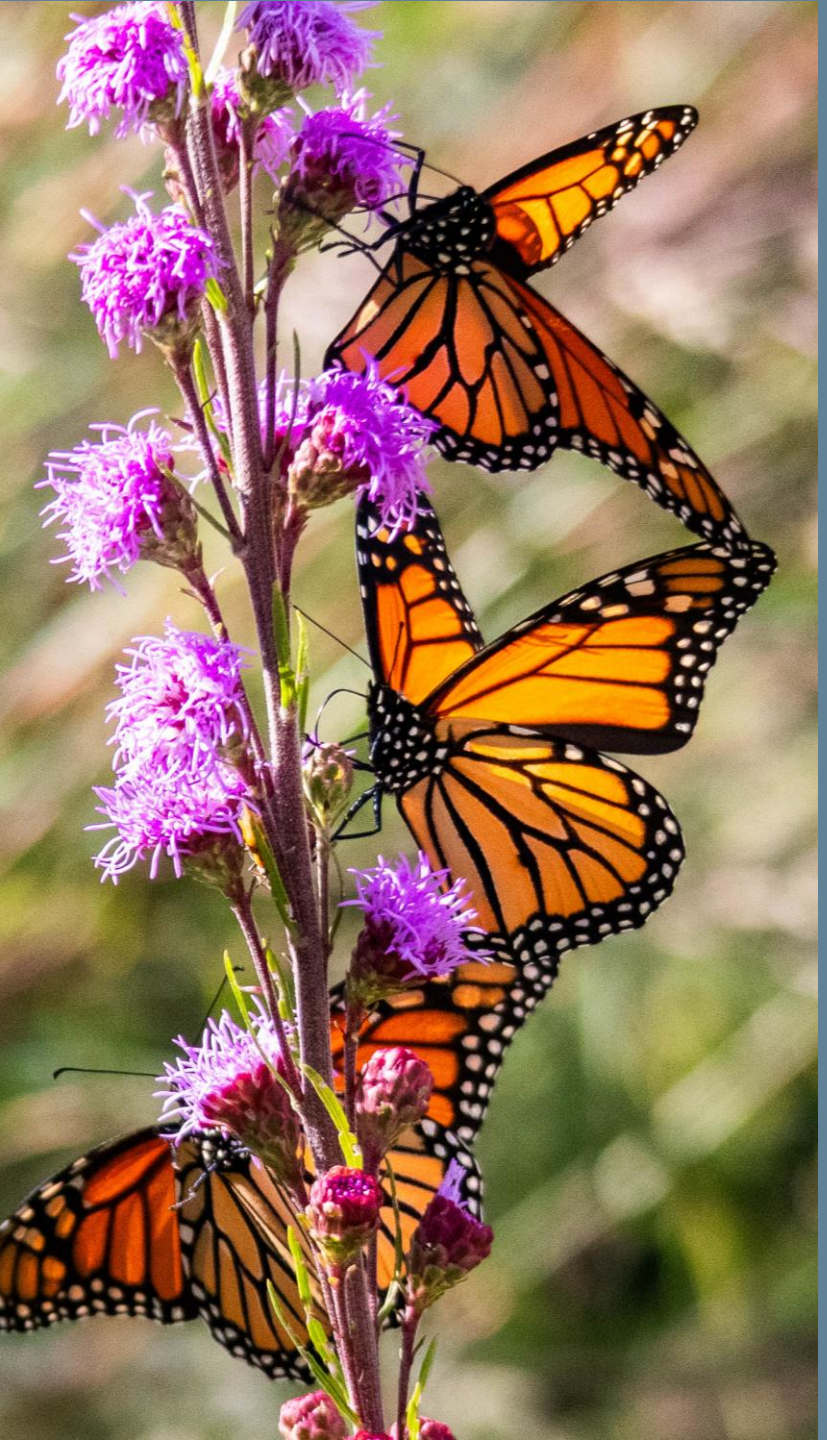


Holy Wisdom Monastery Annual Meeting

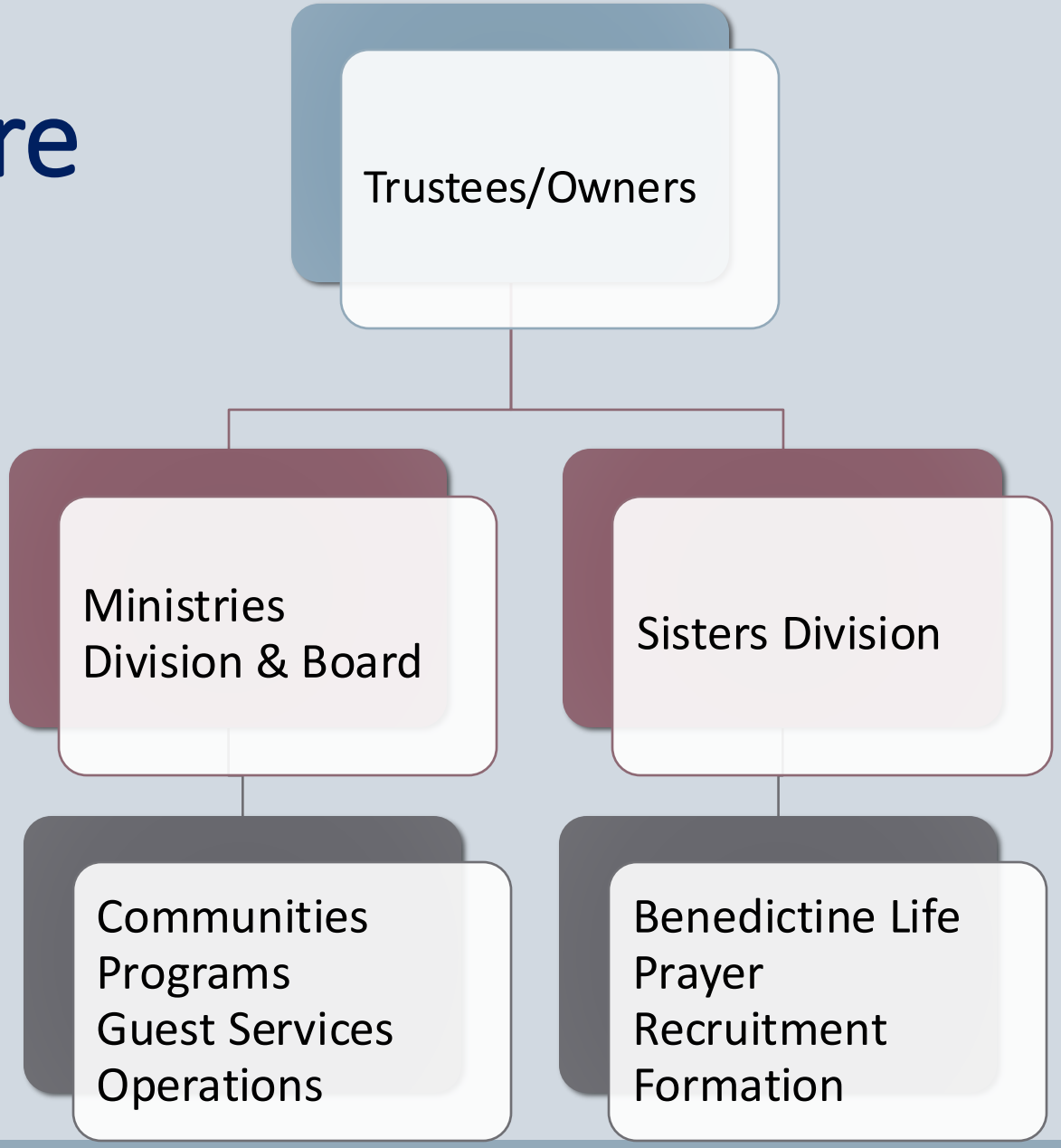
October 18, 2026



Overview & Agenda

- Trustees – Sister Lynne Smith
- Sisters Division – Sister Lynne Smith, Sister Mary David Walgenbach, Sister Everline Jeruto
- Ministries Division – Bob Dinndorf & Erin Trondson
- Financial Update – Meghan Fessler
- Giving Update – Lara Dulin Perez
- Sharing Gifts – Terry Larson & Sarah Wilkin Gibart
- Q & A

Organization Structure





Trustees

- Sister Everline Jeruto, OSB
- Sister Lynne Smith, OSB
- Sister Mary David Walgenbach, OSB
- Nancy Enderle
- Sister Kathleen Phelan, OP
- Paul Harrison

Ends Statements - Trustees

1. Ensure that the mission, vision and values of the Benedictine Women of Madison are promoted and carried out in the life and work of the monastery's communities and ministries.

2. Ensure the appropriate fiduciary balance between the Sisters' division and the Ministries division.

3. Safeguard the BWM, Inc. Corporations assets, including land, buildings and investments.

Sisters Division Update

Sister Lynne Smith, OSB
Prioress

Sister Mary David Walgenbach, OSB

Sister Everline Jeruto, OSB



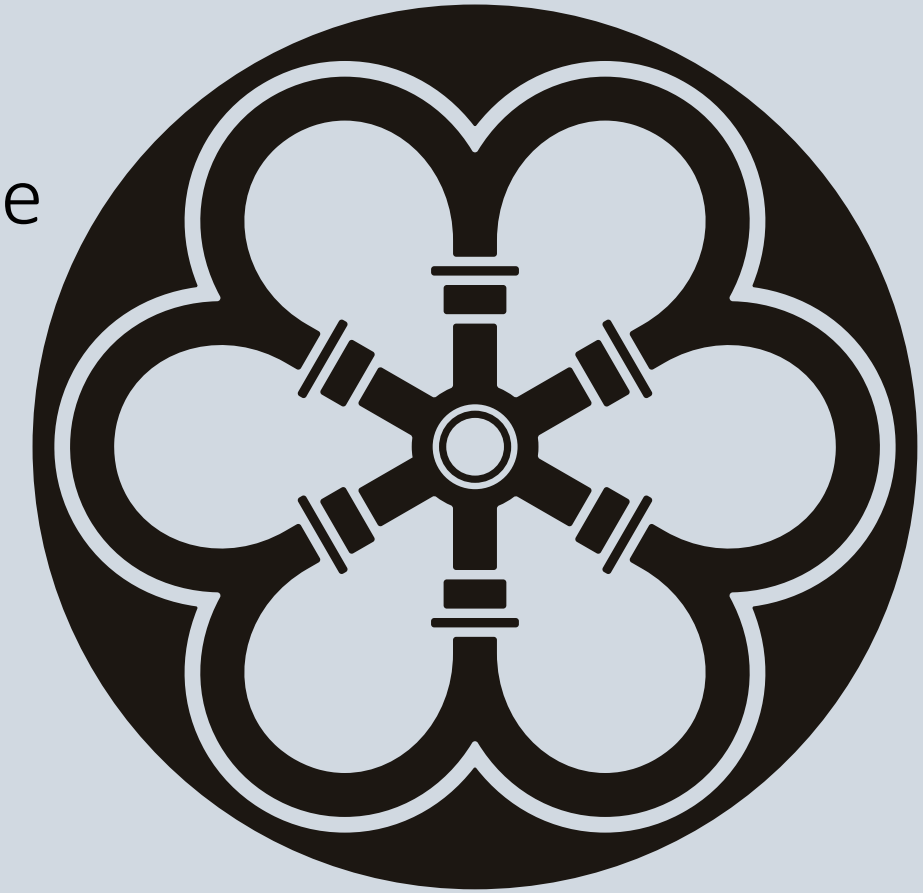
Sisters' Community



- **Benedictine Conversations**
- **Prayer & Worship**
  - Monastic Ritual Team
- **Hospitality**
  - Greetings & meals with groups & retreatants
- **Justice**
  - Support for library of Missionary Benedictines in Nairobi
- **Care for the Earth**
  - Benedictine Intern

Benedictine Hospitality

- 2029 Worldwide Benedictine Jubilee



Welcoming Women



- Visits
- Summer Stewards
- Eco-spirituality Retreats



Recruitment Efforts

- Recruitment committee
  - Sisters Mary David, Everline, Barb Dannhausen, OP
- Every other month meetings with two women
- Looking forward to working with a marketing consultant in 2027









Welcoming Women



Kateri Boucher
Benedictine Intern



Amanda Leicht
Benedictine Sojourner

Ministries Board Update

Bob Dinndorf,
Board Chair



Ministries Board

- Sally Bowers, vice chair
- Everline Jeruto, OSB
- Bob Dinndorf, chair
- Roberta Felker
- Drew Howick
- Tony Wilkin Gibart
- Erin Trondson
- Terry Larson, secretary



Ends Statements – Ministries Board

We know our mission is being furthered when our community members…

- Experience and demonstrate spiritual growth through our Benedictine values (*Prayer and Worship, E-1*).
- Are positively impacted by their experience of Benedictine hospitality as a shared way of life (*Hospitality, E-2*).
- Advance justice as right relationship with all of creation and as a public witness (*Justice, E-3*).
- Protect and sustain a healthy and resilient ecology of the monastery's land, deepen awareness of the interdependence of humanity and creation, and strengthen the motivation to care for the earth (*Care for the Earth, E-4*).

Ministries Division

Erin Trondson,
Executive Director



Justice





Justice: A Year of Action

- Inclusion Outreach
- Here We Stand Statement
- Marches, Events & Protests
- Latinx/Hispanic Ministry



Justice:
A Year of Education

- Resisting Christian Nationalism
- No Other Land Documentary
- Palestinian Village Exhibit
- Guns to Garden Tools
- Voces de la Frontera
- Earth Day with the Raging Grannies
- Palestinian Connection Project



Justice: A Year of Challenging Internal Systems

- Scholarships
- Diversity of Programs
- Accessibility

Social Justice Committee



Community Growth

- Friends of Wisdom Prairie (FWP)
- Sunday Assembly
- Oblates
- Sisters Community
- Center for Clergy Renewal (CCR)





Programs

- 294 new program participants
- 800 program attendees



"The Sacred Queerness Retreat provided the deep spiritual rest and connection I have been yearning for...I was held in such sweet community...On the second morning during our walk through the land of the monastery looking for the divine, I found myself crying at everything I noticed (astonished as Mary Oliver would write). I haven't been able to tap into that stillness and astonishment in a long time. This retreat offered me the gift of noticing again."

- Leah Marie, July 2026

New Coworkers



Gabriel Vandenberg
Guest Services Assistant



Molly Murphy
Kids on the Prairie Coordinator



Moxy Barth
Sous Chef

Worship & Music



A Year of Outreach, Inclusion and Growth

- **Sunday Assembly Growth**
  - 18 new members in 2025, 23 new members in 2026
  - Participation both in-person and online
- **Updated Inclusive Language**
  - Lectionary cycles A, B and C
  - Eucharistic Prayers
- **Inclusive Outreach**
  - First Pride Liturgy
  - Sunday Assembly representation at three festivals



Children's Ministry



A Year of Gentleness and Growth

- Continued Programming
  - Bi-Monthly Children's Prayer & Weekly Childcare Continued
- New Families
- Volunteer Base Growth
- Family Gatherings
- Vision for Families and Children

Culinary Department





A Year of Partnership & Exploration

- **Contemplative Cooking Classes**
  - Designed and offered cooking classes
- **Partnerships**
  - REAP, local farmers and Feed Kitchen
- **Strengthening Guest Experience**
  - Significant positive feedback on meals and experience

"The Contemplative Cooking class is so much more than a skills class, although that's covered in the demonstrations, too. It was wonderful to experience the sights and smells, engage with our instructor and our classmates, and to focus on the experience of cooking food, and honoring the ingredients. And eating it was pretty wonderful, too!"

-Class participant, September 2026

Land Management





A Year of Continued Stewardship and Hospitality

- Stewardship
  - Restored 4 new acres of oak savanna
  - Burned the longest linear mound
  - Responded to severe storm damage from June storm

- Hospitality
  - Updated map panel installed at trailhead kiosk
  - Hospitality to external groups: 28 tours or service projects

- 176 FWP members in 2026



Operations & Guest Services



A Year of Growth and Improved Accessibility

- **Improved Accessibility & Hospitality**
  - New front doors on the Retreat & Guest House
  - New carpet in the Retreat and Guest House
  - Security System upgrades at both buildings
  - ADA automatic doors installed
- **Increased bookings and reservations**
  - Bookings increased by 32% compared to the same period last year
  - 1,363 total reservations were entered into our reservation system

"I loved my time at Holy Wisdom Monastery. My self-guided retreat was peaceful, productive, and restorative. The community's commitment to restoring native woodland and prairie is inspiring, and I'm so grateful to have been able to stay a few days among the humans and more-than-humans at Holy Wisdom."

-Personal Retreatant, August 2026

Spiritual Nourishment



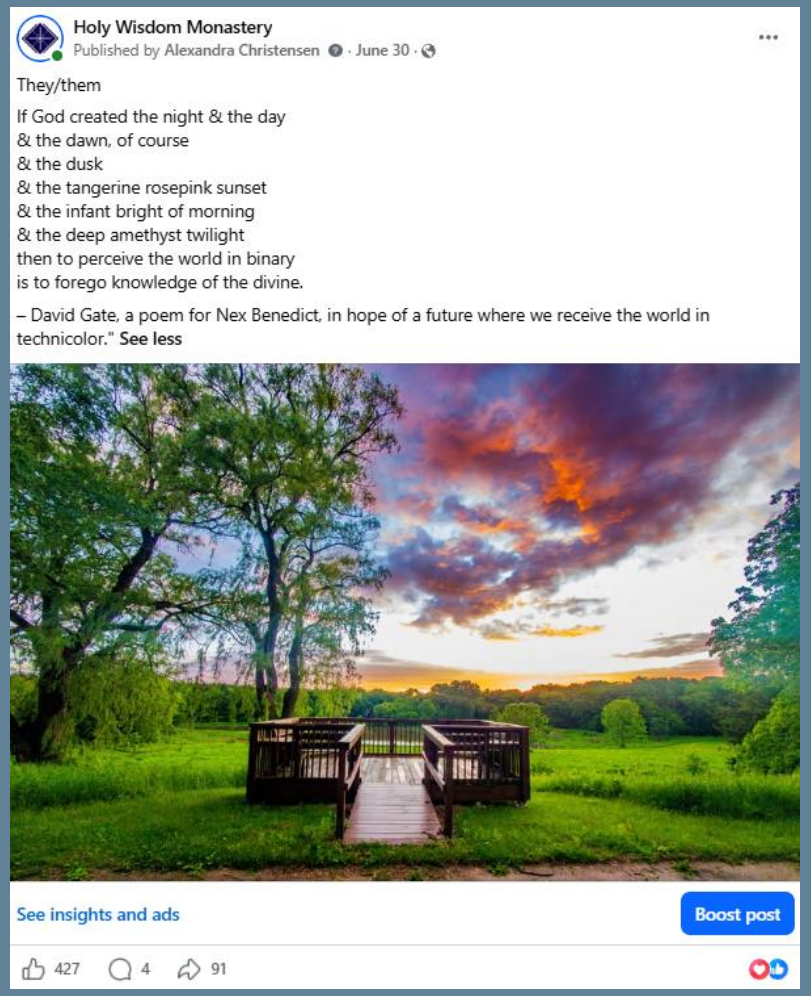
A Year of Stability and Growth

- **Continued Benedictine Spirituality Conversations**
  - Continue to host conversations on humility, balance and work which work to engage a broader community and offer a way to deepen spirituality
- **Oblate Community Continues To Grow**
  - The class of 2026 saw 6 new oblates in 2026 class and there are currently 10 candidates in the 2027 formation class. Additional opportunities for oblates 70+ "Our Oblate Lives, Our Spiritual Lives – As we Age."
- **Spiritual Guidance**
  - The need for Spiritual Guidance continues with 83 sessions scheduled last year. The guides now gather for a Monthly Community of Practice.
- **Contemplative Practices Growing**
  - Participation in both Centering Prayer and monthly Sacred Threshold Gatherings continues to increase.

"I needed to find my place in my life. There have been some major changes in my family that requires me to see myself differently. God showed me that I am still His child and that I have a place in His kingdom."

- Personal Retreatant, November 2025

Communications & IT



A Year of Growth & Infrastructure Strengthening

- **Continued Marketing New Programs**
  - Marketed 99 programs in 2026
- **Social Media Growth**
  - 1093 new followers
  - 483,810 views on published content
  - 16,528 interactions (up 210.2% from the previous year)
- **Fiber Installed**
  - Fiber internet connection installed in February of 2026
- **Improved IT Support**
  - Transitioned IT company to the local and more cost effective DANEnet
- **Sound System Upgrade in the Assembly Room**

Finance



A Year of Strengthening, Streamlining and Long-Term Sustainability

- 2 legal entities of Holy Wisdom merged into one.
- Streamlined reporting & monthly bookkeeping
- Implemented new workflows for the new structuring.
- Prepared budget for Lilly grant application
- Transitioned to a new Insurance Broker - M3
- Supporting long-term sustainability work with Board of Trustees

Mission Advancement



A Year of Increased Support & Connection

- Volunteer System Upgrade
- Community Engagement
  - One on one meetings
  - Festival on the Prairie
  - Spring Solar Tilt
  - Brunch of St. Benedict and Scholastica
  - Donor Appreciation Brunch
  - Volunteer Appreciation Month
- RGH Carpet Fundraising – thank you for $39,986!
- Outside Partnerships
  - Joined WI LGBT Chamber of Commerce
  - Presented at Middleton Chamber of Commerce
  - Accepted sponsorships for the Festival on the Prairie

Center for Clergy Renewal



The Center for Clergy Renewal provides clergy with fertile soil to root deeply into God's love, grow in community, and scatter seeds of hope for a flourishing world.

A Year of Continued Pastor Support & Nourishment

- Hosted clergy from 13 Christian denominations
- Deep Breath retreats for 38 pastors
- Contemplative Immersions for 33 pastors (Cohorts 6 & 7)
- Reunions for 44 pastors (Cohorts 1, 4, 5, & 2)



"I now feel equipped to take care of my soul with kindness, grounding myself in ancient practices that feed my life and relationship with God." – Presbyterian Pastor, Chicago, IL



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.

Financial Update

Meghan Fessler,
Director of Finance



Overall Financial Position

	12/31/2025	8/31/2026
Assets – Investments & Other Current Assets	$7,205,002	$7,339,675
Assets - Fixed Assets	$9,522,644	$9,543,637
Total Assets	**$16,727,646**	**$16,883,312**
Liabilities	$2,734,848	$2,808,319
Equity	$13,992,798	$14,074,993
Total Liabilities & Equity	**$16,727,646**	**$16,883,312**

The Whole Story

Capital Expenditure vs. Operating Expense:

- Capital expenditures are investments in long-term assets, while operating expenses are the day-to-day costs of running the organization.
- Capital expenditures are spread over many years as part of depreciation expense and not a part of Net Operating Income (NOI). Operating expenses are included in NOI as they happen throughout the year.

Spending	Capital Expenditure	Operating Expense
New roof on a building	✅	X
Monthly electric bill	X	✅
New tractor	✅	X
Fuel for the tractor	X	✅
New HVAC system	✅	X
Annual maintenance on HVAC	X	✅

How did last year end?

2025 Net Operating Income

Total Revenue	**$2,578,699**
Total Expenses	**$2,524,463**
	$54,236

How did last year end?

2025 Capital Expenditures

2025 Capital Project	**$2,448,788**
Related Grants & Tax Credits received	**$1,438,084**
Total:	**$1,010,705**

Where are we now?

Jan – Aug 2025

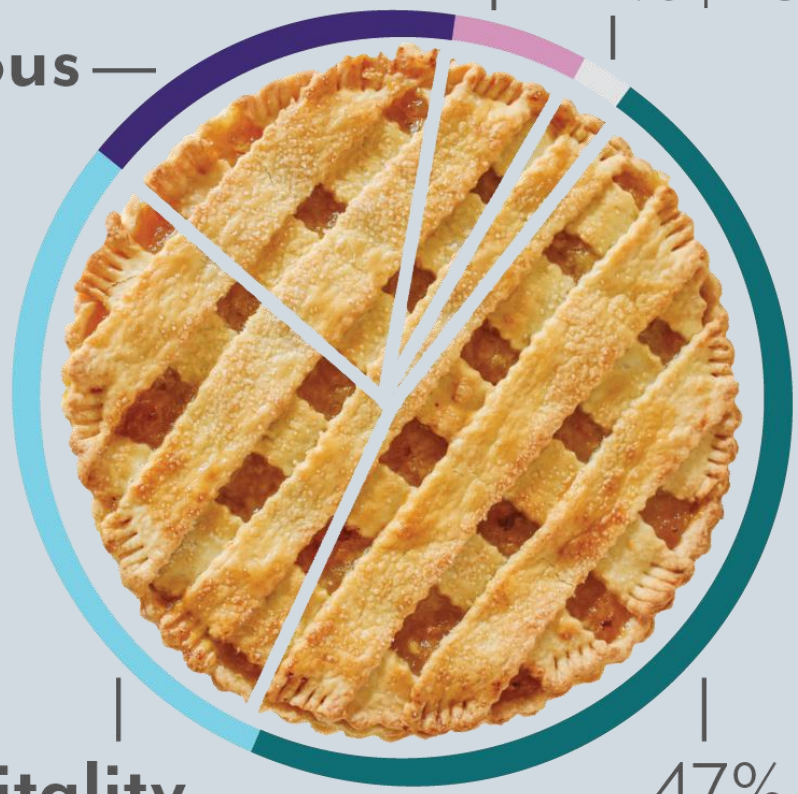
Total Revenue	**$1,524,915**
Total Expenses	**$1,692,483**
	$(167,568)

Jan – Aug 2026

Total Revenue	**$1,581,746**
Total Expenses	**$1,814,587**
	$(232,841)

Holy Wisdom Monastery Revenue

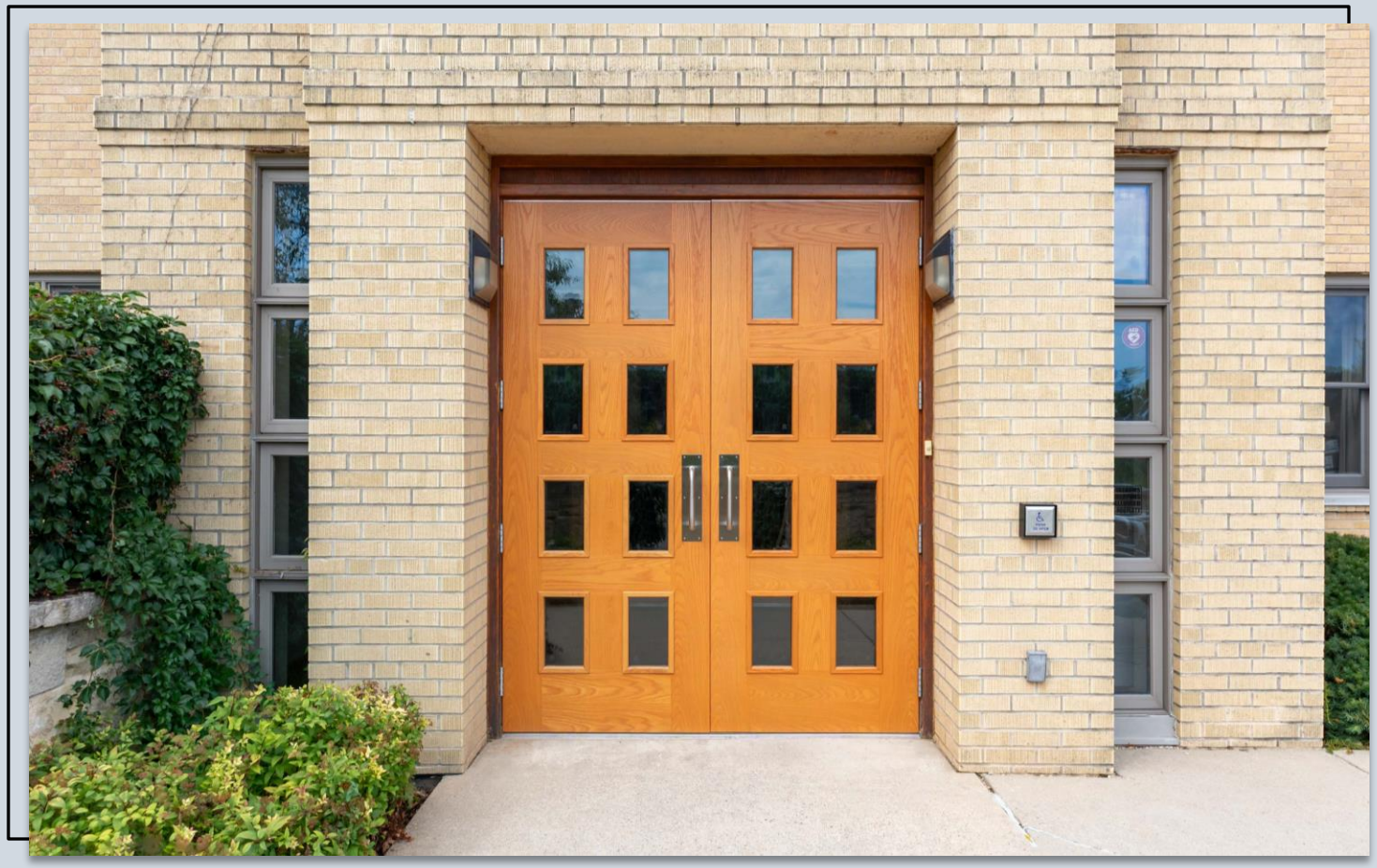






Giving Update

Lara Dulin Perez, Director of Mission Advancement









Volunteer Community

Holy Wisdom Monastery








Planned Giving



Making a Planned Gift will…

- Reflect your values
- Express your gratitude
- Ensure the future of Holy Wisdom Monastery
- Cost you nothing during your lifetime

Talk with Janet Neurauter

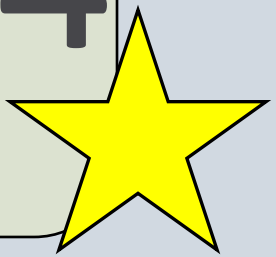
Giving 2026 Year to Date (Jan. – Sep.)

202

NEW Donors

$680,734

Raised



GIVING PROGRESS

Graph depicts 2025 and 2026 non-cumulative monthly giving.

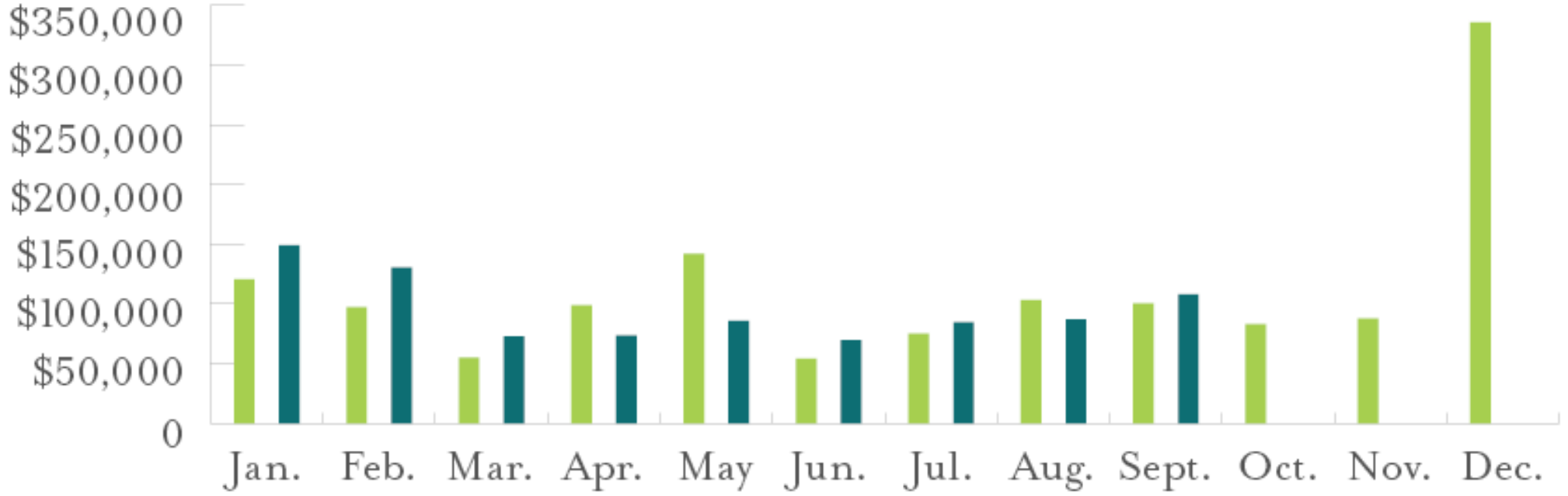


CHART KEY

2025 Jan. - Dec.

2026 Jan. - Sept.

2027 Holy Wisdom Monastery Stewardship

- Your participation matters!
- Your promise for 2027
- Anyone can become a steward – let us know if you have questions



Holy Wisdom Monastery

Ways to Join in Stewardship of Holy Wisdom Monastery for 2025

Sign up online or return this card to Holy Wisdom Monastery by *Nov. 3, 2024* with your intention to give.

1 **I want to make a pledge or become a monthly sustaining donor online!**

SCAN ME

Sign up online by visiting the stewardship page on our website.

2 **Don't want to use an online form? Fill out the info below AND on the back of this card.**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email(s): _____

Phone: _____

☐ I want to give anonymously.

Mail to Benedictine Life Foundation, 4200 County Rd M, Middleton WI 53562 | Questions? 608-836-1631, x120, hwm@holywisdommonastery.org

(OVER)

Please return by

Oct. 25th



Sharing Gifts

Questions?