

interim

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January 2022

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Happy New Year

As I write this article, first I want to take this time to wish all of you a very happy, holy and healthy new year.

I believe in my heart that I speak for all of the sisters when I say we are blessed in so many ways by you. We have associates and agreees who step up and assist when called upon for any number of things. We have a staff of employees who care for the needs of the sisters and our

facilities as if they were their own.

Coming to work each day, I see the beauty and love of our people day in and day out. No task is too small or too insignificant for any one of them.

While I don't see many of you on a daily basis, I can only imagine that what you are doing where you are is done with the same love, care and concern as those who minister at the CLC or the SSJ Administrative

building on a daily basis.

Truly our mission is alive as we serve the dear neighbor without distinction.

Thank you, everyone!

Sister Mary Drexler



Retreats and More

Spring and summer retreat program information will be arriving soon. The Retreat Team will begin posting information about upcoming retreats and programs on the large bulletin board in the Alcove near the Human Resource Office in the CLC. The former Retreat Office in the CLC will now serve as Brandon Vogt's Office of Worship, Prayer and Music Ministry.

Contact Brandon:
brandon.vogt@ssjerie.org
814-836-4065

SSJ Community Meeting to Launch Chapter Planning—January 30, 2022, 9 a.m. -12 noon

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania will hold a General Chapter in 2023. A General Chapter consisting of a Chapter of Affairs and a Chapter of Elections is held every four years.

During a Chapter, the Congregation looks at its deepest meanings and decisions the group must make to continue furthering its mission. The Leadership of the

Congregation is mandated to carry out the decisions made at Chapter.

With Sr. Mary Dacey, SSJ, of Philadelphia as facilitator, a Chapter Planning committee has been meeting

regularly to plan for the General Chapter in 2023.

The entire SSJ community plays a role in Chapter. As we move through the planning process and the Chapter itself, we

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**MISSION:
POSSIBLE**

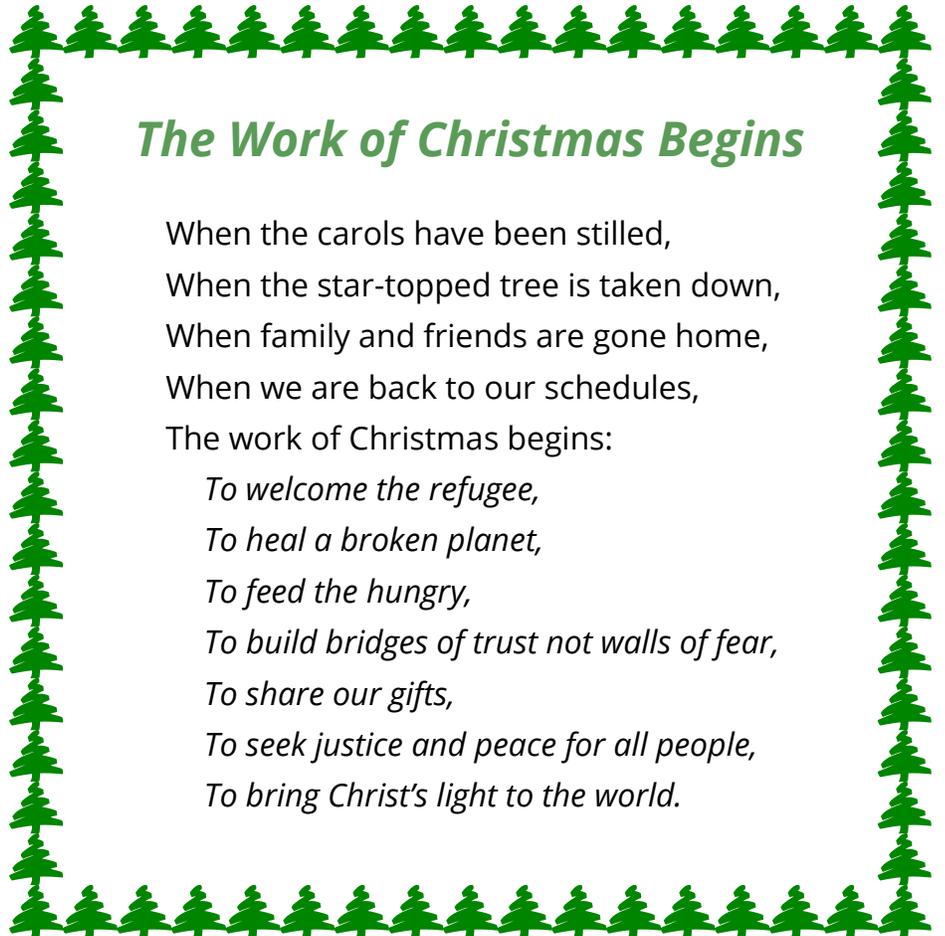
The Work of Christmas

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

I can't believe that we are taking down our Christmas trees and decorations and packing them away for another year. It seems like we just put them up. Where does the time go?

Christmas 2021 is now in the past and a new year has begun. As I was putting things away, I came upon this short poem which I really love. Each year, I spend time reflecting on its message and what it means to me.

Yes, Christmas 2021 has been celebrated but its spirit remains with us. I am reminded that every day I strive to live our charism and mission—uniting neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God—and reaching out to the dear neighbor without distinction, I am doing the work of Christmas. This work is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible**.



The Work of Christmas Begins

When the carols have been stilled,
When the star-topped tree is taken down,
When family and friends are gone home,
When we are back to our schedules,
The work of Christmas begins:

- To welcome the refugee,*
- To heal a broken planet,*
- To feed the hungry,*
- To build bridges of trust not walls of fear,*
- To share our gifts,*
- To seek justice and peace for all people,*
- To bring Christ's light to the world.*

A Spiritual Opportunity—Women's Christmas Retreats

Celebrated on Epiphany (January 6) in Ireland and elsewhere, Women's Christmas offers an opportunity at the end of the holiday season to celebrate with friends and to

gather ourselves before diving into the responsibilities of the new year. This day invites us to pause, to rest, to reflect.

In this spirit, Jan Richardson creates retreats that you are

welcome to download and use, at no cost, either by yourself or with others.

Blessings on your Women's Christmas!

Just released!

Women's Christmas Retreat 2022

[Click here](#) to visit **sanctuaryofwomen.com** to download *A Path Called Solace* as a PDF.



Thanksgiving Donors Set New Record

Our Thanksgiving donors are AMAZING!

For 33 years, we've asked and they've answered. But in 2021, they answered with a resounding, record-shattering \$82,406 – a 15 percent increase over our previous (2020) record of \$71,600.

Of course, it's great to set a

WOW!

new record. But what's truly remarkable is the impact of these gifts.

Thanks to nearly 700 generous donors and 97 volunteers, the Sisters were able to deliver 1,100 holiday meals on Thanksgiving Day and, in a few weeks, will be able to distribute more than \$60,000 to 40 plus area

organizations that fight hunger and poverty throughout the year.

To keep everyone safe during these challenging times, there will be no Thanksgiving liturgy or reception again this year. Instead, Thanksgiving checks will be mailed to area organizations.

SAVE THE DATE

(Continued from page 1)

will provide updates on the process.

A community meeting is planned for Sunday, January 30, 2022 to officially kick-off the preparations for the General Chapter. At that time, the committee will present information about the Chapter

process, a timeline and the theme.

We hope the meeting can be held in person at the CLC, however, COVID may interfere. It may end up being a virtual meeting or a hybrid with CLC Sisters in person and a livestream for others. We will keep you informed. Either way — SAVE THE DATE!



Sunday, January 30, 2022

He Passed By

An article by Sr. Marie Stephen Kebort titled *How have I passed by?* was featured in the last issue of *petite Journeys*. Through a recent experience, the article came to life for me.

I was home one evening watching the news when there was a knock on my door. I went to the door and asked, "Hello, how may I help you?" The voice coming from the other side was that of a woman who said, "I am lost and I don't know how to get back to my daughter's house." She explained that she had gotten upset about some things and left the house without taking anything with her. "I've been wandering around and do not know how to

get back to her house."

It was a nasty, cold, and rainy night. I opened my garage door so that she could come in and sit down while I figured out how to help her find her daughter's house. The only neighbor I thought of who could possibly help me was Cindy Polesnak, one of our *agrégées*. I called her and thankfully she agreed to help.

For about 45 minutes we drove around the area with the woman trying to find her daughter's house. The only clues she could give us were that it was near a church and a gas station. We were on Zimmerly Road when she recognized we had gone too

by Mary Drexler, SSJ

far. We turned around and came down Old Zuck Road where she recognized the church (actually a Temple). She then knew where her daughter's house was. We dropped her off after making certain someone was home.

While driving back home, I asked Cindy, "Why do you think she stopped at my house?" Cindy responded, "God knew that you were probably the only one in the area who would open your door and help her."

That night "He passed by" and a lost woman was reconnected with her family.

How do I pass by? Will others say that the world is a better place because I passed this way?

Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ
Associate Director



Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all our sisters, associates, agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health problems, especially **A. Cynthia Gruzca, A. Evelyn Visnoski, and A. Sandy Filippi.**

Please also remember in prayer **A. Linda Gier**, who died on November 22, 2021. May eternal light shine upon her, O Lord! We also ask your prayers for her family at this most difficult time. Sister Rita Zattosky OSB, sent the following short tribute she wrote about her friend, Linda. I would like to share it with you.

Linda Lois Gier

Linda was like a shining light in so many people's lives. She had her own way to accomplish what God wanted her to do in her lifetime. And she succeeded in doing that. Especially in her last job on earth...working at Saint Vincent Hospital in Pastoral Care. She had always wanted to help others while they were in the hospital. She took this job and worked miracles with some of her patients. Linda was very close to her family and friends as well. Her way of reaching out to others was a special gift from God. She used God's gift wisely. Through faithfulness to her religion and to her church Linda spread her faith and love to all those she met. Her journey is now over. She is with God and with her family and friends who have gone before her. One good thing about this journey is that you don't have to pack a

*suitcase...you just go as you are. Love and missing you,
Sr. Rita
P.S. I will be calling you every night at 7:00 p.m. Listen for the ring. Good job.*

Address Change

We received word from Vicki Bocan, sister-in-law of **A. Carol Bocan**, that Carol is now residing at Oil City Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center. Personal greetings can be sent to her at this address:
**Oil City Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center
1293 Grandview Road
Oil City, PA 16301**

Drive Thru



The December 4th Drive Thru for Community of Caring was a successful event and we would like to thank all who participated by dropping off items. We also would like to thank the following associates who volunteered their time to help: **Gina Adams, Renee Clark, Deacon John Mang, Tammy Mang, and Julie Whan.** Jenn Woodard and Cathi Lewis from the Community of

Caring were also there to greet those who dropped off items. We received the following note from Jenn:

*Dear SSJ Associates,
On behalf of the Community of Caring residents I thank you for your overwhelming show of support!! Not only did we continue to see you driving up with armloads of donations, your love and encouraging words mean so much. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus to our dear homeless neighbors. God bless you!
Love,
Jenn Woodard
Executive Director
Community of Caring*

No News Is Good News

It was a pleasant surprise to hear from **A. Joy Sherred** who called to say hello even though she had "no news" to share. We had a great conversation just listening to each other's everyday experiences and little surprises.

Zoom Get togethers

Since the Corona virus is still with us and continues to prevent us from gathering in large groups at the CLC, we will try to stay in touch this winter by having some "ZOOM time" together. For those who cannot participate via ZOOM, we will try staying in touch with phone calls. You will be hearing from us soon with dates and times for our get togethers.

Wishing you and yours a very blessed and happy New Year! May 2022 be good to you.

where's the justice?

Arctic Refuge Safe

Thanks to calls made by you and others throughout our country, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one step closer to being off-limits to oil and gas drilling. Senate leadership decided not to bring the pro-drilling amendments up for a vote. This paves the road for Arctic Refuge protections to be fully restored later this year and guarantee that the Arctic Refuge is closed to drilling.

Urge Congress to Pass the Afghan Adjustment Act

Many Afghans are being welcomed to the U.S. through humanitarian parole, a temporary status. [Call on Congress](#) to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would create a pathway to citizenship for evacuated Afghans.

Bliley Technologies Helps St. Patrick's Haven



Amy and Keith Szewczyk of Bliley Technologies recently organized a sweatshirt collection for the

men at St. Patrick's Haven. With the winter weather just around the corner, employees at Bliley wanted to do something to help the homeless men who come to St. Patrick's each night.

Titusville Middle School—A little school with a big heart



Titusville Middle School, under the direction of Margie Axton, recently completed a collection of socks for several area agencies, including St. Patrick's Haven. They collected 900 pair of socks which will help many people in the upcoming cold winter months. As Margie said, "That is a great accomplishment for a little school in a small town!"



The longest night

Homeless Persons' Memorial Day raises awareness of the tragedy of homelessness and serves as a public memorial in recognition of homeless individuals who have died on the streets in the past year. A Memorial Service was held at Perry Square on December 21st. Following the service, attendees walked a block to place a wreath at the statue of Jesus by Timothy Schmalz titled "When I was Hungry and Thirsty."

Facts about homelessness:

- Homelessness dramatically elevates one's risk of illness, injury, and death.
- The average age of death of a person experiencing homelessness is about fifty years, the age at which Americans commonly died in 1900.

Do you have a heart for justice? Join JPIC

If you have a heart for social justice please consider joining the JPIC Team. We welcome your help. Call Deb Seng at 814-836-4153.

January 12 Education Justice



Join Catholic Sisters for a yearlong, monthly conversation series "Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate." Each month, panelists will explore a social issue and how it intersects with racism, migration and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation.



Find out more at www.exploringintersections.org

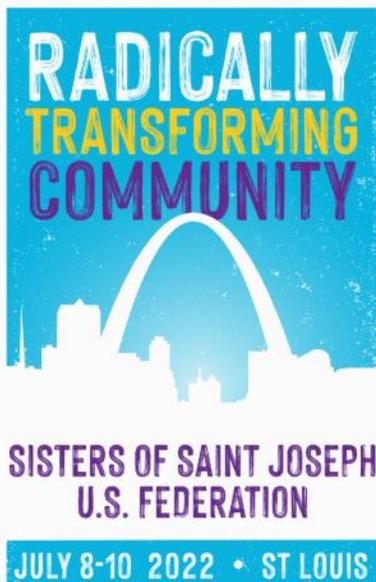
Working Toward a Sustainable Lifestyle



New Year's Resolutions to help you live a sustainable lifestyle:

- * Recycle your old cellular phone.
- * Recycle magazines/newspapers.
- * Don't leave the tap running when washing dishes or brushing your teeth.
- * Use a low-flow showerhead.
- * Choose clothing from second-hand shops or items made in the USA by fair trade manufacturers.
- * Buy goods with less packaging.
- * Use concentrated dishwasher liquid.
- * Wash laundry only when dirty.
- * Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- * Share your recycling knowledge with those around you.
- * Use the local library and save trees.
- * Buy fair trade coffee.

U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph National Event



We truly believe our future rests in expanding our views of community and we will explore this throughout our time at the Event. Watch for more exciting announcements including our very exciting line-up of not-to-miss keynote speakers!

When? July 8-10, 2022

Where? Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch.

Who? YOU! This Event will be open to the entire Federation and those who share the Charism!

Speakers: announcing our very exciting keynote speakers (yes, two of them!) this month!!!

Be sure to visit the [Federation website Event page](#) for more information and regular updates.

Federation Calls to End of the Misuse of Title 42!

Nearly 30 Sisters of St. Joseph, associates, and partners in mission from around the country joined NETWORK and other faith-based and secular immigrant rights groups to call on the Biden Administration to end the misuse of Title 42.

[Read more](#) about the immoral use of Title 42, which denies the God-given, inherent human dignity of our migrant siblings and the basic right to seek asylum protected under international law.

News from the Neighborhood Network



Welcome to **Susannah Faulkner** who joined the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network in December as its Director of Development.

SSJNN has a need for substitute volunteer receptionists and a volunteer to do a few hours of typing. Please contact Lora at 814-897-6901 if interested.

Our gratitude to all who have sent cards, prayers and support of all kinds to SSJNN throughout the holiday season! We are so grateful and wish everyone a blessed and bright new year!

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

As you may be aware, Pope Francis has asked every diocese in the world to participate in preparations for the upcoming world Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in 2023. The theme of that synod will be **For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission**.

Information is available to aid in your understanding of the SYNOD and to explain how the Erie Diocese will participate. [Click here.](#)



Information regarding sessions to be held at the CLC for Sisters will be coming soon.

Welcome New SSJ Employees!



Mikayla Bowers
Front Desk



Ann Iavarone
LPN

Villa Alum? Join Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections

Please join our Facebook Group: Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections www.facebook.com/groups/villassjerie/ If you're not on Facebook, no worries. You can still be in the loop by going to our website and completing a short Villa Alum form. This will help us stay connected. Access the form at: <https://ssjerie.org/villa-connections/>

ssj community January Birthdays

- 4 A. Kathy Davis
- A. Dotty Hanna
- 6 Agr. Michelle Tortorelli
- 7 A. Mary Ann Zarnick
- 9 S. Perpetua Dickant
- 11 S. Colette Palmer
- 13 S. Frances Therese Matia
- 14 S. Marjorie Adams
- S. Nancy Fischer
- 16 A. Maria Ines Patino Giraldo
- 22 S. Rosemary O'Brien
- 23 A. Carol Dorr
- A. Joann Rupp
- 24 S. Phyllis Hilbert
- 25 Agr. Tammy Van Buren
- 29 A. Debbie Brasili

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Connecting with God + Connecting with You

WWW.
SSJERIE
.ORG

Wear Blue

In 2007, the U.S. Senate established National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11th. Its focus is to raise awareness of the continuing problem of human trafficking and slavery in our world. U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking estimates that there are 40 million people worldwide being trafficked today, including in the United States.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline reports, *"There is no official estimate of the total number of human trafficking victims in the U.S. With 100,000 children estimated to be in the sex trade, it is clear the total number of victims nationally reaches into the hundreds of thousands when estimates of both adults and minors in sex and labor trafficking are aggregated."*

What can you do to help? Become aware of what trafficking is and when you see

something, say something. Useful websites for information are:

[Home - U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking \(sistersagainstrafficking.org\)](http://sistersagainstrafficking.org)

[Polaris | We Fight to End Human Trafficking \(polarisproject.org\)](http://polarisproject.org)

[ECPAT-USA \(ecpatusa.org\)](http://ecpatusa.org)
[Blue Campaign | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](http://dhs.gov)

Spend some time informing yourself about trafficking and then, on January 11th, WEAR BLUE. The Blue Campaign is a national public awareness initiative sponsored through the Department of Homeland Security. The goal is to encourage community partners to recognize the signs of trafficking and appropriately respond to situations. The Blue Campaign's educational

by Betsy Wiest, SSJ

objectives include two key elements:

- Preventing human trafficking
- Protecting those who have been exploited by human trafficking

So, on January 11th, wear blue and take the time to educate one other person about slavery, how it is thriving in the world today (the largest growing industry second to arms dealing) and how you can See, Call and Save a life today.

Ask me why
**I'm blue
today.**

It's Wear Blue Day
January 11

for Human Trafficking
Awareness