

# interim

Volume 38, Issue 2

February 2020

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

## Sharing Our Blessings and Sharing Our Hearts *Leadership Message*

We've had a couple of exciting and inspiring events to start the year!

Thanks to the generosity of those who donated to our Thanksgiving appeal, following our annual Thanksgiving liturgy, which was held on January 12, we distributed \$56,000 to area food pantries and organizations which help those in need throughout the year. We received numerous expressions of

gratitude and have included several on page 3.

On January 17, Sisters, Agrégées, and Associates gathered for prayer/reflection around an article titled *The Role of Meaning-Making in Transitional Times* by Ted Dunn, Ph.D., followed by a social. If you weren't able to attend, you may want to read the article and reflect on what drew you to the SSJs, why you stay, and

what would help you as you continue to journey with God and each other.

Sister Mary Rose prepared a Powerpoint for the evening, which will be posted on the login page of our website [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org). The evaluations clearly pronounced the evening a success!

Sharing our blessings and sharing our hearts! What a way to start the New Year!

*Sr. Mary Olympia Sister Carol*

## Take Back the Site Vigil—close to home

A Take Back the Site Vigil will be held for Devin Harley Way. Devin was killed at the intersection of Southgate and Usonia Ave. on January 19. Sisters Jude Marie Talerico and Ann Marie Joint, who live a few houses from where this occurred, will conduct the vigil, along with SSJ Human Resource Director,

Ruth Waidley, also a neighbor. After Devin was shot, another neighbor Dianna Kuhar stayed with him until emergency personnel arrived. Dianna will also participate in the vigil.

Please join us to reclaim this site for non-violence, and to remember Devin and the individuals who committed this crime,

and to support the sisters and friends who live nearby.



**Take Back the Site Vigil  
Devin Harley Way  
Wednesday,  
February 5 5:15 p.m.  
307 Usonia Avenue**



## Join us! Super Bowl Party at the CLC!

Sun., Feb. 2, 6:30 p.m.  
Pizza & beverages  
provided.  
Bring a snack to share.

## Human Trafficking Prayer Service

Thurs. Feb. 6, 2020  
6:00 p.m. CLC Chapel

The Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Team invites you to a prayer service for the victims of human trafficking. We will also be reflecting on the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficking victims.



**St. Joseph Day Celebration Sunday, March 15, 2020**

**RSVP due by March 5 at [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) or 836-4204**

***More information coming in the March Interim***

If you are interested in assisting with decorations, set up, clean up, etc. please send an email to [s.morehouse@ssjerie.org](mailto:s.morehouse@ssjerie.org)

## mission possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

# MISSION: POSSIBLE!

One day last week on my way into work, I was met by two Canada Geese that were blocking the door to the admin. building. I tried to get them to move but I was unsuccessful. I was not a happy camper! As I started to go to the front of the building, one of the employees came out and the geese made a quick getaway. Once inside, I ranted about the geese with whomever I encountered. As I was complaining, one of the sisters said, "Oh, look, aren't they beautiful?! "Beautiful?!!!" I gasped in reply.

Later that day, as I left to go home, I found a picture of two geese on my car window. The caption read: "We are watching you." This was just what I needed to lift my spirits at the end of the day.

That evening, as I reflected on the events of the day, I thought about the geese. I remembered an article by Geoff Wilson entitled, "*Learning from a Flock of Geese.*" In the article, the author explains that when a flock of geese flies, they always fly in V formation. While flying, they are always honking. If a goose becomes sick or is injured and falls to the ground, two other geese go down and stay with it until it is well. If it dies, they join another formation and continue on


their journey.

According to Wilson, the geese teach us the importance of loyalty, teamwork, encouraging one another, looking after those who are sick or in need and using the gifts God gives us to reach out and serve others.

I now think of these geese differently. Rather than considering them to be an annoyance, they now remind me to reach out to the dear neighbor without distinction whenever and however I can.

Like the geese in formation, the SSJ community stays together and supports those in our midst who are in need of our help. This is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible.**

## SSJ Retreats 2020



The Retreat Planning Team is pleased to announce the 2020 retreats which will be offered at the Community Living Center.

More information about the retreats and directors is available on the SSJ community page at **WWW.SSJERIE.ORG** where you can also register for the retreats. Info and forms are also available at the front desk of the CLC.

### CONFERENCE RETREAT

#### **"Unexpected Everything: Open to Mystery."**

Sunday, May 10 – Friday, May 15, 2020

The retreat will begin with supper at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, followed by the Opening Session at 6:00 p.m. and will end on Friday at 12 noon. Fr. George Strohmeier, Senior Chaplain at Gannon University will facilitate. Retreatants are invited into a place of refreshment of body, mind and spirit. *"Be still, and know that I am God."*

### INDIVIDUALLY DIRECTED RETREAT

Sunday, June 7 – Friday, June 12, 2020

The retreat will begin with 9:00 a.m. liturgy on Sunday and end with a closing prayer on Friday at 4:00 p.m. Retreat directors are:

**Sr. Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ**

**Sr. Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ**

**Margaret Chrymko, SSJA**



## Regional Retreat Opportunities

Along with the CLC retreat opportunities, some regional retreat opportunities, both directed and conference/guided retreats, have been posted on the login page of the SSJ website [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org). The retreats listed are generally 4 days or more in length, with those closest to Erie displayed first. Login to [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) and click on the Regional Retreat tab on the right, then select the directed or guided and conference retreats tab. Links to the retreat centers are provided for more information about the selected retreats and for information on additional retreat opportunities.

**For more information, contact the SSJ Retreat Team, c/o Sr. Rosemary O'Brien**  
**Retreat Office: [ssjretreatoffice@ssjerie.org](mailto:ssjretreatoffice@ssjerie.org) 814-836-4065**

## Bread needed for St. Joseph Day

On Thursday, March 19, the Sisters will deliver St. Joseph Day baskets to dear friends and neighbors who have shown special kindnesses to the Congregation and others throughout the year. As is tradition, home-baked breads

will be included in the gift baskets. If you're handy in the kitchen and would like to lend a hand with this year's St. Joseph Day baskets, please consider baking a mini-loaf or two. Favorites include banana, pumpkin, cinnamon, lemon

and cranberry. If you'd like to donate bread this year, please contact Carol Hermann at [carol.hermann@ssjerie.com](mailto:carol.hermann@ssjerie.com) or call 836-4198. Breads need to be delivered to the SSJ Administration Building by noon Monday, March 16.

## Thanksgiving letters/comments

Sisters of St. Joseph, Thank you so much for your generous support of the St. James Food Pantry. Your donation will enable us to help our families and provide emergency food when we receive requests.

### **St. James Food Pantry**

Dear Sisters of St. Joseph, Thank you for your gift to St. Elizabeth Center. It will go far to provide food and hygiene items to needy families in the Oil City area. We are truly moved by your generosity. Together we can do the work Christ called us to do. May you have a blessed new year,

### **Doug and the St. Elizabeth volunteers**

Sisters of St. Joseph, On behalf of St. Peter Cathedral Food Pantry, we're extending our sincere gratitude for the generous donation from your 2019 Thanksgiving Dinner Fund this year. We are fortunate in Erie to have such dedicated benefactors to allow us to provide the much-needed ministry of basic food and necessities to the needy near the Cathedral.

With sincere appreciation,  
**Deacon Ray and Deb Sobina**

Dear Betsy,  
On behalf of the Erie County

CROP Hunger Walk Board, I would like to thank the Sisters of St. Joseph for the very generous gift from the annual Thanksgiving Dinner Fund. That came as a very welcome surprise. Due to a change in policy at the peninsula (and I'm afraid we initially missed that memo), we had to move the 2019 Walk up a couple weeks. That meant churches and other groups didn't have as much time to organize their walk team and solicit support, which resulted in somewhat diminished results. So your gift is an answer to our prayers; it comes at a great time and will enable us to make up some of that difference. God is indeed good.

As is true with all the funds the CROP Walk raises, a portion will be used for grants to local programs/ministries that, in one way or another, address issues of hunger. The remainder will be sent to Church World Service (or some designated agency that does international hunger/poverty relief work). Again, our sincere gratitude. Please extend our thanks to all the Sisters (with a special nod to Sr. Phyllis, who served on our Board for many years and is still a very active supporter).

Sincerely,  
**Rev. James Haas, Erie County  
CROP Coordinator**

Dear Sisters in Christ, On behalf of all the members and beneficiaries of Inter-Church Ministries Voucher Program, I/we thank you for the blessed gift we received yesterday. It was a beautiful celebration and so I send thanks also for that. Further, I can only say that the honor on our end goes to Diane Edwards, executive director emeritus... I look forward in humble prayer to continuing her legacy and helping to improve the lives of so many in need, thus working toward the goal of reducing – and eliminating – poverty and hate in our community. Peace,

**Karen Adams, Director**

Dear Sisters, Our sincere thanks for awarding Gannon's Erie-GAINS money to support our strategic community partner – Strong Vincent Middle School. This will allow us to increase our after-school initiatives to mentor, tutor, feed and interact with these students. We are grateful to the Sisters of St. Joseph for all they have done and continue to do for the Erie community. With your generous gift, we too will continue to support our society in need. Many thanks,  
**Caroline DiPlacido**

Dear Sisters in Faith,  
Thank you for your donation to

*(Continued on page 5)*



## get to know ssj associates



### Rita Lyle

Rita says that becoming an associate has enhanced her spiritual life and she enjoys the friendship of the sisters. For the past 12 years, she was a volunteer in Marycrest where she enjoyed working with the sisters. More recently, she has been volunteering in the Associate Office.

Rita is the second of four girls in her family. She and her husband, Bob, have been married for 56 years and are proud parents of two daughters, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Prior to her retirement, Rita worked for many years as a medical receptionist. Currently, she is a member of St. Jude Parish. Rita belongs to a prayer group which was started by agrégée Judi Janke at St. Joseph Apartments. In her free time, Rita enjoys reading and knitting.

Rita became an associate in 2006 and Sister Jude Marie Talerico was her mentor.

## associates' news and happenings

### It's NOT too late!

#### Annual Associate Retreat Saturday, February 8, 2020

*Then and Now: Spirituality for  
our Time and Place*

Phyllis DiFuccia, SSJ, Facilitator  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Community Living Center  
Suggested donation \$10

Lunch and coffee provided  
Call the Associate office

836-4134.

### In appreciation

On behalf of all associates, **Jodi Andres, Kathy Davis, Rebecca Flynn, Patty Fronzaglia, Alice Fuhrman, Rose Jones, Marti Michael, Anna Turco and Gratia Wittmann** have been sending birthday greetings to our associates. We are ever so grateful to them for their generosity and dedication by volunteering to carry on this wonderful gesture. Presently we are in need of two volunteers to send cards in December and in July. If you care to help, please call the associate office at 836-4134.

Speaking of grateful, we also owe a debt of gratitude to **Thelma Manendo, Janet Demjanenko, Joan Fels, Alice Fuhrman, Linda Gier and Patty George** who volunteer to help

with mailing the Interim to associates who do not get it via email.

### Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to associates who are celebrating their birthdays in February, especially to **Ann Semler** who is celebrating a milestone birthday this year. Although it is not a milestone birthday, we wish **Eleanor Niewiedomski** a very Happy Birthday as she celebrates her 98<sup>th</sup> Birthday on February 7.

### A Milestone Anniversary!

Happy anniversary to Associate Mary Lou Rathers. Mary Lou and her husband, Mike, are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on February 7.

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

Are you interested in joining the Associate Prayer Shawl Ministry? The group meets on the second Wednesday of the month, September through May. You can join the group at any time. For more information call the Associate Office at 836-4134.

## Help Us Live the Mission GO GREEN!

In an increased effort to live the SSJ mission and our Gospel call to care for our common home as Pope Francis beckons us to do in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, we are urging Sisters, Agrégées and Associates who have email to receive *Interim* electronically, via email. This will reduce our printing and paper costs, as well as help the environment. Other benefits: you can increase the size of the view on your computer screen to make it easier to read, and, you can also print out selected pages as necessary. Be sure we have your email address. Send it to [Jennifer.woodard@ssjerie.org](mailto:Jennifer.woodard@ssjerie.org).



## 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.

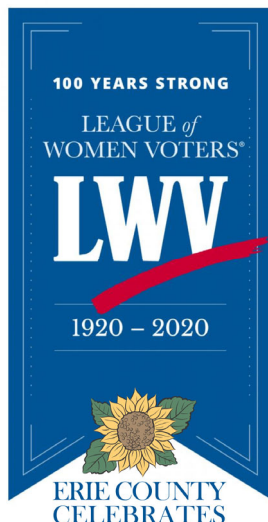
Jodi Andres  
Director, Volunteer Resources  
Phone: 814-452-5646  
[Jodi.Andres@ahn.org](mailto:Jodi.Andres@ahn.org)

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

## 6th Annual 1:38 Women's Conference March 28, 2020 Our Lady of Peace Early Bird Special \$33 by January 31

Lunch and refreshments included. Parking is free. For more information, please see Sr. Millicent or call 455-7364. All are welcome! They always have excellent speakers!

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Women's Right to Vote Events



**"Danielle McGuire, Recy Taylor & the Roots of the #MeToo Movement  
Mercyhurst University, Mary D'Angelo PAC  
February 4, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

**Susan B. Anthony's 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party  
(Prizes for best suffragist hats, sashes & signs)  
Porreco College  
February 15, 2020 2:00 p.m.  
There is a fee for this event. See website for more details [www.Porreco.edinboro.edu](http://www.Porreco.edinboro.edu)**

### Thanksgiving letters/comments

(Continued from page 3)

the Union City Food Pantry. We've expanded and changed. How so?  
-- day and evening hours on Mondays;  
-- hundreds more people come than before;  
-- they "shop" for what they need, rather than "deal with" what they get; and  
-- our board has people who need the pantry on it.  
Respectfully,  
Rob Willert, Treasurer

Dear Sisters,  
Thank you for sharing the Thanksgiving donations with the Shankar Service Foundation. As you know, the purpose of the SSF is to raise money to provide health care and education to some of the poorest of the poor in rural India. All of the health care services are given at no cost to the patients. School children who are able pay a small tuition fee. There are 380 students at our school this year, and of those, 32 pay no

## Sr. Mary Thomas Downing Reading Center

Thank you to Sisters Mary Arnold, Mary Rita, André, and Marie Stephen, who have been busy re-organizing the CLC library to making reading materials more readily available.

Unlike a typical library which is set up to assist people with research, this re-organization will simply make it easier to find books you would like to read.

Given the changes, we have changed the name of this space to the **"Sister Mary Thomas Downing Reading Center."** We hope everyone enjoys it!

fee at all and 45 pay half. The fee includes uniforms, books and supplies, and transportation. We cannot adequately explain how far this donation goes to help us continue our work in India. On behalf of the clients and children we serve who are not able to thank you personally, we extend our sincere gratitude.  
Sincerely yours,  
Kripa Singh, MD

## events, happenings and ministry news



### Haiti Presentation

Presentation on mission work in Haiti by Jennifer and Doug Tucker. **Thursday, February 20, at 6:00 p.m. CLC Gathering Room**

### brown bag & basketry

Your choice from Valentine baskets, the key basket and the small wall basket. You will be able to make at least two.

**February 3 & 4 3:30 - 8 p.m.** Ground floor of Heritage Apts. on the former Villa campus, 2547 West 8th Street. Specific instructions will be provided when you register.

COST: \$30

MATERIALS: Bag supper, comfortable clothes, old towel, dishpan.

**To make a reservation: s.andrefeulner@ssjerie.org or 836-4139 or 969-1429**



**Sister Ann Loretta Urmann helps with the S.O.A.P. project. See page 7.**

### St. Pat's Haven News:

Save the date for the 2nd Annual Comedy Challenge benefitting St. Patrick's Haven and the Upper Room.

**Wed., March 4, 2020 7:00 p.m.**

**Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club**



The visiting team at **St. Patrick's Haven** commit to spending one evening a month for an hour at 7 p.m. talking with our guests. Can you spare an hour and join our team? We have a large need for more people to help with this important ministry. Please contact **Betsy Wiest** at 836-4153 for more information.

### WWW.SSJERIE.ORG SSJcommunity page

#### For members only

Sisters, Agrégées, and Associates — be sure to login in regularly to the SSJ Community page of our website (*for members only*). Consider this page to be your daily SSJ news source. This page is updated often and includes Social Justice Action items, Weekly CLC liturgy schedule, online RSVP and Registration forms for various community functions, a dynamic (always updating) community calendar, an online SSJ directory, photo galleries, and SSJ videos. Also, pertinent information and resources are posted there, as well. (*If you forget the login credentials, contact Jenn at 836-4204.*)

### SSJNN news:

Volunteers needed for children's programs to help with cooking, sewing, life skills or other things you'd like to share with youth. A volunteer is also needed for one hour on Mondays to facilitate a children's activity table at the soup kitchen. Please call Lora Caldwell at 814-897-6901.

Please welcome **Darla Foradora** as the newest member of the SSJNN staff. Darla joins the staff as director of youth programs. Darla graduated from IUP with a Bachelor's Degree in criminology, and received a MBA degree from Kaplan University. Darla brings extensive youth work experience to her new role, including Behavioral Specialist at Pressley Ridge School for Autism, TSS, para educator, Agency with Choice and Sib Sessions coordinator at the Barber National Institute. Darla loves cooking, animals, running, music, boxing and community involvement. She looks forward to leading our youth programs, and developing meaningful enrichment and empowerment opportunities for the children in our neighborhoods.



14TH ANNUAL  
.....  
Guess That Tune

**GALA**

**APRIL 18, 2020**

Bayfront Convention Center



## where's the justice?



### Pro-life breakfast

Sisters Millicent Zimmer and Carmel Rojek were among those from the SSJ community who attended the Pro-Life breakfast on January 11, 2020. Keynote speaker, Ryan Bomberger, who was “conceived in rape and adopted in love,” shared his experiences growing up in a multi-racial Christian family. He is ever grateful that his birth mother turned the unplanned into a loving plan.

### Asbury Springhill and St. Patrick’s Haven

Once again, the employees at Asbury Springhill designated St. Patrick’s Haven as the recipient of the proceeds from their 4th Quarter 2019 jeans days. The employees and residents of Springhill continue to support the mission of providing a safe haven for homeless men in Erie.



### Homelessness in Erie

Erie County conducted the annual Single Point in Time count on January 25, 2020. Teams of volunteers worked with housing programs, including St. Patrick’s Haven, to

assure an accurate count. Other volunteers drove throughout Erie County looking for those who might be experiencing homelessness. This information is used to assist providers in developing needed programs to better serve those whose housing is unstable.

### Martin Luther King Rally

Sr. Rosemary O’Brien and Betsy Wiest attended the Martin Luther King Peace Walk at Perry Square, Erie, PA on January 20, 2020. Mayor Joseph Schember and local NAACP President Gary Horton spoke prior to the walk on the great strides Erie is making to promote diversity—especially in educational and employment opportunities. Approximately 300 people attended the rally.



### SOAP

Several sisters helped with the Lutheran Women’s S.O.A.P. project during human trafficking awareness month. S.O.A.P. (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) is an initiative that involves placing specially labeled bars of soap in hotel rooms. The labels include information and the Human Trafficking hotline number.

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Developed in 2015 and to be completed by the year 2030.



### GOAL #4:

**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.**

Universal primary education had a 91% enrollment in 2015. However, 262 million youth ages 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017 with more than half not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and math. Education helps reduce inequalities and reach gender equality. It empowers people to live more healthy and sustainable lives. It is crucial to fostering tolerance between people and contributes to more peaceful societies.

**TAKE ACTION:** Contact your legislators and encourage them to work toward inclusive and equitable quality education for all citizens.

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.ORG

## Solidarity with the “dear neighbor”

by Betsy Wiest, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

*“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are really responsible for all.”* Pope Francis

We live in a world where respect for life and people is not a privilege afforded to everyone. Climate change, discrimination, and violence are just some of the things that we, especially the poor and marginalized, experience. We can't live and exist independently of others; we are interdependent beings. We need to treat each other as sisters and brothers and care for our “dear neighbor”

without distinction. Only working as one can we build communities that empower everyone to attain full potential.

Catholic Social Teaching on the principle of solidarity encourages us to build relationships so we can understand what life is like for others who are different from us.

Our gospel calls us to promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict. So, how can we do this? Try these:

- Smile at everyone you meet—especially those you don't know.
- Attend a vigil or prayer service that promotes peace.
- Learn about other cultures and join a group that celebrates diversity.
- Most important, each day,

pray the following prayer for solidarity and the healing of our broken world.

*Spirit of God, you are the source and fount of all creation.*

*As you are one, make us one.*

*Unify us in an awareness, which sees the plight of your children around the world.*

*Unify us in a hope which speaks of a better future.*

*Unify us in a justice which works for the world you dream.*

*Unify us in a love which prioritizes relationships of care.*

*Unify us in a joy which witnesses to your eternal goodness.*

*Unify us as one human family with a shared home and common destiny in You.*

*Unify us now to act on behalf of the marginalized, voiceless and unseen.*

*As you are one, make us one.*

*Amen.*  
*(Photo is from Silent Peace Walk for Solidarity at the Community Living Center on 1-13-2020.)*

