



Holy Wisdom Monastery

*Weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth
into a shared way of life*

Memorial Courtyard Case Statement

About our Benedictine Community

The Benedictine Women of Madison have a long history of evolving their service to meet the needs of people in the surrounding area.

In 1953, a portion of farmland on a hill overlooking Lake Mendota, near Madison, Wisconsin, became home to the Academy of Saint Benedict and a girls' school operated by the sisters. Seven years later the sisters closed the school and opened the Saint Benedict Retreat and Conference Center.



The Sisters of Saint Benedict grew to become the ecumenical Benedictine Women of Madison and in 2006 the Center was renamed Holy Wisdom Monastery.

For more than one thousand years previously, indigenous Ho-Chunk people lived in this region and built the largest number of effigy mounds found anywhere in the world. Several mounds are located on the monastery grounds. The mounds were used by indigenous people for ceremonial, burial and other civic purposes.

The Holy Wisdom Memorial Courtyard marks an expansion of our ministry to members of the larger Holy Wisdom community and to friends of the monastery. We appreciate your interest in learning more about this opportunity.

– Benedictine Women of Madison

Holy Wisdom aspires to ever greater levels of hospitality

The monastery land has long been sacred ground and our guests experience this quality when they visit.

In seeking ways to expand its service to the Holy Wisdom Monastery community of communities, the Benedictine Women of Madison identified the need to expand interment space for the remains of loved ones.

“They’re building on an old story, in a new way. ‘That all may be one’ inspires me – families have a sacred space for their loved ones and may God bring us all together to everlasting life.”

– Norma Madsen, Donor & Volunteer

According to a 2018 study by the National Funeral Home Directors Association, 60% of Wisconsin residents chose cremation over traditional burial and this rate is expected to increase to 80% by 2035.

In response to this need, the sisters envisioned the Holy Wisdom Memorial Courtyard. This space will serve as a ministry to individuals and families with an immediate need and those who seek peace by pre-planning their final resting place in advance. To be able to extend Benedictine hospitality and comfort to those who are grieving is a privilege to us.



The courtyard is west-facing, located in a beautiful and peaceful place behind the Monastery Building and overlooking Lost Lake. The setting invites solitary contemplation, as well as offering a welcoming space for gatherings of family and friends to remember loved ones.



The Memorial Courtyard is also in full view of the Monastery Oratory, the small chapel where the sisters' community and others gather five times each day for Liturgy of the Hours and centering Prayer.

The Columbarium and Ossuary

The original columbarium was built into the western wall of the Monastery Building when it was constructed in 2009. The columbarium is a structure for the respectful storage of funerary urns, holding cremated remains of the deceased. A Columbarium is a time-honored option as a final resting place.

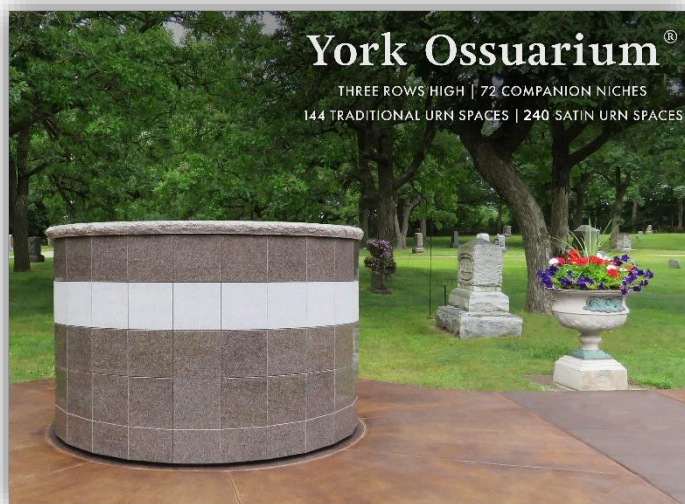
At Holy Wisdom, we continue our mission to care for the earth by intentionally living in right-relationship with the earth's resources. Our design and construction of the Memorial Courtyard takes into account water savings, energy efficiency, material selection, environmental quality and innovative design that blends into our adjacent natural spaces, full of native plants, trees and flowers.

Our 2009 columbarium is a display wall fitted with 56 niches (recessed into the wall), each designed to hold the cremated remains of up to two people. We are adding a free-standing granite structure that includes columbarium niches and an ossuary for communal burial.



“Ossuary” is an ancient term that describes a space that communally holds the remains of numerous people. The term “ossuary” is less familiar in the United States, but has a long history in other countries.

The Holy Wisdom Memorial Courtyard features a circular ossuary, 3 rows with 72 companion niches, accommodating the remains of up to 144 people.



The ossuary at the center of the granite structure will accommodate the cremains of an additional 240 satin urns.

The columbarium-ossuary is at the center of a harmoniously-designed garden envisioned by the sisters and planned by a creative team of local landscape architects and our own land management staff. Plantings will be installed by Holy Wisdom's volunteers, who have become experts in caring for native flora.

Teak benches will provide visitors with places to rest and enjoy quiet, contemplative reflection. Parking is

located on site and the area is easily accessible to all by walking paths and elevator access. Niche and ossuary vault prices include the right of inurnment in the reserved space, inscription on the niche, memorial liturgy(s), presider for the service(s), openings/closings and perpetual care.

Visiting the Memorial Courtyard is encouraged from dawn to dusk each day. While here, you may also want to visit our other sacred spaces - hiking trails, the oratory, Lost Lake, the Retreat and Guest House or the Monastery Building.



Visiting the Memorial Courtyard and Services

We anticipate completion of the Memorial Courtyard in the fall of 2021. We look forward to inviting community members to tour the courtyard and make it their own. We will also invite clergy and spiritual leaders of all faith backgrounds to visit and help us understand how we might be of assistance to them. For example, we welcome others to preside at a memorial liturgy, a funeral rite or interment service in our Assembly Room (chapel).

We are honored to assist family members and friends of the deceased at this difficult time. Meeting their needs is our highest priority.

The courtyard offers a sacred space for annual remembrance ceremonies, both public and private, in memory of loved ones and community members who have passed.

Memorial Courtyard Opportunities

Donors are invited to participate in completion of the Memorial Courtyard.

Project budget:	\$167,378
Amount raised (as of July 2021)	<u>\$82,375</u>
Amount needed:	\$85,003

Thanks to early gifts, planning and engineering work have been accomplished. Walkways and concrete work for the granite columbarium-ossuary are being installed in June 2021 with the columbarium-ossuary structure set to be delivered later this summer.

The fundraising goal includes a maintenance endowment to insure the Memorial Courtyard will be cared for in perpetuity.



Below is a list of major project elements along with the fundraising goal for each. Progress has been made toward funding a number of the elements.

Project Elements	Total Goal
Design	\$14,615
Engineering & Construction	\$26,992
Electrical Lighting	\$12,420
Walkway Paving Stones	\$32,500
Ossuarium Unit	\$50,232
Benches (3 avail.)	\$22,935
Native Plantings	\$5,000
Threshold Stone	\$1,184
Wayfinding Signage	\$1,500

For more information on how to reserve interment space or make a gift to support the Memorial Courtyard, contact Nancy Sandleback, nsandleback@holywisdommonastery.org, 608-836-1631, x105.