

# interim

Volume 37, Issue 7

July 2019

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania



Liturgy and installation of  
new Leadership:

**Mary Drexler, SSJ**  
**Phyllis McCracken, SSJ**  
**Carol Morehouse, SSJ**

Sunday, June 30, 2019  
10:30 a.m.  
SSJ Community Living Center

## Welcome New Leadership



Pictured left—right: Carol Morehouse, SSJ; Mary Drexler, SSJ;  
and Phyllis McCracken, SSJ.



# summerpalooza!

Saturday, July 27, 2019

11:45 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

12:00 noon—prayer and blessing of donations  
followed by a picnic lunch

SSJ Administration Building and Patio

Join us as we gather to enjoy some fun, food, renewing/beginning relationships,  
and especially, helping those who are served by our ministries.

**RSVP by July 12, 2019** [associates@ssjerie.org](mailto:associates@ssjerie.org) or 814-836-4134

*Much like "That's a Wrap," we are asking for donated items for our ministries.*

*A list of suggested items is on page 4. Items DO NOT need to be wrapped.*

## mission possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

*"Shawls ...made for centuries universal and embracing, symbolic of an inclusive, unconditionally loving God. They wrap, enfold, comfort, cover, give solace, mother, hug, shelter and beautify. Those who have received these shawls have been uplifted and affirmed, as if given wings to fly above their troubles..."*

Jane Severi Bristow

Janet Severi Bristow and Victoria Galo, graduates of the 1997 Women's Leadership Institute at the Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, began the Prayer Shawl Ministry in 1998. It has developed into a worldwide ecumenical ministry.

The prayer shawl ministry combines the love of knitting or crocheting with the atmosphere of prayer as the maker of the shawl prays before, during and after it has been created. In 2006, after associate Mary

Lou Rathers experienced being a part of the prayer shawl group in Florida, she volunteered to start the SSJ Associate prayer shawl ministry. A small group of associates, sisters and friends came together once a month to pray and make prayer shawls. Thirteen years later, this group continues to meet. Some associates who can't attend make shawls at home and send them.

Since 2006, hundreds of prayer shawls have been given to individuals in need of prayers and comfort while dealing with health issues, grief, or loneliness. Shawls are also given on the occasion of a retirement, milestone birthday, anniversary, or new beginnings.

The SSJ Associate Prayer Shawl Ministry has touched the



lives of people near and far. Agrégée Betsy Wiest recently sent shawls to Dr. W. L. Scheller, a former faculty member at Gannon University who now lives in Nebraska and cares for his mom. In his thank you note he shared, "She and I are both very moved and blessed that the sisters took the time to pray for us while making our shawls. As I have said before, the prayers are very much appreciated. I believe it is the power of prayer which has brought her so far."

This is what makes the SSJ Mission Possible!

*If you wish to join the SSJ Prayer Shawl ministry or want to find out more about it, call the Associate office at 836-4134 or email Sister Ann Marie at [s.amcappello@ssjerie.org](mailto:s.amcappello@ssjerie.org).*



# s'more!

... food for the journey

Sister Rosemary O'Brien will soon launch her new online blog titled, **S'more... food for the journey.**

Be watching for more information and details on how you can subscribe to her blog and not miss any of her reflections and sharing. Following is an introduction and description of what Sister Rosemary hopes to accomplish with her blog.

Warm summer days stir up memories of being a child and gathering with family and friends around the camp fire. I

can almost taste the sugary, chocolatey, toasted marshmallow delights that left us wanting more. One was never enough. Another one, please.

Thankfully, my desire for more is much different today.

The Sisters of St. Joseph tradition speaks of "the More" – not as something quantitative, but as a way of life that moves always toward profound love of God and love of Neighbor without distinction. It is a way of being — the inner drive and

spirit that has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response of praise to our life in God. This relationship is the "food" that nourishes us for our journey. It sustains us in the midst of the conflict and chaos of our world today.

Welcome to S'more . . . where "food for the journey" will be shared /offered by way of reflections and resources for spiritual enrichment. Be surprised and nourished by the presence of God in everything.



## 2019 circle of friends

Join us for the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Circle of Friends – Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019.

As always, we'll start the celebration with an outdoor Mass, followed by a delicious picnic supper, fellowship and

games.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Carol Hermann at 814-836-4198 or [carol.hermann@ssjerie.org](mailto:carol.hermann@ssjerie.org).

**Saturday,  
September 14  
at the CLC**  
4 p.m. Liturgy  
5 p.m. Picnic  
6 p.m. Games &  
Fun



### what's this all about?

August 13, 2019 marks the 9th Erie Gives Day, which was started in 2011 in honor of the Erie Community Foundation's 75th Anniversary.

During this event that runs for 12 hours between 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on August 13, the Erie Community Foundation will match a percentage of your donation to the Sisters of St. Joseph.

### Erie Gives day — the details

**Day and Time:** August 13, 2019 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.

**Gift Amount:** The minimum gift is \$25. There is no limit to the amount of money you may give.

**Checks:** For the first time, Erie Gives will accept donations by check. Gifts by check must be made out to The Erie Community Foundation, received by August 12 and accompanied by a "check donation form" (available on the Erie Community Foundation website).

**Credit Cards:** As always, Visa, MasterCard and Discover will be accepted.

**Prorated Match:** The Erie Community Foundation will enhance each donor's gift by providing a prorated match to each gift made to a nonprofit.

**Your Receipt:** You will receive an email receipt of your gift; please retain it for tax purposes. Unless you choose to remain anonymous, your donor information will be sent to the appropriate organizations.

**When the Nonprofits receive your donation:** The organizations will receive your donation plus The Erie Community Foundation's prorated match later in August at the Erie Gives check distribution day.

For more information or to make an online gift on Erie Gives Day, visit [www.eriegives.org](http://www.eriegives.org).



Patty Johnson, CSJ, Executive Director of the U. S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph was in Erie on June 3 and presented a session on the Federation and membership opportunities. Pictured left-right: Mary Ann White, SSJ; Patty Johnson, CSJ; Mary Herrmann, SSJ; and Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ.

## get to know ssj associates



### Jan Staszewski

Connectedness. That is what led Jan to become an associate in 2006. Jan's connections with the SSJ include her education at St. John Grade School and Villa Maria Academy; and working at St. Mary's Home of Erie and Saint Vincent Hospital. Jan said that becoming an associate seemed to be another logical connection. Her mentor was Sister Mary Kay McNelis. Jan belongs to the Christian Meditation group which meets monthly at the CLC. She has been part of the group since it was started by Sister Mary Kay in 2001. Jan was one of the original members of the SSJ Prayer Shawl Ministry and is now the coordinator of the group. In 2015, Jan and Associate Mary Lou Rathers walked the last 62 miles of the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James) in Spain. Jan is the proud mother of two adult children.

## associates' news and happenings

### Happy July Birthdays

Tish Hosick	July 2
Paul Mercier	July 4
Cindy DeCoursey	July 5
Patrick Shaughnessy	July 10
Cindi Olesky	July 14
George Dufala	July 15
Stephanie Hall	July 17
Margaret Zeigler	July 18
Kathleen Mannino	July 19
Marvin Ridgeway	July 20
Ruth Mercier	July 22
Anna Wiley	July 23
Christine Opron	July 25
Mary DeSanti	July 27
Joan McCain	July 27
Anne Swift	July 27
Mary Roach	July 28
Clarice Sidun	July 30

### Special Celebrations

Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to **Hal and Charlotte Sheldon!**



**Summerpalooza** Following is a list of the items requested: paper products, garbage bags, laundry supplies, 3-in-1 men's body soap, dish soap, carpet and air freshener, coffee, canisters of creamer and sugar, individual snacks, beach towels, flips flops, sand toys, sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, bubbles, school supplies, Zoo passes, arts and crafts, basketballs, soccer balls, electric skillets, toasters, pots and pans, blankets, linens and towels, pillows, toys, men's gloves, socks.

### Thank you!

On behalf of the associates I would like to thank **Nancy Donnelly** for her dedicated service as associate co-director for the last eight years. I, personally, am especially grateful for having the opportunity to work with Nancy for the last two years. Her presence in the office will be missed. We wish her the best and hope she enjoys her retirement years!

### New Candidate Sessions

We will be starting sessions for new associate candidates in September. If you know of anyone who might be interested in becoming an associate, please invite them to call the associate office at 836-4134 or email [s.amcappello@ssjerie.org](mailto:s.amcappello@ssjerie.org).

Congratulations to **Susan Colvin** and **Frances Skobieranda** who became associates on June 23 under the guidance of their mentors, **Sisters Ann Donohue and Jean Baptiste DiLuzio**. Pictured at left (l-r): **Sr. Ann Donohue, Susan Colvin, Frances Skobieranda, and Sr. Jean Baptiste DiLuzio**.

Congratulations to all the associates celebrating milestone anniversaries this year who were honored during the Prayer Service.

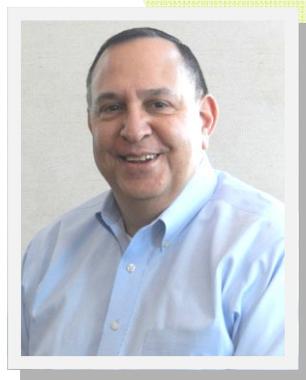


## Transition Time

As Sisters Mary Herrmann, Mary Ann White and Clare Marie Beichner prepare to move on from their Leadership positions and Sisters Mary Drexler, Carol Morehouse, Phyllis McCracken, Claudia Dombrowski and Nancy Fischer get ready to assume Leadership positions, there have been preparations and celebrations.

Top left: Bishop Persico officially affirmed the new leadership on Sunday, June 9.

Bottom left: The CLC sisters hosted a tea party as a way to send off the outgoing Leadership and welcome the new.



## Saint Mary's Home appoints new President/CEO

"Saint Mary's Home of Erie announces the departure of Sister Phyllis McCracken, SSJ as President/CEO effective June 30, 2019. Sister Phyllis leaves Saint Mary's after 35 years of ministry to assume an elected role of Leadership with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

She has served as the President/CEO of Saint Mary's Home of Erie for the past 17 years. The organization's Board of Trustees has named Allen L. Bonace, Chief Operating Officer, as her successor effective June 1, 2019. Allen has served Saint Mary's Home of Erie for more than 15 years."

## events, happenings and ministry news



### St. Patrick's Haven— can you spare an hour?

Do you have an hour a month to visit with the homeless men at St. Patrick's Haven? We are in need of people to volunteer for this powerful and life touching ministry of presence. Call Betsy at 836-4153 if you are able to help lighten the load of our "dear neighbor" by just talking and listening for an hour.

### Garage sale for a cause

Proceeds benefit Hekima Place. You never know what treasures you might find. Or, just stop to say hello!

**June 28—30**  
**July 5 & 6**  
**8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.**  
**3309 Asbury Road**

### Sister Sightings!

These sisters were seen enjoying themselves at the recent CLC tea party in honor of the outgoing and incoming Leadership. Left—right: Sister Mary Kay McNelis, Marie Timmons and Sally Villa.



## LITTLE ITALY FARMERS MARKET

331 West 18th Street

FRESH • HEALTHY • LOCAL

EVERY MONDAY

June 24 — September 30

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Donating produce grown in the  
support of the Farm to Table Initiative  
to various animal health facilities



## Volunteer Opportunities at Saint Vincent Hospital

"Touch Lives" at Saint Vincent Hospital by offering your heart, compassion, and gifts. I invite you to apply or call to discuss how "together" we can enhance the patient/family experience as well as your own.

Jodi Andres  
Director, Volunteer Resources  
Phone: 814-452-5646  
[Jodi.Andres@ahn.org](mailto:Jodi.Andres@ahn.org)

To become a volunteer, apply online at  
<https://www.ahn.org/volunteer-application>

## where's the justice?

### Suffragettes—ringing in a year of celebrations

Bells were rung at noon in the CLC on June 24 to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment – Women’s Right to Vote. The sisters, in collaboration with other area organizations, rang bells to “ring in” a year of upcoming celebrations. After the bell ringing, agrégée Cindy Polesnak announced a moment of silence which was observed for those



who worked so hard to assure that women can vote. Remember – every vote counts and who we elect matters!

### Human trafficking, drugs & rest stops

Betsy Wiest joined Bryan Prior of the Crime Victim Center to present a program to approximately 150 professionals on the connection between human trafficking and drugs at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Erie County Drug & Alcohol Coalition on June 21<sup>st</sup>. While at the presentation, attendees signed letters to support House Bill 1513. H.B. 1513 to redesign the current

signage in PA rest stops to be more educational as well as contain information to

help victims. If passed, the bill would require signs to be placed in restroom stalls where victims can view them in privacy, as well as in the lobby.

### Green apples for the Earth

The JPIC team developed the “Green Apple” award to recognize educators in Erie Diocesan grade schools who teach environmental issues to their students. This year, we awarded 31 Green Apples to teachers in schools in Erie, Oil City, Franklin, Lucinda, DuBois and Warren, PA. Teachers were presented with a Green Apple certificate, an eco-friendly green apple and a Be Kind magnet during impromptu ceremonies in their classrooms. Projects ranged from teaching about recycling to composting, planting trees, exploring how watersheds affect us and completing a water quality study of a stream. Students and teachers



collaborated with community partners such as the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Presque Isle, PA Fish Commission and the Venango Museum of Art and Science. Congratulations to all who participated! The program was so successful that the CSJ community in Watertown, NY under the direction of Sr. Bethany Fitzgerald, adopted a similar program for their teachers. What a great way for students to learn how to Care for our Common Home!



*journey to the border*

A volunteer's experiences at the Annunciation House ministry on the Texas/Mexico border.

Agrégées Deb Seng and Betsy Wiest, along with Patrice Swick of the Erie Diocese recently shared their volunteer experience at the U.S. Mexico border with sisters who reside at the CLC. The three spent two weeks volunteering with Annunciation House staff providing support for refugees who had been released from Border Patrol.

They will again share their experiences on the evening of July 18. Join Agrégées Deb Seng, Betsy Wiest and Patrice Swick from the Erie Diocese for a presentation on their recent service trip to El Paso, Texas to work with refugees.



**Thursday,  
July 18, 2019  
7:00 p.m.  
CLC Gathering Room**



## Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

5031 West Ridge Road  
Erie, PA 16506-1249  
Phone: 814-836-4100  
Fax: 814-836-4278  
E-mail: [publicrelations@ssjerie.org](mailto:publicrelations@ssjerie.org)



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## Prophetic communities, contemplation and the common good

SSJ Agrégée Deb Seng and Sister Marianne Stuckert, SSJ, recently traveled to St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana for a seminar: "Contemplation and the Common Good". The keynote speaker was Sister Simone Campbell, SSS. Sister Simone is the Executive Director for NETWORK in Washington, DC. NETWORK commits to upholding human dignity, embracing our right and responsibility to participate, standing with those living in poverty, bridging divisions, uniting with workers, and nurturing the earth.

The conference began with Dr. Meghan Clark, a moral theologian from St. John's University, reaffirming how we belong to each other and how we are called to be relational. Sister Simone's keynote presentation focused on how her contemplative practices allow her to be open to other

people's suffering. She also reminded conference attendees it is only in community that we can bear the suffering of the world. Heidi Schlumpf, a national correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter, interviewed Sister Simone who shared many stories about her work at Network and encouraged all of us to become active in working for the common good. Her biggest message during the interview was, "When you look at the world in its brokenness, your heart breaks and it opens you up to be more welcoming." Spending this time listening and reflecting on Catholic Social Teachings and the Common Good reinforces the importance of living our Charism. Recognizing that all are made in the image of God

excluding no one challenges us. We are all called to work for the Common Good. As you look at the world's brokenness, what stirs in your heart to help make a difference?

