



Holy Wisdom Monastery

2024 Annual Report

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

Learning to be the Prioress

By Lynne Smith, OSB, Prioress

On April 16, 2024, I became prioress of the sisters' community at Holy Wisdom Monastery. I have been growing into the responsibilities of this position. The support of my sisters and the communities around us at the monastery are important to us as I continue to grow into the role with your help and feedback. I am grateful for the words of encouragement, support and suggestions I have received from so many of you. When I was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) I promised to serve the church with "energy, intelligence, imagination and love." My desire is to continue that kind of service at the monastery.

The sisters have for a long time involved many lay people in our work. Over the years, the communities at Holy Wisdom Monastery have grown tremendously. With that growth comes the need for more support. The sisters and the Benedictine Woman of Madison Board



Everline Jeruto, OSB; Lynne Smith, OSB; Joanne Kollasch, OSB; Father Dan Ward; Mary David Walgenbach, OSB

have been working on a restructuring process that puts more responsibility for the ministries in the hands of the board and the executive director. This will allow the sisters to focus more on our community life and on growing the sisters' community. Thank you for your generous support of the sisters' community and the ministries at Holy Wisdom Monastery!

Blessings,

Lynne W. Smith, OSB

Lynne Smith, OSB
Prioress



Holy Wisdom is a Refuge

By Erin Trondson, Executive Director

Dear friends, thank you for your continued commitment to Holy Wisdom Monastery during a time when connection and community are so important. The divisiveness and isolation of our current culture have so many of us experiencing loneliness, and our health and wellbeing are suffering. The Community of Communities at Holy Wisdom is an antidote for this suffering. In 2024 we strengthened our communities, expanded the reach of our experiences and began to explore what new programs may be needed.

We believe that the nourishment of this organization – through our mission of weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life – could support an even broader community. In 2024 we explored this by strengthening and growing our current communities and researching and designing new initiatives for 2025. Last year, thanks to your help,



each community at Holy Wisdom experienced growth and outreach to more people. In our Annual Report, we hope to demonstrate this impact.

We know that in addition to strengthening and expanding our current Community of Communities,

we also need to support new growth. In 2024, thanks to many community brainstorms, we were able to launch dozens of new programs and initiatives for 2025. We know that our work right now is both to root down and to reach further. Last year we did that. This strengthening, this exploration and this new growth could not have occurred without the generous support of our donors and volunteers – and for that we are so grateful. Thank you.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin R. Trondson".

Erin Trondson
Executive Director



Highlights

Building Community & Leadership



WELCOMING NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ERIN TRONDSON

Erin Trondson joined the coworkers as executive director in early 2024 after an extensive search in 2023. Erin came to us with over 20 years of leadership experience in education and non-profit management. Her keen strategic eye and ability to inspire and build relationships, are already proving invaluable to the monastery as we move into the future.



TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP WELCOMING LYNNE SMITH, OSB AS THE NEW PRIORESS

On May 5th the assembly room was alive with song and prayer to honor the transfer of leadership from Mary David Walgenbach, OSB to Lynne Smith, OSB as the new prioress. In her remarks upon becoming the first Protestant prioress of the Benedictine Women of Madison, Lynne emphasized the strength of community rooted in right relationship.



CELEBRATION OF MONASTIC PROFESSION FOR EVERLINE & JOANNE

On September 15th with the Community of Communities surrounding the sisters, Everline Jeruto, OSB made her final monastic profession, as a member of Benedictine Women of Madison, and Joanne Kollasch, OSB renewed her promises to God and the community for the 70th anniversary of her monastic profession.



COMMUNITY COOKOUT

The Community Cookout on August 8th brought together community members, neighbors and newcomers for an evening of fun and fellowship. Attendees showed up in great numbers, to enjoy food and the monastery's beautiful grounds. The event offered a variety of activities, including butterfly crafts, temporary tattoos, games for all ages, tours and a scavenger hunt of the monastery, providing entertainment for children and adults alike.

Highlights

Net-Zero Completion

In 2024, Holy Wisdom Monastery officially became a net-zero energy campus, marking the latest milestone in seven decades of environmental stewardship by the Benedictine Women of Madison.

A COMMUNITY-POWERED VISION

Prompted by the need to replace the aging gas boiler in the Retreat & Guest House, the \$3.2 million initiative was accomplished through two phases: installing a 300-kilowatt ground-mounted solar array with grid interconnection, and replacing the Retreat & Guest House's failing HVAC system with sustainable geothermal technology. We received remarkable community support from funders, grants, tax credits, in-kind work and donations to complete the project. Our donors contributed \$128,509 toward the project cost.

This achievement is celebrated annually with the Spring Solar Tilt, where over 90 volunteers gather to hand-



crank solar panels into their summer position. Following a blessing over the array, teams named after native prairie plants work together, transforming maintenance into meaningful community action against climate anxiety.

RESTORING CREATION

The solar array sits on land that tells a powerful restoration story. As chronicled in Dr. Amy Alstad's "A Story About a Lake and a Prairie and an

Array of Solar Panels," this ground has witnessed the restoration of Lost Lake and now complements the surrounding thriving prairie by growing solar power.

This net-zero milestone continues the Benedictine sisters' visionary environmental leadership. Now more than ever, Holy Wisdom Monastery stands as a living demonstration that environmental stewardship and spiritual practice work hand in hand.



Embracing the Journey: My Final Profession

By Everline Jeruto, OSB

Embarking on religious life is like setting sail into the unknown. This was my experience when I came to this monastery. At first, I was unsure of what to expect. I had always been a curious soul, seeking answers to life's big questions. And so, when the call to move to the USA to join this community presented itself, I knew deep down that it was a calling I couldn't ignore.

As I settled into the monastery, at first, I couldn't help but wonder what was in store for me, from this small, ecumenical, monastic and different culture community. What challenges would I face? I quickly realized that the path ahead was not always clear. There



were times when the path disappeared, leaving me feeling lost and unsure. But every time this happened, I turned to the sisters who welcomed and accepted me into this community. I also turned

to God, who has been a compass, always pointing me in the right direction. God and the sisters became my most trusted companions on this journey and always will be.



Steve Zwettler; Joanne Kollasch, OSB; Mary David Walgenbach, OSB;
Lynne Smith, OSB; Everline Jeruto, OSB; Father Dan Ward

I have learned that the true essence of religious life is not just in reaching the destination, but in embracing the journey itself. It's about finding the courage to let go of what I think I know and trust in God. It's about constantly seeking and learning each day as I move forward.

Having completed my final profession in 2024, I thank the sisters and the communities of Holy Wisdom Monastery for their encouraging words, prayers and presence in my life. You have truly helped me grow, strengthened my faith and shaped me into the person I am today.

Coworkers & Board of Directors

RETIREMENTS

NANCY SANDLEBACK

Nancy Sandleback retired after 28 years of service as the monastery's librarian and archivist. She also supported communications, IT, mission advancement and the sisters. We are thankful for Nancy's gifts of stability, dedication, willingness to help, and attention to detail throughout her long tenure.

LISA HOON

Chef Lisa Hoon retired after seven years in the Holy Wisdom Monastery kitchen. She was known for her exceptional culinary skills and legendary baking abilities. Lisa also stepped up as head chef during a transition period in early 2023, ensuring uninterrupted culinary operations and demonstrating her dedication to Holy Wisdom's mission of hospitality

NANCY ENDERLE

Rev. Nancy Enderle retired after 40 years in ordained ministry, including six years at Holy Wisdom as founding director of the Center for Clergy



Coworkers at Holy Wisdom Monastery attend a Madison Mallards Game as part of a coworker retreat.

Renewal. She led five cohorts of Contemplative Renewal Immersions and was on the Leadership Team, serving the monastery in ways that extended far beyond her primary role.

MARY PERTZBORN

Mary Pertzborn retired after three years as the monastery's bookkeeper. Her dedication and hard work were indispensable gifts to the monastery through the executive director transition. Mary looks forward to volunteering at the

monastery and staying connected to the community post-retirement.

ANNIVERSARIES

CORTEZ MITCHELL – 5 YEARS

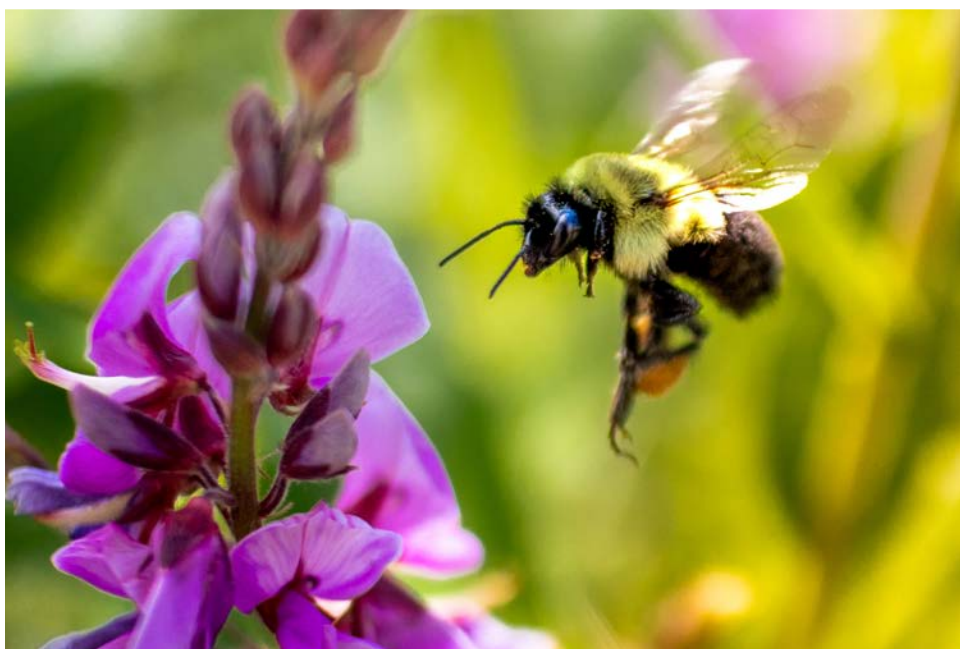
Cortez Mitchell celebrated his five-year work anniversary as groundskeeper at Holy Wisdom Monastery. He is an indispensable member of the coworker community and is rarely seen without a smile despite his often long and demanding task list.



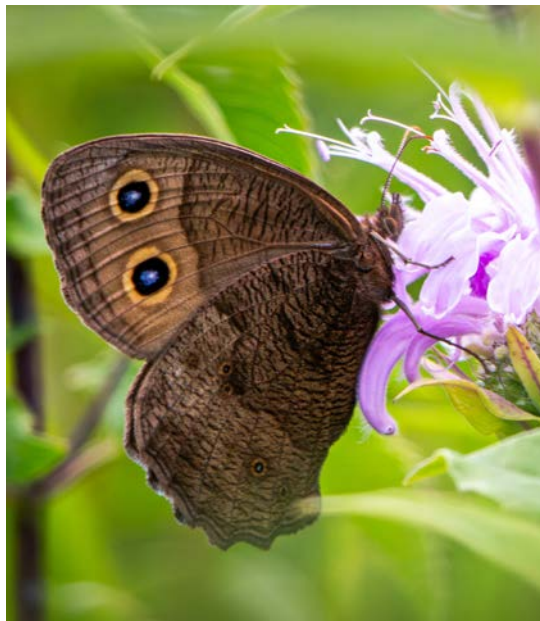
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Benedictine Women of Madison Board of Directors supports the mission, and visions for the future. Pictured left to right: Sister Mary David Walgenbach; Sister Barb Dannhausen; Erin Trondson; Jim Welsh, vice-chair; Colleen Hartung, chair; Terry Larson; Sister Lynne Smith; Bob Dinndorf; Tony Gibart; Neil Heskin; and Roberta Felker.





Honor and Memory



GIFTS MADE IN HONOR OF

Father Thomas Dunn
Nancy Enderle
Everline Jeruto, OSB

Joanne Kollasch, OSB
Sylvia Marek
Car McGinley

Rev Tina Newberry
John Russell-Curry
J Michael Smith

Lynne Smith, OSB
Rev Nancy Taylor
Mary David Walgenbach, OSB

GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY OF

Linda Axelson Packard
Gabe Blood
Tom and Lujean Braunger
Kathleen Clear Keller
Christine Erdman

Mike Fisher
Dorothy Hall
Mary A. Hughes
Mike Hughes
Debra Kollasch

Stephen Kollasch
Brian Mosley
Bill Murray
Tim Riesen
Scott Shimanski

Bob Smith
Mary Turgasen
David Walgenbach
David Zaleski
Jack Zanzig

Support, Revenue & Expenses

Holy Wisdom Monastery relies on gifts from generous donors to sustain this place, our mission and ministries. We are so grateful to everyone who finds community with us and supports our continued work.

COMMUNITY GROWTH

281

Sunday
Assembly
households
Up 19 from 2023

208

Friends of
Wisdom
Prairie
Up 15 from 2023

153

Oblate
community
members
& 6 candidates

104

CCR
Pastors
served in 6
cohorts

318

Personal
retreats
booked

130

Group
retreats
booked



931

Donors
in 2024



223

Donors
are New

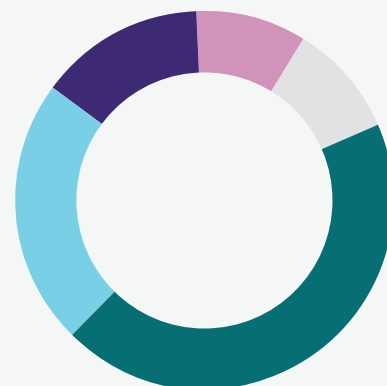
If you want to become a donor, scan the QR code to help us continue our work. Your generosity creates opportunities for action toward a more just and sustainable world.

<https://rebrand.ly/HWMDonate>



SCAN ME

2024 GIVING BY AREA



TOP FUNDS

Wisdom Fund	\$456,002
Communities & Ministries	\$235,120
Care for the Sisters	\$145,369
Center for Clergy Renewal	\$98,681
Care for the Earth	\$98,193
TOTAL	\$1,033,365

FINANCES

2025 | JAN. - JUN.

Total Revenue	\$1,554,920
Total Expenses	\$1,514,184
	\$40,736

2024 | JAN. - DEC.

Total Revenue	\$2,855,636
Total Expenses	\$3,088,420
	\$(232,784)

YEAR END GIVING



*Thank you for your continued support
in nurturing a community of
inclusivity and stewardship.*

Thank you for being part of our community.

MISSION

Holy Wisdom Monastery, home of Benedictine Women of Madison and a community of ecumenical Benedictine communities, weaves prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life.

VISION

Holy Wisdom Monastery welcomes people into sacred space and our community of communities to pray, study and nourish one another. Compelled by the Gospel and rooted in the Benedictine tradition, we support personal and community growth as we live out our mission and values in a changing world.

VALUES

As a beacon of Benedictine spirituality, the sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery and the community of communities seek to live and work out of our values: prayer and contemplation, simplicity, balance, beauty and quality, hospitality and inclusivity, silence and listening with the ear of the heart, humility, respect for each person, justice, community and care for the earth.

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[HolyWisdomMonastery.org](https://www.HolyWisdomMonastery.org)



4200 County Rd M, Middleton, WI 53562 | 608-836-1631

hwm@HolyWisdomMonastery.org

The Benedictine Life Foundation of Wisconsin, Inc. (EIN 39-1830847) provides volunteer and financial support to further the mission of Benedictine Women of Madison and Holy Wisdom Monastery. Learn more at [HolyWisdomMonastery.org](https://www.HolyWisdomMonastery.org).

