

1980–The Christine Center–2020

# 40<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY



## Honoring our 40 year History Preserving our Heritage Planning for our Future

Dear Friends of the Christine Center,

On October 11, 2020, the Christine Center celebrated its 40th Anniversary. How do we capture the struggles and successes of our rich 40-year history in just a few pages? Within this commemorative issue we have worked diligently to present highlights of our humble beginnings; a snapshot of our current endeavors; and a glimpse into our future plans through and beyond the country's unprecedented pandemic.

The Christine Center was founded as a place of retreat supported by the vision of Sr. Virginia Barta, OSF: "We are One." Sr. Virginia prayed for guidance and felt directed to a 251-acre property in Willard, Wisconsin. After an appeal for contributions to numerous religious communities across the country, Sr. Virginia was successful in raising sufficient funds, which would allow her dream to become a reality. On October 11, 1980, greeted by the splendor of a colorful fall day, Sr. Virginia, and Sr. Davina Pietz, OSF arrived at the farm property, which would become The Christine Center. A caravan of cars packed with thirteen friends, household supplies, 25 plants, and Muffin, a collie-mix canine companion, accompanied the two Sisters.

Within a few days of their arrival, the reality of the harsh Wisconsin winter began to set in. Beyond determination and a sense of resiliency, it became apparent that the Sisters' rural skill sets were limited. Wood needed to be chopped for fuel, and parcels of land needed to be prepared for seasonal planting and harvesting. Sr. Virginia wanted the Center to

become self-sustaining; relying on the resources of what the land and labor would provide. Sr. Virginia knew the tasks she faced were larger than she and Sr. Davina could accomplish on their own, and that help from willing volunteers would be required for her vision to become a reality.

After a rain-drenched day, the Sisters' vehicle became stuck in a muddy field, and their beloved dog, Muffin, had ran away. The loss of her dog prompted her to search and knock on the doors of neighbors. Unfortunately, Muffin, was never found; however, her efforts transformed neighboring strangers into new friends. These "angels" donated supplies and assistance to construct dwellings, and assisted with planting, harvesting, raising goats for milk, and bees for honey. Her hope was that the growing community would live peacefully, grow spiritually, and together promote global transformation.

A variety of circumstances necessitated that Sr. Virginia depart the Christine Center in 1992. Sr. Johanna Seubert, FSPA arrived at the Center in 1987 and began to work closely with Sr. Virginia. Sr. Johanna has continued to reside at the Center for 33 years, assuming a variety of administrative roles, as well as serving as a Diamond Approach teacher and spiritual guide for many retreatants. We asked Sr. Johanna to share her understanding of the Center's vision, "Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation" in this commemorative issue.

The year 2020 has proven to be a challenge and test of Leadership resiliency with our temporary closure in March due to Covid-19. Although we have needed to postpone our plans for our 40th Anniversary celebration, the Board and Administration continues to actively engage via Zoom to plan for and assure the Center's sustainability.

Our Program Committee is working to revitalize our programming, including several new unique opportunities for spiritual growth. One of our programs, Seasons of Deepening, a 12-month onsite and online offering will launch later this year and is highlighted in this issue.

Our Building and Grounds Committee has also participated in the creation of a Master Plan for the Center, as well as a plan to prioritize

assist us with needed repairs and operations. Carl Greer, a friend of the Center, has provided us a \$25,000 matching grant to stimulate participation and help us achieve our goal.

Within this issue we also honor the legacy of Sisters who have supported the Center and our mission over the last 40 years. They continue to serve as a resource to Leadership in their current role as Resident Partners in Mission.

Finally, as we celebrate this 40-year milestone, we express our gratitude to present and past Board members and our many volunteers, who have devoted tireless hours of service in numerous capacities. A special note of thanks is extended to all the friends and donors of the Center, who have provided financial assistance during this unprecedented temporary closure. We are blessed by a legacy of donors, and by our Founder's Circle, who continue to support the Center's ongoing development. The generosity of these donors has allowed for the creation of the main Center building in 2000 and the Chapel and meeting room spaces in 2010.

Happily, we re-opened the Center to onsite private retreats in May, and to onsite Programs in September, with limited reservations, so that we can adhere to safety protocols and protect the health of our visitors and staff.

Looking forward, the Center continues to be a vital resource for our times and for future guests.

We await your return and welcome your next visit as *THE STILLNESS CONTINUES TO CALL YOU.*

Peace and Blessings,



Kathleen Yosko PhD  
Executive Director

### mission

Offering contemplative support to persons of all spiritual paths in a natural woodland sanctuary.

### vision

Spiritual deepening for global transformation.

### values

Rooted in the Franciscan tradition, our values are contemplation, hospitality, compassion, simplicity, transformation, & care for our Earth Community.

the stabilization and revitalization of campus structures. Many of our beloved hermitages, built nearly 30 years ago, have begun to deteriorate due to weather and inconsistent upkeep. Numerous repairs have already been made over the last 10 months. To continue to preserve our rich legacy, we are launching a 40th Anniversary fundraising initiative Preserve Our Heritage, which we introduce in this issue. Our hope is to raise \$100,000 to



**Bela Maroti**  
25 Years of  
Visionary Leadership  
Board Chair 1989-2014



### board of directors

Top row, L-R: Wade Britzius, Chair  
Rosalie Hooper Thomas, Vice Chair  
Kathleen Yosko, Executive Director  
Middle row, L-R: Brian Voerding  
Linda Cates, Tom Roberts  
Bottom row, L-R:  
Sr. Gabriele Uhlein OSF  
Henry Eisenhauer  
Not shown: Bela Maroti Emeritus  
Sheryl Andrus Past Chair



### leadership team

L-R: Valerie Haberman, Program Director  
Kathleen Yosko, Executive Director  
Penny Gehrke, Operations Manager

## SPIRITUAL DEEPENING FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION

In celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Christine Center I want to reminisce about our history as it relates to our Vision Statement, "Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation".

I have been here for thirty-three of these forty years, and humbly and gratefully acknowledge how this vision and practice have influenced my life and the lives of many who come seeking spiritual deepening.

"Real service to humanity happens when we act from our True Nature, the Spirit within."

~ Sr. Johanna Seubert

There is nothing more important, in my opinion, than spiritual deepening to transform ourselves and the Global Community. Action is important and necessary when it comes from a person experiencing deep inner transformation. This means egoless, compassionate, wise action which can bring about constructive change, one person at a time,



Sr. Johanna Seubert, FSPA, has served the Christine Center for the last 33 years. As a spiritual director, retreat facilitator and Diamond Approach teacher, she has guided retreatants and their spiritual unfoldment. She reflects here on the Christine Center Vision statement

which expands out to others. Real service to humanity happens when we act from our True Nature, the Spirit within.

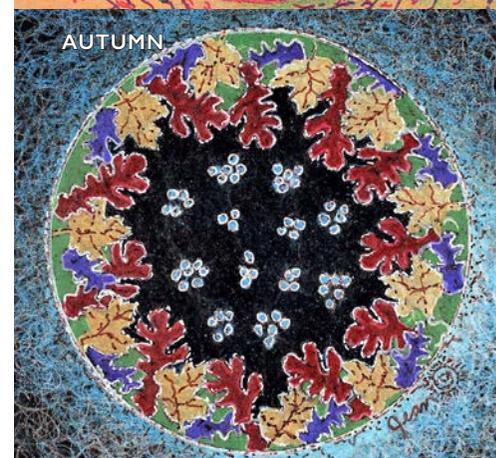
There are many ways/paths, to deepen ourselves spiritually. The Christine Center is rooted in Christianity and open and accepting of all spiritual paths, and all people. Spiritual Deepening means developing the internal spiritual qualities, that help us to be aware of and understand our inner struggles, enabling us to return to wholeness. It means finding our way into that wellspring of Being/God. We know our essential nature is there and yearn to access it more and more, as we develop a truer way of being and living.

In the various retreats offered at the Christine Center we learn about our True, Divine Nature, and practice methods and exercises that help us experience a more authentic way of being in the world. This means living a life that exists when we're connected to a deeper and more expansive Reality. We learn to be more real, more authentic, and more essential. Essence is the most authentic, innate and fundamental nature of who we are. And the experience of Essence is the central task of spiritual work and development in all traditions. True service, egoless action, global transformation, is most effective when it flows from this authentic relationship with God.

Spiritual Deepening is an on-going process, a life-long journey to live the life of the Spirit, to become our essential, true Self. The Christine Center is exceedingly blessed to have teachers, groups and retreatants who foster the vision of Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation. It is an effective way to bring about peace and harmony, in ourselves and in the Global Community.



Mandala artwork by Jean Werrenmeyer, inspired at the Christine Center



## Seasons of Deepening

Our legacy of deepening continues to evolve and unfold with the consciousness of the times.

Since first beginning our Spiritual Deepening for Global Transformation program 13 years ago, we have seen the growth and change that has occurred, both in the Christine Center and in our beloved guests, on these sacred grounds. We are all called to go deeper to meet the spiritual needs in our rapidly evolving world. As we reimagine our signature program, we offer now *Seasons of Deepening*; a series of programs inviting you into the emerging dialogue and enriching spiritual pathways that appear before us. Aligning our soul work with the deepening rhythms that emerge in the Equinox and Solstice seasons of our planet, we dive into Being with our whole hearts and invite you to join us on this sacred path.

In addition to *Seasons of Deepening*, we are developing a series of conversations to be held one weekend per month called *Emerging Dialogue*; an opportunity for a period of practice followed the next day by a period of conversation centered on the emerging consciousness that is arising in our world.

## Save These Dates!

### Winter Solstice: Dec. 27 to Jan. 3, 2020

*During our annual New Year's retreat!*

Inhabiting darkness while moving towards light and the rebirth of the sun, the new year and winter solstice offer a period of blessing; a sacred rest, pause, and a time for deep reflection.

### Spring Equinox: March 5 to 7, 2021

Emerging from the fallow season, we stretch into the light from the deep rest we inhabit during the cold months, just as the tender seeds stretch their roots and prepare for new life to rise from the soil.

### Summer Solstice: June 18 to 20, 2021

Immersing in the warmth and growth this season represents, we embody the fullness of life, growth, and possibility... presence abounds.

### Autumnal Equinox: Sept. 17 to 19, 2021

*During our Annual Hildegard Fest!*

Celebrating with Saint Hildegard, we give thanks and align with the nurturing and nourishing qualities of the harvest and abundance season; recognizing our abundant nature/soul/life that we share as one.

## 40 Years of Spiritual Deepening

### SEASONS OF DEEPENING



1980

Humble Beginnings-Sr. Virginia Barta's vision becomes a reality in a barn on a 251 acre farm located in Willard, WI.



1980

Sr. Virginia Barta, OSF arrives with her companion Sr. Davina Pietz, OSF on October 11, 1980 to face the harsh WI winter.



1983

Construction of Hermitages begin with the help of volunteers. Currently there are 18 hermitages.



1999

The Center outgrows the space in the Barn. Construction of new Center home begins to include a meditation hall, dining, kitchen and sleeping rooms.



2001

The new Center building is dedicated on July 8, 2001 by Bishop Burke. Sr. Virginia is present for the dedication. The Meditation Hall is named in honor of Sr. Johanna Seubert, FSPA.



2010

September 8, 2010 the new wing opens. Our Mary of the Angels Chapel dedicated to Sr. Virginia. New Library named in honor of Bela Maroti, Board Chair



> > > > > HONORING OUR 40 YEAR HISTORY > > > > > > > > > > > > > PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE > > > > >



1981

Bee keeping; planting and harvesting. New skills to become self-sustaining



1982

The old Willard post office is relocated to the campus, serving originally as a health food store, later a hermitage, and currently Hope Art Studio



1986

Barn redesign allows for the creation of a meditation hall in the loft and library.



2000

The iconic barn silo is recreated as the entryway to the new building.



2009

New needs for a chapel, library and meeting spaces calls for a \$1 mil. Capital campaign. Groundbreaking and construction begins.



2019

New Christine Center Signage, designed by Henry Eisenhour and dedicated to Sherryl Andrus for her Board Service 2014-2020.

THE CHRISTINE CENTER: founded October 11, 1980....

As a vowed religious, Sr. Virginia led a socio-hermetical life. After practicing years of contemplative meditation, her vision was to create a welcoming place of retreat and renewal for

all seekers, a synthesis of Western and Eastern spiritualities to embrace all persons, nationalities, cultures, and creeds. As the sign above the Center's entrance proclaims, "We are one." Sr. Virginia also

...how it began and evolved

had a deep respect for the transformative qualities of nature, silence, and the practice of meditation. She wanted to "establish a space within the silence, where one could, 'Be still and know that I AM God.' "

## 2020

Recent roof repairs to chapel and main building. Workers stabilize the Chapel Cross



## 2021

Effects of age and weather. The original Barn is being re-cycled. Power hermitage can no longer be restored. Both will be torn down.



## PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

Truly the Christine Center is indeed a story of humble beginnings.

The Christine Center began in a refashioned barn that eventually housed a meditation hall, bookstore, and chapel. Another barnlike structure was demolished. The wood was recycled as a resource to construct small housing units that became known as hermitages. Since these units had no running water, they were void of kitchen and bathroom facility. Shekinah, the current house of the Sisters was used for cooking and communal dining. By 1982 four hermitages were constructed by volunteers.

Currently the Center has 18 hermitages, ten of which have bathrooms and kitchenettes.

Ahimsa, Basil, and Rumi have been stabilized and updated. Sun has been modernized with a new kitchenette and bathroom. Shekinah was under attack by woodpeckers due to rotting wood under old insulation. Major electrical repairs, new siding and a new accessible bathroom are underway for Shekinah. Our Sisters have given us so much; they deserve the comfort of a safe home. Unfortunately, we will not be able to save Power and the original Barn is structurally unsound and unable to be stabilized.

As we celebrate our 40th Anniversary on October 11, we ask your support to Preserve Our Heritage for the future. Please consider a generous gift to honor the work of the Sisters over the last 40 years.

## Preserve Our Heritage Campaign Goal

\$100,000

> > > > > > PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE > > > > > >

## 2019-2020

Extensive Restorations:

- **Shekinah**—The Sisters' Home. Age and woodpeckers had destroyed the wood exterior. Roof repairs and electrical updates complete.
- **Basil**—gifted by Gwen Hudetz. Foundation stabilized; Electrical updated; Roof replaced; Private rooms & renovated bathroom added.
- **Ahimsa**—Sr. Virginia's final home at the Center. Foundation stabilized; Windows, doors, & roof replaced. Renovated interior & bathroom added.
- **Rumi**—Entire structure stabilized; Private rooms, bath and kitchenette added.



### Greer Foundation \$25,000 Matching Grant Challenge

Carl Greer has been a presenter and loyal supporter of the Christine Center for many years. The Greer family understands the importance of sustaining this wooded sanctuary as a resource for future retreatants. The Greer Foundation would like to invite other donors to join with them. They have again generously announced a challenge grant of \$25,000 to assist us with our campaign. This grant will match each dollar we are able to raise up to \$25,000.



## Donate Now!

Please consider making a gift to assist us with the Preservation of our Heritage by using the enclosed envelope or visiting our website at [www.christinecenter.org](http://www.christinecenter.org) and click "Make a Donation"

Maintaining this number of aging structures, many of which are over 30 years old is no small task.

Over the past year, we launched a restoration effort, which we are now calling **Preserve Our Heritage**. The hermitages are truly loved by our retreatants; however, several of the hermitages including Shekinah were eroding from the effects of weather and inconsistent maintenance. Structural deficits were becoming apparent. With donor funds remaining from our Adopt a Hermitage campaign, we began a process to preserve these structures. To date

Sr. Virginia had the courage to follow a calling, an intuition that "the Christine Center existed long before the land on which it now sets was found. It existed on the plane of visions and dreams, the place where ideas live until they become realities," Sr. Virginia Barta





## The Christine Center Founder's Circle

Mike Andrechak & Kathy Seybert	Robert & Robin Hudetz
Sherryl Andrus & George Sciliffet	Richard Hunt
Rosanne Annoni	Patricia Lillis
Rajai & Chickee Atalla	Sherri Kliczak
Mary Bart	Carol Kretchman
Jan Irene Miller Bayuk & Jim Bayuk	Kevin Leary & Mary Kelleher
Louis and Jean Boos	Bela & Julie Maroti
Margo Berg	Tom & Elena Matlock
Father Tom Borkowski	Paul Norton
Carol & Neal Carbon	John & Diane Oliverio
Linda Cates & Randy Apel	Robert & Joan Parker
Patricia Connelly	Terry Pate
Molly Corcoran	Zorba & Penny Pastor
Mary Ann Crosby	Mary K. Peterson
Laura Desmarais	Ocean Prihoda
Joseph D'Arrigo	Karen Rudeen
Peg Doherty	Ziad Salameh
Henry & Paula Eisenhauer	Susan K. Schmidt & Andrea Van Sickle
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration	Joan Seubertz
Harry Faust	Bev & Tim O'Shaughnessy
Jean Feraca	School Sisters of Notre Dame
Joan Filla	Sisters of St Francis, Denver, CO
Greg Fleischmann	Rick & Toni Sturtz
Sherri Fuller	Richard & Donna Svruluga
Sr. Delmarie Gibney, FSPA	The Minneapolis Foundation
Mary Giglio	Susan & John Twiggs
Anne & Chad Gifford Family Foundation	Erich Uhlein
Dexter Gillett	Sr. Gabriele Uhlein, OSF PhD
Carl Greer	Michael Ward & Maurice Melchiono
Marie Goldbach	Mary Wehner
Diana Grove	Wheaton Franciscan Sisters
Susan Dunne Guzman & Andy Guzman	Meg Whiston
Jim & Rhonda Hartwig	Kathleen C. Yosko
Dianne & Brian Henke	
Gwen & John Hudetz	
Frank & Carolyn Hudetz	

### A SPECIAL HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AND DONORS

As we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, we express our gratitude to all of the friends and donors of the Christine Center, who have given generously of their time, talent and resources, which has sustained and allowed us to thrive. We extend blessings to those who have provided leadership and direction by serving on our Board and Committees. A special note of thanks to those who have tirelessly provided numerous hours of labor to trail maintenance, gardening and other projects as requested.

We are also deeply indebted to all of our donors, who have given freely to support Center operations and achieve the goals of two capital campaigns in 2000 and 2010, the funds of which were used to create our main Center building, chapel, and meditation hall. To all donors past and present we say, "Thank you for your generous spirit!"

Finally, as we reflect on the last 40 years of our history, we extend special recognition to the ongoing generosity of our Founder's Circle of Donors, whose lifetime giving has exceeded \$5000. Your giving has been a source of unfailing support to the Center's mission.



Sister Virginia Barta, OSF, 1980 to 1992

Sister Davina Pietz, OSF, 1980 to 1983



Sister Mary Pendergast, RSM, 1981 to 1987



Sister Charlotte Schmit, OSF, 1984 to 1991



Sister Josine Doering, OSF, 1982, 1992- 2001



Sister Suzanne Moynihan, SSND, 1992 to 1993

### The Christine Center: Sisters in Service

Sr. Virginia and Sr. Davina arrived at the Christine Center on October 11, 1980.

Sr. Virginia knew that she and Sr. Davina could not manage the demands of running the Center on their own. She prayed for

### THE CHRISTINE CENTER: *A legacy of dedicated sisters.*



Sister Dorothy Bendick, SSJ-TOSF, 1984 to 1986



Sister Margaret Wagner, FSPA, 2000 to 2007 (on CC Board 1990-2007)

Sister Cecilia Corcoran, FSPA, 2005 to 2016

help. Assistance first came in the form of local "angels," neighbors, Mike Weyer, Harlan Brux, and Ron Langteau, who helped with land clearing and construction.

Sr. Virginia also knew she needed other Sisters to assist with Program Development and the Center's mission. The Center has been blessed with a legacy of Sisters, who have tirelessly served the Center in numerous roles, as well as our current Sisters, Resident Partners in Mission, who continue to support current lay leadership. We express our gratitude and thanks for their unfailing service and dedication.



Sister Maryann Greenwald, SSND, 1993 to 1996



Clockwise from top left:

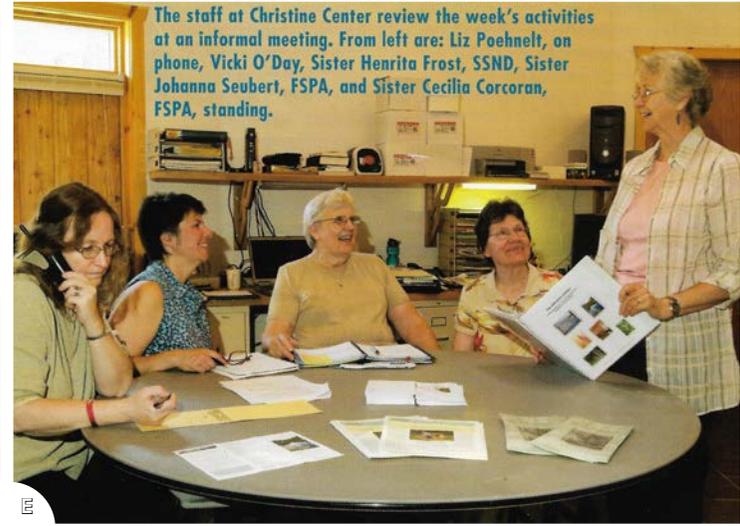
Sister Marge Zulaski, OSF 2010 to Present  
Sister Gabrielle Uhlein, OSF 2010 to Present  
Sister Henrita Frost, SSND 2007 to Present  
Sister Johanna Seubert, FSPA 1987 to Present



Sister Helen Schott, OSBM, 1992 to 1993

1980 - The Christine Center - 2020  
**40<sup>th</sup>**  
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40 YEARS OF MEMORIES...The following pages serve as a scrapbook of memories that showcase our friends, volunteers, staff and presenters engaging in shared moments at the Christine Center. Space simply could not handle all of the fond memories of the community that we hold near to our hearts.



A) Sr. Gabe and Deanna Sava.  
 B) Mary Pendergast on the tractor.  
 C) Fr. Steve Brice and Sr. Virginia Mary Bart.  
 D) Seminar in the Barn Meditation Hall.  
 E) 5th anniversary celebration in '85.  
 F) Saturday night Zikr.  
 G) Meals on the patio at Shekinah.  
 H) Early days Diamond Approach retreat with teacher Carol Carbon



A) Dedication of the Chapel and Library wing with Bishop William P. Callahan. B) Sr. Marge and Sr. Gabe cooking. C) Building of Siloe Bath house with Sr. Henrita, Sr. Johanna, and Sr. Cecy. D) Staff meeting with Liz Poehnel, Vicki O'Day, Sr. Henrita, Sr. Johanna, and Sr. Cecy. E) Sr. Cecy, Sr. Margaret and Deb Murray on the newly developed trails F) Spiritual Deepening Group 5. G) Henry Eisenhauer installing the new sign he designed. H) Intuitive Painters.

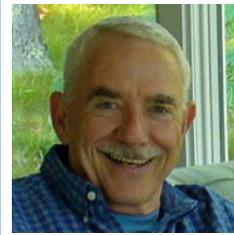


A) Dedication procession and blessing of the Meditation Hall, welcome center, and Guesthouse. B) Visiting sisters and visiting baby goats. C) Dancing around the apple trees. D) Staff meeting. E) GLACIER group enjoying outdoor meal. F) Moving into the age of technology. G) Sr. Cecy playing chimes for her retirement. H) Guided movement in the barn meditation hall



**A LEGACY OF FRIENDS NO LONGER WITH US...** Over the last 40 years the Christine Center has been blessed with the assistance of many "Angels," a term Sr. Virginia used to describe a willing volunteer.

Although many of our friends, volunteers, program presenters and donors are no longer with us, the memory of their smiles and contributions continue to live on as part of our heritage.



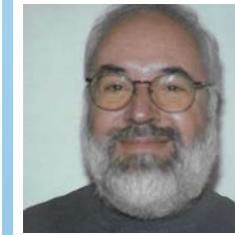
**Mike Ward**  
Board member,  
donor, presenter



**Roberta Hodges**  
Presenter, volunteer, massage therapist, community member



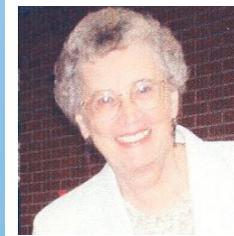
**Ron Retzlaff**  
Director, spiritual leader, community member



**John Parenti**  
Artist, Presenter, "Art as Spiritual Practice"



**Mary Bart**  
Director, presenter, Board member



**Sister Margaret Wagner,**  
FSPA Leadership team, Board member



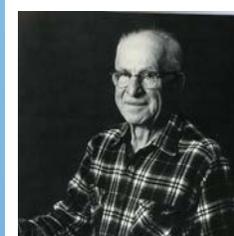
**Sister Charlotte Schmidt,**  
OSF Community member



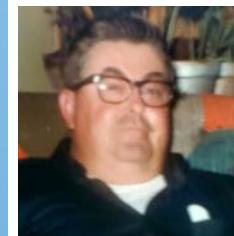
**Sister Josine Doering,**  
OSF Community Member



**Gwen & John Hudetz**  
Non-resident community members, Founder's Circle



**Roy Langteau**  
Volunteer carpenter and builder



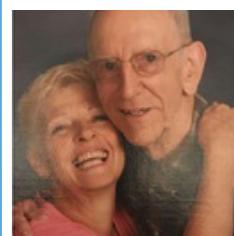
**Mike Weyer**  
Volunteer Coordinator



**David Schultz**  
Work-study community member



**Margie Webb**  
Board member, donor



**Carol and Jerry Vedra**  
Non-resident community members, volunteers

**PRAYER OF UNIFICATION**

In the name of the One God,  
Mother-Father if us All,  
And of Everything.  
We are One Mind  
In the Light of Holy Wisdom;  
We are One Heart in the Radiance  
Of Pure Love;  
We are One Body in the  
Resonance of Divine Power.  
All of Creation is One,  
In Light and Love and Power,  
As it was in the beginning,  
Is now and ever shall be. Amen.



**Steve Krohelski**  
Work-study community member



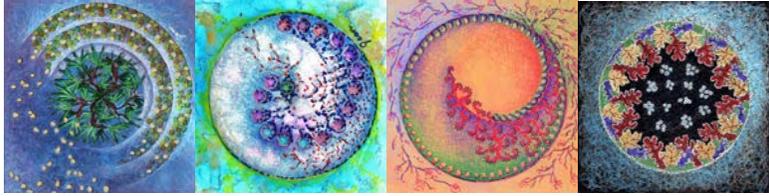
**Sister Virginia Mary Barta**  
Foundress Christine Center



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*Save these Dates for the  
Seasons of Deepening  
Events!*

Winter Solstice:  
December 27 to  
January 3, 2020

Spring Equinox:  
March 5 to 7, 2021

Summer Solstice:  
June 18 to 20, 2021

Autumn Equinox:  
September 17 to 19,  
2021