

interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

October Winds Blow...

Dear Friends,

"October gave a party. The leaves by hundreds came. The chestnuts, oaks, and maples and leaves by other names..." This is the beginning of a poem (I had to memorize in grade school, but all I can remember today). October will give us a party of leaves, but we may have to wait a few more weeks. Still in September, however, there has been a party of some sorts here.

This past weekend, two Sisters from the Congregation of St. Joseph, LaGrange Community, Srs. Pat Bergen and Kathy Sherman, came and presented a weekend program entitled "Let Us Sing As We Go: Dreaming the MORE for Us and for the World." Both Sr. Pat and Sr. Kathy put together a program that delighted participants with music,

song, and quiet reflection. As Sisters, Associates, and Agrégée were leaving, they were remarking about the colorful weekend with many returning to reacquaint with others. It truly was a party!

This month of September ended on an upbeat note of music and singing, leading us into the month of October that will be filled with our Pre-Chapter preparation. May we take the joy from September and add it to the color of October for an enriching and challenging month.

Blessings!

Sr. Mary

Sr. Mary



Our 250 Acts of Kindness, Justice, and Peace Initiative continues.

Please
[Click here to record your Acts.](#)



OCTOBER'S PARTY by George Cooper

October gave a party; the leaves by hundreds came—
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples, and leaves of every name.
The Sunshine spread a carpet, and everything was grand,
Miss Weather led the dancing, Professor Wind the band

The Chestnuts came in yellow, the Oaks in crimson dressed;
The lovely Misses Maple in scarlet looked their best;
All balanced to their partners, and gaily fluttered by;
The sight was like a rainbow new fallen from the sky.

Then, in the rustic hollow, at hide-and-seek they played,
The party closed at sundown, and everybody stayed
Professor Wind played louder; they flew along the ground;
And then the party ended in jolly "hands around"



MISSION: POSSIBLE

THANKS FOR MAKING THE MISSION POSSIBLE

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

On September 10, 2026, the Sisters of St. Joseph were invited to attend the AHN St. Vincent Hospital's annual Mission Day Celebration. A special unveiling of the permanent History Wall and the presentations of special awards to employees took place in Sister Marie Paul Lobby. This year was special as it was the 150th anniversary of the founding of the hospital.

The ceremony began with a prayer led by Sister Clare Marie Beichner, Pastoral Care Ministry, followed with a welcome by

Dr. Chris Clark, President of AHN St. Vincent Hospital. In his remarks, Dr. Clark said, "For a century and a half - from our roots as a 12-bed hospital to the integrated network we are today - we have been a steadfast pillar of health and healing. We are immensely proud to carry on the compassionate mission and visionary legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph."

According to Dr. Clark, "The wall is much more than a timeline of dates. It is a visual testament to our shared legacy -honoring the caregivers, leaders, and

community partners, past and present, who live out our core mission of service every single day."

Dr. Clark then invited the Sisters in attendance and the Board Members of the Hospital to assist in the unveiling ceremony. Following the unveiling, Sister Clare Marie Beichner offered a prayer of blessing of the History Wall.

Although the hospital is no longer one of our sponsored ministries, the SSJ Spirit is still present and that's what makes the SSJ Mission Possible!



Dr. Chris Clark, hospital board members, and Sisters the unveiling AHN St. Vincent,s new History Wall.



Associate and Agrégée News



Associates Richard Marshall and Gary Flick have participated in the CROP Walk for many years, but not in the usual way. Both men belong to the Millcreek Area Community Band which each year welcomes returning walkers by playing from their repertoire of concert band music.

Congratulations to **Associate Alice Fuhman** on the birth of her 12th great-grandchild Hadley. Hadley, whose father is Alice's grandson Michael Fuhrman, is Alice's 6th granddaughter.



SSJ Associates Mary Lou Rathers and Stephanie Hall were recently given a "hardhat tour" of the Women Religious Archives Collaborative heritage center, currently under construction in Cleveland, Ohio.



Condolences to **Associate Betsy Williams** on the recent death of her husband Richard "RJ" Williams. *May eternal light shine on him, O Lord, and may he rest in peace.*

Thank you Sisters, Agrégées, Associates, and friends for your support of this year's 51st annual CROP Walk. The funding from this effort will be shared both globally and locally in our community. We are thankful for our community's involvement.



What's Going On In Your Life?

We want to know what is going on in the lives of our Agrégées and Associates! Are you celebrating a special anniversary or birthday? Is there an addition to your family? Maybe you are taking an exciting trip or have started a new job. Don't be shy about telling us. We really want to know. Sharing details of our lives is one way for us to stay connected. If you have something to share, email us at SSJNews@ssjerie.org.

Community Weekend with Srs. Pat Bergen & Kathy Sherman

Over the weekend of September 25-27th, the SSJ Community Living Center was filled with nearly 70 Sisters, Associates and Agrégées, who participated in a special community event with Srs. Kathy Sherman and Pat Bergen from the Congregation of St. Joseph.

The event, "Let Us Sing As We Go: Dreaming the MORE for Us and for the World" lived up to its title, as there were many opportunities to sing, listen, reflect, and dream through the weekend. As Sr. Mary Drexler said in her welcome to those gathered at the opening session, this was a time that did not require decision making. Rather, attendees were encouraged to remember, imagine, let go, and go deeper.

After the opening session, the weekend began with a special concert offered by Sr. Kathy, filled with music that reflects the Charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Her songs were powerful reminders of the challenges in our world and our responsibility to be agents of change. Each session that followed stood as its own story while also formulating a journey from the beginnings of our own Congregation, the original story of the first Sisters in France, and the universe and earth. This allowed participants to attend as little or as much as they were able. The weekend ended with an anointing and the challenge to be builders of a civilization of love.

Those who participated commented on the power of the music and prayers offered by Srs. Kathy and Pat, the opportunity to come together as a community, and the many blessings that flowed from the weekend, including "so many chances to have God's love shown to me." Many Associates were also able to renew connections during the weekend, an opportunity provided by an event like this.

Through music, imagination, art, reflection, prayer, stories, and sharing, attendees were encouraged and reminded to remain a source of hope and love for the universe, to find the gift in letting go, and to search for the source of new life.



Click [here](#) to hear a video from Sr. Kathy's concert on Friday evening.

Shared with permission from art-



Snapshot from our Sponsored Ministries

Erie Irish Festival - September 18 - 20th

St. Patrick's Haven had a table at the annual Erie Irish Festival, where attendees had the opportunity to participate in a basket raffle and learn more about the Haven. The festival, held in front of St. Patrick Cathedral, provided a weekend filled with great food, live music, and Irish culture.



The Haven is grateful to have had the opportunity to connect with the Erie community, share more about their ministry, and raise awareness of the services they provide to men in the Erie area.



Celebrity Bartending Fundraiser - September 18th

The SSJNN held its annual Celebrity Bartending event at the La Nuova Aurora Club. Among several guest bartenders were SSJ's very own: Sr. Carol Morehouse, Agr. Charlene Kellerman, A. Brandon Vogt, and Carleen Onuschak!



The SSJNN would like to thank Sr. Marianne Stuckert, Sr. Clare Marie Beichner, Agr. Deb Seng, Agr. Tammy VanBuren, A. Nancy Brown, and A. BJ Chitester for their help in making the event a success. They also appreciate all of the Sisters, Agrégées, Associates, and supporters who made the event possible.



Sound Off for St. James - September 19th

St. James Haven brought the community together with local food trucks, an 80-basket raffle, a bake sale, and a swag table - all while raising critical funds to support the mission of St. James Haven. The main attraction of the event was a worship concert, featuring music from the worship teams of Calvary Baptist, New Beginnings, and Oasis churches, as well as performances by No Rival and Allison Mattis, who sang with Lydia Mattis and Jenna Ploski.



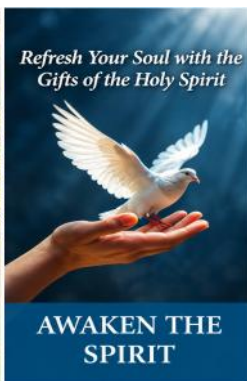
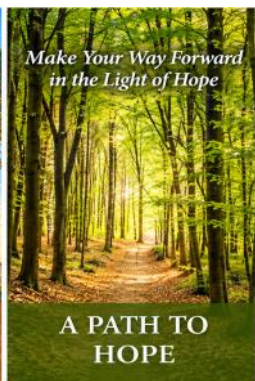
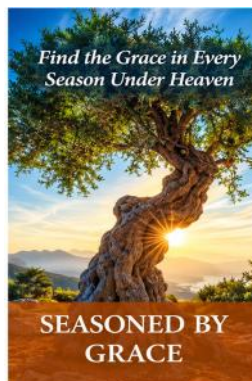
Samantha Stump, director of St. James Haven, is grateful to all of the sponsors, churches, volunteers, raffle basket donors, and members of the board of directors who helped make the event a success.

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

Rachael Tserkovniak and Alec Durfee, who have been part-time with the Sisters of St. Joseph, have officially moved to full-time employees. Rachael has gone from a part-time contracted service employee to the full-time Director of Human Resources. Alec has moved from a part-time Social Media Specialist to working part-time for the Sisters and part-time for the Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation as a Digital and Social Media Specialist.



Nourish Your Spirit *Click for retreat opportunities.*



God Is Better Than Santa Claus: A Book for Adults

By: Christine Kresho, SSJ, Book Discussion

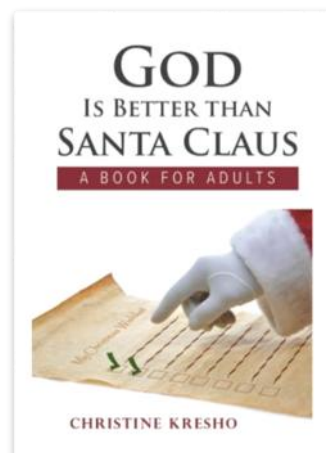
Join us for a meaningful and inspiring discussion of *God Is Better Than Santa Claus: A Book for Adults* by Christine Kresho, an SSJ from Baden, PA. This 70-page book invites us to reflect on our faith and explore how we grow in our understanding of God's unconditional love. Come share your thoughts, insights, and perspectives with us!

Wednesday, November 18, 2026 from 6:00–8:00 PM on Zoom.

Click [Here](#) to register.

The book is available through online retailers and some libraries. Those who register will receive the Zoom link the week of the meeting.

Having trouble registering? Please send your name and email address to mchrymko@hotmail.com.



Living Laudato Deum

by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

Don't Burn or Throw Out Leaves.

Autumn leaves make excellent, micronutrient-packed mulch. Some municipalities collect leaves along with other yard waste to be sent to a composting center, but if no such facility exists, your leaf pile just gets sent to the landfill.

Before you bag up leaves for trash collection, use as many as possible as mulch for your trees, shrubbery and gardens. If you can't use them, ask around, as anyone who composts might have a use for them. Community gardens are a good place to start. Whatever you do, don't burn leaf piles - doing so releases carbon monoxide and particles that can cause respiratory problems.



- 2 A. Karen Grove
- 5 A. Nancy Imler
- 6 A. Mary Ann Weber
- 7 A. Bob Olon
- 10 A. Richard Marshall
- 10 A. Patricia Fronzaglia
- 11 A. Joan Fels
- 12 A. Jennifer King
- 14 A. Kristina Huber
- 15 A. Sheila Causgrove
- 16 A. Kay Hotchkiss
- 17 A. Dave Sharie
- 20 Agr. Judi Janke
- 29 A. Stephen Kuhn
- 29 A. Elaine Mozdy

LET'S CELEBRATE WITH THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH!

YOU'RE INVITED!



SSJ SOIRÉE

OCTOBER 24, 2026
3 TO 5 PM

5031 WEST RIDGE ROAD

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- OCTOBER 16 -
FOUNDATION@SSJERIE.ORG
or 814-836-4202

HOSTED BY THE
SSJ MISSION & MINISTRIES FOUNDATION
AND OUR EXCLUSIVE EVENT SPONSOR:



Northwest
Wealth Management



VMA 1979 alum Sally
Painter to speak during
Jefferson Education
Society Global Summit
on October 21, 2026.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Make Your Voice Heard!

by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

I joined over 750 volunteers from all over the country in Washington D.C. from September 13-16th. We met with every Senate and House office. We were advocating for support of the highest possible funding increase for research and cancer prevention programs in the 2027 budget. We were also asking for our legislators to cosponsor H.R. 3521/S.4440, the Clinical Trial Modernization Act. It is a bipartisan bill that will make it easier for patients to participate in cutting edge clinical trials and enhance US innovation in research by cutting red tape.

I also joined area environmental and faith-based organizations on September 23rd and 24th at the Bayfront Convention Center to protest the Shale Insight Convention being held there. This is the largest fossil fuel lobby in the country. They are pushing to increase fracking and build mega data centers in PA, OH, and WV. The corporations and their lawyers attending this conference are behind the largest proposed AI data centers and fracked-gas power plants, including in Homer City, PA, near Pittsburgh. On Tuesday, during a time when the participants were having a reception on the bay side of the convention center, we were in two boats singing, chanting and beating drums, asking them not to pollute and saying that we believed a better way of

life is possible. We know they heard us as many of them came outside to take pictures. On Wednesday, we held a rally and had several speakers educating us about the effects of data centers and fracking on local communities. There is a House Bill in front of the PA House that would place a moratorium on building data centers for six months. Please let your representative know that you would like him/her to support HR 1834 to give municipalities an opportunity to put regulations in place before data centers are built. We ended the day on Wednesday with a Season of Creation prayer service. Season of Creation is a special period of ecumenical prayer and action for the earth from September 1 to October 4th. We joined in prayer with Christians all over the world lamenting the suffering of the earth, being a witness to the change needed in our hearts and in our world, and a profound act of hope for a different future.

There are two actions that you can take to advocate for these important issues. Contact Senators Fetterman and McCormick and ask them to cosponsor S. 4440 and Representative Kelly to cosponsor H.R.3521, the Clinical Trial Modernization Act. Secondly, contact your PA House member and ask them to support HB 1834 placing a moratorium on the building of data centers for 6 months. We can all do our part.

