande Okolo** at **269.381.6290**, or by email at [yokolo@csjinitatives.org](mailto:yokolo@csjinitatives.org).

