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Dear Friends,

Summer may have seemed a bit delayed to all of us this year; unparalleled challenges faced us during the beautiful months of spring. But now, as we have gradually begun to emerge from our homes and the restrictions of the pandemic, we’re invited by physician-songwriter Debasish Mridha to take on a fresh perspective.

“Summer is singing with joy”, she notes, and the beaches are inviting you with dancing waves.”

This image of such elation reflects so many things contained in our summer issue of Celebrate. We find ourselves delighted with abundant gifts from God as we connect with our readers once again. Our Chapel has been completed, and we have begun to enjoy the shining freshness of this sacred space for prayer and reflection. It is because of generous donors, such as Mr. Weigel as seen on page 3, that such a monumental project was possible. Look for a photo of the Chapel on page 13.

You’ll find some interesting ways that our Sisters have faced the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, and you’ll get an historical view of previous health crises at Oldenburg in the article beginning on page 4. However, our 11 Sister-Jubilarians (pages 8-9) take center stage as causes of summer joy; with deep gratitude, we celebrate their amazing gifts of self to God and our Franciscan mission. How blessed we are in their presence and service!

Notice the distinct ministry offered by S. Marya Grathwohl, Director of Earth Hope; her story of earth advocacy can be found on pages 10-12. And finally, Oldenburg Franciscan Center (page 14) has filled its calendar with inspiring opportunities for education, prayer, and reflection for all who attend.

So many reasons emerge to “Rejoice as summer should,” says writer Melissa Marr, and to believe that, as author Charles Bowden states, “Summer time is always the best of what might be.” We thank you for your gracious partnership with us, and we pray that your summer days will be filled with the joy of “the dancing waves”, the delight of God’s presence and light in all that you do!

With warm summer blessings,

S. Delouiseng Menges, OSF

For the General Council
Journey with Us

Donald “Donny” Weigel

By: Jo Ann Butt - Communications Manager

Donald, or as his many friends refer to him as, “Donny” Weigel, is a familiar face around Batesville as the octogenarian and his late wife, Marge, actively volunteered in the area. The couple raised their five children, ensuring that they received a Catholic education at St. Louis elementary school, and later their three daughters continued at the Immaculate Conception Academy, now known as Oldenburg Academy.

The joking dad and grandfather fondly remembers his time at St. Louis School, and added, “The Sisters were really good to me during grade school, although I spent a considerable amount of time in the hallway, if you know what I mean. They made me toe the line, and as I look back, that’s what I really needed!”

In addition to his life-long career with the Hillrom Company, Donny was involved in giving back to his community. He recalled how the Sisters taught him the importance of caring for others as he served as a volunteer fireman for many years and also as Batesville’s Fire Chief from 1978-1996.

When asked about how he chose to support the Sisters, Donny was quick to respond, “I understand the Sisters’ need for income to support their Community in their senior years. I enjoy reading their Celebrate magazine and learning about the many ways the Community remains active, and I want to help as I can.”

Thank you, Donny Weigel for being a good and faithful servant!

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF OUR BASEBALL RAFFLE

Thank you to everyone who purchased a chance to win a prize in our Cardinals vs. Reds Baseball Raffle in support of our retired Sisters!

Due to pandemic concerns, we were not able to award tickets to the two games slated to be played in June and September, but the following prizes were awarded to the raffle’s winners:

1st Prize of $800
Rob Chapman
Batesville, IN

2nd Prize of $650
Kristina Harvey
Brownsburg, IN

3rd Prize - Reds’ Basket
Diane Kessens
Batesville, IN

4th Prize - Cardinals’ Basket
Timothy Prickel
Terre Haute, IN

Watch for our raffle chances to arrive in the spring of 2021!
The coronavirus pandemic has impacted our Sisters, our nation, and our world as we all learn to change our lives to adapt to the uncertainty of an invisible virus that threatens the human race.

Our Sisters’ Motherhouse is located in Oldenburg on the southern edge of Franklin County in southeast Indiana. Franklin County was among three southeastern Indiana counties with an unusually high rate of positive cases of COVID-19, placing our Sisters at a higher risk of potentially contracting the virus. Safety measures were implemented early to establish a quarantine environment, and were strongly enforced to help protect those living and working at the Oldenburg Motherhouse. Those precautions, combined with a steady stream of prayers from you as well as those from our Sisters—have kept our Sisters and Co-workers virus free, to date, and we thank you!

One may ask, how do you quarantine a Community of Sisters to remain in their Motherhouse, and what about those who are residing elsewhere and actively ministering among God’s people?

That’s an excellent question—and we’ll share with our readers how some Sisters continue in their external ministries and how the Sisters residing at the Motherhouse minister during the pandemic.

Sisters engaged in external mission work are being impacted differently based on their responsibilities. Their public ministry places them at a higher risk in contracting the virus due to the number of people they are in contact with on a routine basis and therefore must take every precaution to protect the health of those they serve as well as their own health.

S. Margie Niemer, who serves as Parish Administrator at St. Bernard and Mother of Christ Parishes in Cincinnati reports, “Parishioners at our parishes have enjoyed full participation at Sunday Mass and weekday meetings. During the pandemic, that changed to phone calls that were organized so that everyone was contacted to keep a connection. Those in nursing homes also received several greeting cards instead of personal visits that could not be made.

The food pantry remained open and both parishes contributed food, diapers and monetary support to serve the Winton Hills neighborhood. The St. Vincent de Paul Society remained active and were supported by selling homemade masks for $10 as well as keeping up the monthly second collection for that agency.

A great effort was made to clean and sanitize both church buildings in anticipation of the reopening of public worship services on May 31. “The parishioners have been so conscientious in contacting each other and offering to help in any way possible.”
Meanwhile, S. Mary Beth Gianoli, Vice President of Mission Effectiveness at Marian University, has experienced a different impact of the pandemic as she notes, “When Indiana’s Governor Holcomb implemented the ‘stay at home’ order, our normal routine changed immediately. Students returned to their place of permanent residence; classes moved to an online format; faculty and staff began to work remotely. Each of us had to think about our work activities and find creative ways to continue our ministry. We looked for ways to provide both educational and spiritual opportunities for our students, faculty and staff. The Mission and Ministry staff quickly embraced this new reality and began inviting people to meetings, prayer experiences and Bible sharing groups using an online platform. One new offering was an online prayer opportunity for faculty and staff. About 40 people come together, via WebEx, every weekday morning. This brief time allows people to connect, pray and support each other and our students. This has been so well received that we are planning to continue this practice even after we return to campus. We are striving to help people feel grounded and supported through this difficult time. The response from our faculty, staff and students has been very positive. Everyone is working to keep that, which is important, in focus.”

In addition, one of my first concerns has been for food -- about 90% of our children are on the free or reduced lunch program, and receive breakfast, lunch and a daily snack at school. So I focused on making sure they had food while the classroom teachers worked on getting students set-up for online learning.

Over the weeks we have had several drive-in/pick-ups for school work, school supplies, food, and lastly for summer games and things to keep them productively occupied and entertained. Who knows what impact this will have on the coming school year -- it will likely be as much of a challenge as these past few months have been!”

While Sisters engaged in outside ministries scurried to adapt to COVID-19 precautions, ensuring the continued safety and wellness of the many senior Sisters residing at the Oldenburg Motherhouse became a monumental task … a task that Sarah Collins, Director of Campus Services, and members of the Sisters’ Council, S. Christa Franzer, S. Delouise Mengers, S. Annette Gillman and S. Barbara Leonard, the Coordinating Team, S. Joanita Koors, S. Bernice Stenger and S. Evelyn Forthofer along with the Director and Assistant Director of Health Services, Connie Luers and Beth Hoog, all worked together to accomplish.

Early precautions included placing the campus in quarantine with no visitors permitted. The Sisters’ weekly liturgies were no longer open to the public, and in following the Archbishop’s instructions, Mass was suspended while prayer services were broadcast via closed-circuit television to the Sisters’ rooms. Co-workers’ temperatures were taken upon arrival, and additional hand-sanitizing stations were located throughout the buildings while those who were able to work from home were encouraged to do so.

Members of the housekeeping staff increased their sanitation efforts, and the food services team changed their serving format from buffet-style to items being served by a Co-worker or volunteer Sister, and those in contact with our Sisters were donning masks and appropriate personal protection equipment.

Continued on page 6
In addition to the quarantine measures, keeping residents’ minds active and offering socially-distanced activities has been challenging as the quarantine continues. Mary Ellen Rinklin, Activities Coordinator, worked with Sisters and Co-workers to help the residents to remain active while safe in their facility.

Activities were broadcast on closed-circuit television and included morning exercise demonstrations, afternoon readings, interviews, games and crafts. Some Sisters wrote prayers that were published on their Facebook page to provide hope for others during this uncertain time, while others were sewing masks to provide protection.

Everyone continues to work together to ensure the wellbeing of those most vulnerable residing at the Motherhouse ... just as they have done through history as this is not the Sisters’ first pandemic.

See the Sisters’ Epidemic History on page 7.

Top Left—S. Janice Scheidler dons a smiling mask
Right Column of Photos:
- Sisters practice social distancing in the Dining Room while meals are served by staff and Sister volunteers.
- Charlotte Schutte Kochman of the Wellness Center leads an exercise demonstration as S. Laurina Schneider assists.
- S. Laure Poeling welcomes a Co-worker with a temperature check.
- Mary Ellen Rinklin, right, Activities Coordinator, interviews S. Bernice Roell.

The Coronavirus Prayer on page 7 was written by S. Rose Marie Wockenmann and was among several penned by our Sisters and posted on their Facebook page to help console others.
**Sisters’ Epidemic History**

- **1859** Typhoid
  - 2 Sisters died; Fr. Rudolph was ill 4 weeks

- **1861** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died

- **1862** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died

- **1864** Smallpox
  - Primarily among children, 3 in our care & 3 Sisters

- **1865** Smallpox
  - 3 children & 2 Sisters (milder form)

- **1872** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died at Lawrenceburg

- **1875** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died; and was buried at Lanesville, IN

- **1876** Typhus
  - 1 Sister died; smallpox 1 academy girl died, 2 others, several Sisters at Motherhouse & on mission

- **1880** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died in Carthage, OH

- **1881** Typhoid
  - 1 farm hand died

- **1899** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died

- **1901** Typhoid
  - 13 Sisters died here and on mission within 6 weeks; 40 Sisters at home and 20 on mission afflicted; Academy opening delayed; 4 Hartwell Franciscans from Cincinnati provided nursing care at Oldenburg

- **1902** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died; smallpox, 1 Sister afflicted – “taken to the pest house” in Knightstown, IN
  - Had a major outbreak of smallpox in 1902, and patients were sent to “pest house”.

- **1903** Typhoid
  - 2 Sisters died

- **1904** Typhoid
  - 1 Sister died on mission

- **1907** Typhoid
  - Complications from 1901 epidemic – 1 Sister died

- **1909** Typhoid
  - 1 novice died; 2 other Sisters afflicted; 1 other Sister died from Typhoid complications of 1901 epidemic

- **1913** Typhoid
  - Hartwell Franciscans again came to Oldenburg during the summer and sent those stricken to hospitals, also nursed Sisters at New Al sace & Yorkville at pastors’ requests; Beginning October 4 & end of the year, 59 Sisters afflicted with “colon typhoid”; 3 died; 3 academy girls died, 23 students were ill; dismissed school and sent well students home where 40 more became ill. Source seemed to be wells on property resulting in a water purifier being installed.

- **1918** Influenza
  - Between October and end of the year, 4 Sisters (3 of them novices), died at Oldenburg, 1 died in Middletown where the epidemic was widespread, 1 died in St. Louis. Many Sisters afflicted.

- **1957** Typhoid
  - 37 Sisters afflicted and quarantined, none died. Ill and quarantined in infirmary were 2 of 11 postulants invested Aug. 12, 2 of 27 2nd year novices making temporary profession, and 1 of 22 Sisters making perpetual vows. August 12 ceremonies took place without families attending, quarantined Sisters’ ceremonies took place in infirmary – Father Luke, Mother Cephas, and Sister Estelle (also quarantined), presiding. 500 Sisters quarantined at Motherhouse for 16 days; all immunized by nurses sent by State Board of Health, took classes, cleaned cemetery stones, etc. Some schools delayed opening because Sisters arrived late at their missions. 4 Hartwell Franciscans, 3 Cincinnati charities, and 2 Mishawaka Franciscans came to nurse the sick in the infirmary—the 3 communities refused donation for their services. Water, food, and sanitation were ruled out as source of epidemic.

- **1858 – 1958** At least 153 Sisters and 4 novices, died of tuberculosis (consumption). At one time there was a separate dining room for those who were known to have TB. Early missions in New Mexico (Carlsbad, especially) served as a “sanitarium” for the Sisters because of the dry climate.
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
And where there’s sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

S. Madonna Bishop
As I get older, I recognize much more all of the beauty and harmony this world provides – and it is very good. God looked over all of the things He has done to build a healthy, happy world, and He pronounced it “good;” live a healthy, happy life. This I have tried to do, and my world continues to grow in beauty and harmony.

S. Lorraine Geis
Seventy years ago on September 8, 1950, I wasn’t really thinking of a life time as a teacher. I was just gratefully happy to be able to follow St. Francis in a life of prayer and Community. After two years as Postulant and Novice, it was hard to leave my Novitiate friends and begin a teaching career. By 1961 there was a greater separation to the other side of the world! My forty years of missionary life in Papua New Guinea, with people of another culture, was greatly unexpected, but a ministry for which I am forever grateful.

S. Sharonlu Sheridan
Being Franciscan is the only way for me to be happy. The closer I was to nature and the children and my Sisters the happier I became. God knew what I needed and laid it out for me. Deo Gratias. I never expected to teach Chippewa Indians. It was a wonderful experience, and I learned so much from them. “Migwetch” to Red Lake! The best came last.
What gives me joy as an Oldenburg Franciscan are the surprises God provides me with every day. My life has been like a roller coaster ride. It has been filled with many memorable ups and downs. Sometimes I have been dumbfounded or terrified. Other times I have experienced new adventures or unique surprises which have energized my creativity and new ideas in my work, and building friendships that led me to believe in accepting everyone as they are. I thank God for having time to enjoy God, to deepen our relationship, to see goodness and humor and to be able to laugh at myself with others and God.

S. Sharon Blank
My joy as an Oldenburg Franciscan is following Francis in his love for all of God’s creatures. I love being in nature, going to Lake Michigan and especially watching the hummingbirds and woodpeckers at my bird feeders. I also enjoy planting flowers and watching them flourish. Nature is God’s great gift to us. I also enjoyed my many years of teaching God’s little ones, the joys of nature and life.

S. Marilyn Doerger
When I entered the Sisters of St. Francis I expected to teach children. I did this for several years before moving to ministering to the elderly at Sem Terrace in Cincinnati. I encountered people who had wisdom and a great joy for life. It was a very fulfilling ministry.

S. Donna Eggering
In my ministry as Pastoral Administrator I have grown to understand that all opportunities to prepare God’s people for all the sacraments is a privilege as well as the times spent consoling members at the death of a loved one. In thinking of my vocation as an Oldenburg Franciscan for 60 years, I feel it’s not about me, it’s all about God allowing me the privilege of serving Him all these years.

S. Susanna Helmes
When I entered on February 2nd 1960, something began to happen that I never imagined would happen! There was so much excitement about some of the Sisters going to Papua New Guinea. I thought, “What if…?” I began to pray. I volunteered. Continued to pray. Waited. And sure enough – in 1970 God sent me to Papua New Guinea.

S. Damien Hinderer
I never thought I would spend 46 of these 60 years living at the Motherhouse in the beautiful town of Oldenburg. There is an amazing amount of caring and sharing for others here in the Convent and in the town’s residents.

S. Olga Wittekind
My Franciscan journey has brought me great joy and gratitude! All the ministries I have had through teaching, Director of Scholastics, ministering in New Orleans and our Oldenburg Franciscan Retreat Center have given me so many opportunities to share this joy with others. My daily resting in God enables my Godness to flow to others in joy.

S. Patti Zureick
I thoroughly enjoyed my 25 years as a kindergarten and first grade teacher. I have surprised myself in feeling called to minister in the mental health field as a clinical counselor these past 10 years. Working with adults and children to help my clients attain inner peace has brought me much joy.
Editor’s Note:
Close your eyes and imagine we are in Montana — the largest landlocked state in the U.S. while ranked as the 44th state in population … providing miles of breathtaking views of nature complete with sunrises and sunsets in God’s Big Sky Country. Now imagine ministering there for over seventeen years among the Crow and Northern Cheyenne to teach the St. Charles Mission School, Pryor students while learning of their language and culture, and of ways to preserve the Earth. I had the privilege of interviewing S. Marya as she shared a glimpse from where she has come … and where her passions are leading her!

SUE

S. Marya, please share a little about your early life. Who helped to shape your hopes and dreams?

MARYA

I was born in Cincinnati, but now, Montana is home: this forever sky and land, and many Crow and Northern Cheyenne captured my heart.

At age eight, I knew I wanted to become a priest. I told my parents. Smiles. I told my German grandma. She was praying the rosary with Bishop Sheen on the radio, rocking slowly in our sunny dining room. She didn’t speak much English. “You’re a girl,” she said. “Girls can’t become priests. But you can become a Sister.” So that settled it.

Looking back, I realize now that I was seeking intimacy with the Holy, a closeness with God. At the same time, my parents instilled in me a love and respect for nature. Mom took toddler me on tours of her flower gardens, and later taught me how to care for the canaries she raised. Dad filled my imagination with stories of his trips to Yellowstone and other National Parks as a young man. He also took me fishing with him and I learned to relish the “quiet waiting” of those hours at a pond’s edge.

All of this shaped my passion to serve God’s good Earth as my full-time ministry as a Sister of St. Francis.

I graduated from St. James, White Oak, Elementary School, the Immaculate Conception Academy and Marian University. I have a Masters Degree in Creation Centered Spirituality from Mundelein/Loyola University and a Masters in Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness from the California Institute of Integral Studies. I had a one-year internship with Global Education Associates (GEA) in New York City. During that year I did research for GEA’s program that prioritized the education of girls in the global south. I attended United Nations’ conferences on global economics, world health and education issues, women’s rights, global poverty, environment and world religions.

SUE

When did you first meet the Franciscan Sisters?

MARYA

The Franciscan Sisters entered my life as teachers at St. James. When I found out that they staffed Crow schools in Montana, I knew they were the Community I wanted to join, and I entered the Sisters of St. Francis on February 2, 1963, and have been in the Community for 57 years.
**Who influenced your decision to become a Franciscan?**

**MARYA** My mother always spoke highly of the Franciscans who staffed the parish where she grew up. As a child, I had no idea who they were and what they stood for, but they were true pastors and I sensed that Franciscans lived a good way of life of service and prayer. The beauty and spaciousness of the land of Montana equally influenced my decision. My eighth grade teacher, S. Mary Mark Deters, encouraged me to consider joining the Sisters. S. Marilyn Doerger, who was in the Aspirancy at the time as a high school student, became my pen pal, and her descriptions of life at the convent also drew me to the Sisters.

**Share with us about your current ministry.**

**MARYA** I launched Earth Hope in July, 1998. So that’s twenty-two years of ministry as a writer, and leading Earth retreats and giving talks (Japan, Ireland, India, Australia, Russia and throughout the U.S.) in an effort to strengthen people’s innate love for Earth and foster commitment to the life of the whole Earth Community. I also collaborated with prison volunteers to create a Cosmology Course for use with prisoners in Santa Rosa, CA, St. Louis and New York City.

My ministry was called forth by the cry of suffering Earth, by seeing and feeling the pain of devastation of air, water and soil by human behaviors, the horror of the mass extinction of species, the destruction of rain forests, coral reefs, and deserts. And I knew that the breakdown of Earth’s life-support systems increased the suffering of billions of people who were already struggling to survive poverty, malnutrition and disease.

After signing a book contract with Riverhead/Random House in June, 2003, most of my day has been devoted to research and writing, or thinking about what to write! Several times a week I network with local and national activist organizations: Citizens Climate Lobby, the Billings Sanctuary Rising group, Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council and Eco-Angela’s Laudato Si’ study group. I provide Spiritual Direction sessions regularly.

For seventeen years I had the privilege of living among and learning from people of the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Nations. Their traditions of prayer and respect for nature influenced my thinking and gradually changed my understanding of the human-Earth relationship, from Earth as natural resources for human use, to Earth as a web of life, of which we are a part and upon which we depend for our existence. The discovery and revitalization of our farm while I was on the Council, also guided me into my Earth Hope ministry. As well as eight years of being on staff for the fall semester of the Earth Literacy Degree Program at Genesis Farm in New Jersey.

**What have been your greatest obstacles within your ministry?**

**MARYA** There are three. 1) thinking I don’t know enough to speak out boldly for Earth and climate, 2) the prevailing mindset of profit before people and planet, and 3) the fact that we all depend on systems of energy, food production and global markets that are destroying Earth.

**SUE** If you could attain one major accomplishment—what would it be?

**MARYA** To wake up the public to the climate crisis and influence significant cultural, political and economic change toward a carbon neutral energy grid and protection of air, water, soil and all species.
It is in Giving that We Receive Listening Conversation for the Repair of the World

It was the gentlest of invitations. To participate in a “listening conversation.” I sensed the title alone held wisdom for addressing the fear, anger and antagonism of our polarized times. Especially over a topic like the environment.

Walter Runsabove, Northern Cheyenne, Oglala Sioux and Red Bottom Nakoda, and I, German, Alsace-Lorraine, North American, teamed up in the auditorium of Montana State University, Billings to draw attention to cultural and spiritual sources for Caring for Creation. Students and invited public filled the room.

We each shared a song from our ancestral heritage. We told stories of how our parents and grandparents shared their love for creation. We prayed from our diverse but harmonious traditions for the good of Earth and all life.

I did not know what to expect when Professor Berru-Davis invited me. My yes gave a return of renewed energy for kindness toward Earth, gifts from Walter, Pro. Berru-Davis and participants.

S. Marya, left, at the Global Peace Initiative of Women, Environmental Panel at Jaipur, India

S. Marya and the late S. Pat Bietsch preparing a wind generator at the former Prayer Lodge.

SUE What have been your greatest assets, or who have been your greatest supporters within your ministry?

MARYA First, always and last: Earth's beauty and faithfulness to life, and the words of St. Francis that Earth is our Sister and Mother who sustains and governs us. Community leadership that accepts and approves my ministry. Sister Helen Prejean, who encouraged me to submit a book proposal to Random House and created a circle of financial supports, the Flying Buttresses. (For more info, please visit my website, www.earthhope.org.) And Pope Francis and the Laudato Si’ Action Platform which is proposing that Catholic communities across the world work toward total sustainability in the coming decade.

SUE What have been your most gratifying memories?

MARYA Working with S. Mary Ann Stoffregen, S. Pat Bietsch and the Prayer Lodge Board to fulfill their goal to “live in a good way with Mother Earth.” We initiated wind and solar power generation, installed a ground source heating and cooling system, designed and built a passive solar greenhouse. We doubled the size of our buildings and cut our utility bill in half. Imagine the joy of living well while cutting carbon emissions!

SUE How do you hope to be remembered?

MARYA The ongoing vitality of Michaela Farm producing food in ways that also enhance Earth; the Earth friendly systems in use at Wild Rose Center (formerly known as Prayer Lodge) and my book, For the Love of Earth: An Unexpected Journey into Mountains, Universe, God.

Religious life throughout the centuries sprang into existence where human suffering and the gifts and passionate generosity of women intersected in a heartfelt call from God. The urgent need of our time is to address climate change and the widespread destruction of Earth’s life systems. These twin crises exacerbate every other social problem and increase human suffering.

So I encourage anyone considering religious life to pay attention to aspects of these crises that you care about and have the ability to address and change. Find and work with groups of like-minded committed people. Find community to nurture your passion and commitment. The community you find may or may not be within the religious life system of the Catholic Church. But any service you can render on behalf of Earth life is needed so very much. Future generations of people and of all species are reaching out to you.

The Oldenburg Franciscan Sisterhood has been and is a circle of grace, wisdom and friendship that sustains me and supports my call from God to be Earth Hope.
Chapel Update

After closing the Chapel in January so the walls could be repaired and painted, and with much creativity in ensuring that the contractor’s work could safely continue during the pandemic, our Sisters ultimately returned to the Chapel for a prayer service on May 24th.

THANK YOU to everyone who supported the Chapel Fund which helped to preserve our chapel’s future!

To protect the health of our Sisters, the Chapel is not open to the public at this time.

An announcement will appear on our Facebook page, Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, noting when the Chapel will reopen to the public.

While the project was completed slightly under the estimated cost, donations to the Chapel Fund continue to be accepted to help offset the total cost and may be sent to:

♥ Sisters of St. Francis
CHAPEL FUND
PO Box 100
Oldenburg, IN 47036

In 2018, a heating system malfunction caused excessive condensation to form on our Chapel’s walls, eventually resulting in structural as well as cosmetic wall damage as our maintenance staff worked frantically to identify the root cause of the problem. It was determined that the deteriorating steam pipes under the Chapel were responsible for much of the condensation, and the cold air entering the Chapel through our stained-glass windows was further complicating the situation.

Our maintenance staff worked diligently to repair the steam pipes, and once repaired, the condensation problems were eliminated, leaving the structural and cosmetic damage to the walls and the leaky stained-glass windows to be addressed.

Once an estimate was received to complete the remaining repairs, our Development staff began fundraising efforts to secure $600,000 toward the cost of the Chapel repairs. As funds were raised, we began repairs last fall, contracting with Daprato Rigali Studios of Chicago to complete the window re-glazing. They finished this portion of the project in December, and returned in January to begin the wall repair, painting and restoration work.
upcoming programs...

Fairy Tales: Patterns in Our Lives
Sat. July 18th
9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

A Day of Quiet Renewal
7-31, 8-28, 9-25
10-30, 11-20, 12-11
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Drumming Circle @ OFC
Tues., Aug. 11th
7:00 PM

Our Dreams Are Messages from God
Saturday, August 15th
9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Soul Collage
Sat., Sept. 5th
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Womens Day: Women of Wisdom
Saturday, October 3rd
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

On the Road with OFC: Interfaith Pilgrimage to Indy!
Thurs., Sept. 10th
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Friday Night Movies
July 17:
The Girl Without Hands
August 14:
First Cow
September 4:
The Secret: Dare to Dream

Contemplative Prayer
Wednesdays:
July 1
August 5
September 2
with S. Olga Wittekind, OSF

Coffee Talks
July 19:
Mirabai Starr
August 16:
Caryll Houselander
September 6:
Carmelite Spirituality

To register for programs visit our website: www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org,
call us at 812.933.6437, or email us at center@oldenburggosf.com
You can make a difference in the Sisters’ ministries …

Leave a Bequest

If you would like to support the Sisters after your earthly life, consider remembering the Sisters with a bequest as a part of your planned giving.

Planned giving gives you a special connection with the Sisters’ ministries for years to come. As you begin the process of planning your gift, you have a number of options, including:

♦ Donate to the Sisters of St. Francis through your estate planning by naming us in your will for a specific amount or percentage share in your estate.

♦ Name the Sisters of St. Francis as the beneficiary of your estate after expenses and gifts to loved ones.

A bequest is a gift made to charity in your will or trust. One significant benefit of making a gift by bequest is that it allows you to continue to use the property you will leave to charity during your life. Another benefit is that by making a bequest you are able to leave a lasting legacy.

Types of Bequests

There are a number of ways you can make a bequest to the Sisters of St. Francis. You can leave what is called a specific bequest. A specific bequest involves making a gift of a specific asset such as real estate, a car, other property or a gift for a specific dollar amount. For example, you may wish to leave your home or $10,000 to the Sisters. Another kind of specific bequest involves leaving a specific percentage of your overall estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 10% of your estate to the Sisters.

Another kind of bequest is called a residual bequest. A residual bequest is a bequest that is made from the balance of an estate after the will or trust has given away each of the specific bequests. A common residual bequest involves leaving a percentage of the residue of the estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 30% of the residue of your estate to the Sisters.

Bequest Benefits

There are no limitations on bequest gifts. Bequests may be made for a general or specific purpose. All bequests are exempt from federal estate taxes. If you have a taxable estate, the estate tax charitable deduction may offset or eliminate estate taxes resulting in a larger inheritance for your heirs.

Bequest Language

In order to make a bequest, you should speak with your attorney. Your attorney can help you include a bequest to the Sisters of St. Francis in your estate plan.

For more information about the needs of the Sisters when you are considering a bequest, please contact S. Maureen Irvin at mirvin@oldenburgosf.com.

You can request a Mass for a loved one to be said in the Sisters’ Chapel.

A Mass can be offered for a person living or deceased.

Though we often think of having a Mass said for those who have passed away, Masses may also be offered for those who are living. The Council of Trent says that Mass may be said “for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities.” In other words, if you know someone who could benefit from the spiritual graces that come with having a Mass said on their behalf, consider requesting a Mass in the Sisters’ Chapel.

You can have a Mass said in thanksgiving, or for a celebration.

Again, most people remember to have a Mass said for the death of a loved one and a few may think to have a Mass offered for a special intention or friend who is suffering, but you can consider having a Mass offered for a celebration. It is a great way to show our gratitude to God.

Masses can be said for birthdays, anniversaries, in celebration of the reception of the sacraments, or for prayers that have been answered!

To submit your Mass request:

Submit your Mass request by using the enclosed envelope, note the intention for the Mass being requested, and enclose your donation. The suggested stipend for a Mass is $10.

To Request a Mass:

♦ Use the enclosed envelope
♦ Note the Mass intention
♦ Enclose your donation
♦ If you wish to make an online request, visit OldenburgFranciscans.org/donate/, and note your intention in the comments section.

THANK YOU!
You alone know the heart of each person who shares TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE with us.

We pray that you bless each one of them with whatever they need at this time in their lives.

If they are grieving, fill them with the comfort of friends and family.

If they are suffering from illness, provide them with healing.

If they are worried, give them peace of mind.

If they are fearful, give them courage.

If they are in any need, we pray that their need be met.

We thank You for connecting us to all who so generously give to us.

May we continue to see that all of us are connected in the web of life and called, like our donors, to reach out to our brothers and sisters wherever they may be.

Amen