

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | September 2023



Pictured, top left to bottom right: Sister Michael Marie Burns & Associate JoAnn Snodgrass; Speaker Mark Clarke; Sisters Kathleen Holland, Pat Weldon, Phyllis Morris, & Ida Green; Sisters Deborah Schneider & Ruth E. Westmoreland; Speaker Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF; Sisters Barbara Rosener & Donna Burke; D-lectable D-lites Food Truck; Sojourners Lou Egging, Connie Beck, Gail Burkamper, Ruthann Notz, & Gabriela Egging.

2023 Summer Gathering

The annual Summer Gathering of the Clinton Franciscan Family was held July 26-28 at The Canticle in Clinton. Close to sixty Sisters, Sojourners, Associates, and employees attended the meetings and special events.

On Wednesday, July 26, Dubuque Franciscan **Sister Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF**, presented on "Navigating Transitions During Chaotic Times." Currently serving as a consultant and facilitator for religious congregations, Sister Dorothy has 50 years of mental health experience and has provided workshops and facilitation on several topics, including community living, communication skills, issues around aging, transition, change, and grief.

In her presentation to the Clinton Franciscan Family, Sister Dorothy addressed the impact of change, reviewed grief and the importance of mourning, explored community grieving, and highlighted the skills need to enable and embrace transformation.

In small group discussions, participants reflected on her questions, such as:

*What change has been the most challenging/difficult throughout your life?,
What is your earliest memory of loss?, and
How can you create space to be vulnerable
and begin opening those spaces, releasing its
energy for self and for others?*

Following Sister Dorothy's presentation, the Sojourners and Associates gathered to watch a video offered by the Franciscan Federation on ["Leading Associate Communities in the Franciscan Spirit of Incarnational Leadership."](#)

The first day concluded with dinner offered by the D-lectable D-lites food truck. This brought a fun picnic option for dining... even in Iowa's 100 degree heat index!

Summer Gathering continued on page 2

— Summer Gathering continued... —

On Thursday, July 27, the Sisters met with consultant **Mark Clarke** of CommunityWorks, Inc. to continue the conversation on planning next steps and the processes to move forward on the implementation of the [2021 Chapter Commitment Statement](#).

During his presentation, Mark focused on the commitment of “authorizing the next Leadership Team to explore and recommend possible governance and leadership options, in consultation with community members, to enable making decisions together for our future.”

Another fun evening was planned with options to attend the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre’s performance of *The Spongebob Musical* or a Blue Heron Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River.

The Summer Gathering concluded with a business meeting for Sisters and the celebration of **Commissioning** on Friday, July 28. Commissioning services were held at The Canticle and The Alverno.

With a theme of *Trust in the Process of Life Itself*, Sisters, Sojourners, and Associates were commissioned to their local communities and particular ministries within the Clinton, Chicago, and Western regions.

During the Commissioning services, Sister Janet Ryan read excerpts from [What would Teilhard say? Evolve or be annihilated](#) by Illia Delio, OSF. Quoting the reading, “To live in evolution is to let go of structures that prevent convergence and deepening of consciousness and assume new

structures that are consonant with creativity, inspiration, and development...

Evolution requires trust in the process of life itself because, from a faith perspective, there is a power at the heart of life that is divine and lovable.”

Sister Janice Cebula, President, recapped the presentations from the previous days and expanded on the reading as part of her Commissioning reflection.

She quoted a participant from a Zoom meeting she was on the week before saying, “We are not remnants of the past; we are the roots of the future.” Several times throughout her reflection Sister Janice asked, “What kind of roots do we want to be?”

As she referred to the reading from Illia Delio, OSF, Sister Janice pointed out that change is integral to life. “Imagine what the seed goes through to become a healthy plant! A lot of dying. Change brings loss.” She concluded by referencing the theme, *Trust in the Process of Life Itself*.

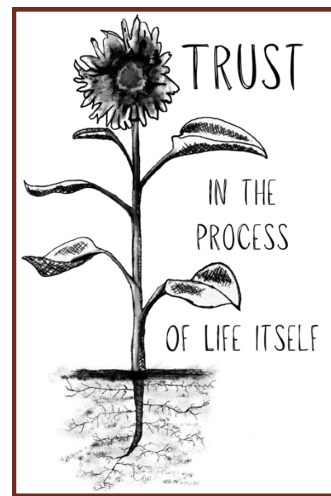
An Associate Commitment Ceremony was part of the Commissioning service at The Canticle, welcoming two new Associates to the Clinton Franciscan Family — Annette Mootz-Hinsch and Rita Mulholland. Read more about each new Associate on page 8.



From left: Associate Brenda Connell with cousins Sisters Francis and Donna Burke at The Alverno Commissioning



Blue Heron Eco Cruise Participants



2023 Commissioning logo designed by Amy Jo Peters, Communications Assistant

Jubilee Celebrations

To celebrate and give witness to the lives and service of the congregation's jubilarians, a Jubilee Mass was held Saturday, July 29, at Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Clinton. Father Michael Schaab of the Diocese of Peoria, IL, presided.

Four sisters publicly renewed their vows, including 60-year jubilarians Sisters Eileen Golby, Ruth E. Westmoreland, and Jeanne d'Arc Untz, and 25-year jubilarian Sister Kathleen Sadler. Associate Barbara Brinkman, 25 years, renewed her commitment to the Associate Partnership Program.



Sister Jane McCarthy celebrated her 70th Jubilee on Friday, July 28, at The Alverno with a cake reception for family and friends.

Iowa State Representative Chuck Isenhardt, cousin of Sister Jane, presented her with a special certificate of recognition from the Iowa House of Representatives "in gratitude for her service to the people of Iowa through education, Hispanic ministry, and immigration reform."

Sister Ann Martinek, also celebrating 70 years, observed her Jubilee in-house at The Canticle in May.



Front row, from left: Barbara Brinkman, Sr. Eileen Golby, Sr. Ruth E. Westmoreland, Sr. Kathleen Sadler, and Sr. Jeanne d'Arc Untz with Leadership Team members Sr. Marilyn Huegerich and Sr. Janice Cebula



L: Sr. Jane McCarthy R: Chuck Isenhardt presents Sr. Jane McCarthy with a certificate of recognition

Remembering Clinton Franciscan Associate



Sharon Gilbert

Sharon Gilbert, a Clinton Franciscan Associate for 35 years, passed away on June 23, in Clinton.

She was a registered nurse, working with Northern Presbyterian Homes in California for many years. She was also employed in Clinton at Mercy Hospital, The Alverno, and Medical Associates. She did mission

work with Catholic Relief Services as a nurse at refugee camps in Sudan and Thailand, among other places. Notably, Sharon met Mother Teresa on her

mission trip to Mother Teresa's Hospice for Dying in Calcutta.

Following the death of her husband, Michael, in 2010, Sharon established Bright Spot Riding Center in Clinton, which provided therapeutic horse riding for special needs individuals.

Sharon was interested in becoming an Associate for "a deeper prayer life," according to her initial application. She committed to the Associate Partnership on October 4, 1987. "My association with the sisters began as a graduate of MSC College in 1961, as an employee of The Alverno, and my long-term relationship with Sister Colette Kelly, who offered encouragement and guidance," Sharon wrote in 2004.

— Actions for Peace and Nonviolence —

by Jennifer Kryszak, Franciscan Peace Center Director of Strategic Planning

For the Sisters of St. Francis, active nonviolence and peacemaking is a way of life, the goal of our relationship to others, the world, and God. In our society, we are exposed daily to violence that is often valorized in the media. That is why we work to invite people to the path of nonviolence, to make nonviolence and peace visible and tangible in our society.

Some of the ways that people learn more about active nonviolence and peacemaking are through community events and actions. The Sisters of St. Francis and the Franciscan Peace Center annually take part in Pace e Bene's [Campaign Nonviolence Action Days](#), which continue to expand and draw people's attention to active nonviolence. The Action Days run from September 21, the International Day of Peace, to October 2, the International Day of Nonviolence. During the Action Days in 2022, over 60,000 people participated in more than 4,600 actions, events, and marches in the United States and twenty other countries. These numbers are promising as more people are learning about and taking action for a world free of violence.

This year, the Clinton Franciscan Family will participate in this celebration and call for nonviolence in several ways:

International Day of Peace - Day of Prayer

On September 21, we will join with international communities to celebrate the International Day of Peace. We will observe a Day of Prayer at The Canticle that will include time for personal prayer on diverse social issues including the death penalty, gun violence, care for creation, human trafficking, income inequality and basic human rights, immigration, racism, ending war, and nuclear disarmament. The day will conclude with a drumming circle for peace and active nonviolence.

As Sister Marilyn Shea notes, "Having a day of prayer at The Canticle as we celebrate the International Day of Peace will give us the

opportunity to pray for those who experience discrimination and a loss of basic human rights as well as to reflect on the truth that peace can only happen if we ourselves live our mission of active nonviolence." As Sister Marilyn said, prayer is one aspect of this mission that encourages a life dedicated to active nonviolence. Education and advocacy assist us in this dedication. Thus, the Day of Prayer will also enable participants to learn more about each one of these pressing social issues and take action to promote a more peaceful world.

While the Day of Prayer at The Canticle is for local residents only, others will be invited to participate through Facebook and their own organized Day of Prayer. For each hour, a prayer will be posted on the [Sisters of St. Francis Facebook page](#) to encourage the wider community to join in prayer for these social issues. Additionally, the materials for the Day of Prayer will be available on our [website](#) so that others may organize their own individual or group prayer.

Stop the Hate/Show the Love Walk

In Clinton, community organizations, including the Sisters of St. Francis and the Franciscan Peace Center, will observe the International Day of Peace on September 28 with the 25th annual Stop the Hate/Show the Love Walk. This event encourages participants to understand, promote, and celebrate peace. In addition to the walk, the program includes music, activities for children, and a release of butterflies. The event begins at 4:30 p.m. at Jefferson Elementary School.



Just Living Festival

To observe the International Day of Nonviolence, the Franciscan Peace Center will host a [Just Living Festival](#) on Sunday, October 1, on The Canticle

Actions continued on page 5

— Season of Creation: *Let Justice and Peace Flow* —

by Jennifer Kryszak, Franciscan Peace Center Director of Strategic Planning

The [Season of Creation](#) is an ecumenical celebration focusing on our relationship with God our Creator and all of creation. The Season begins on September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Christians across the globe will spend time reflecting on and taking action for creation.

The theme for the 2023 Season of Creation is *Let Justice and Peace Flow* and draws on the image of a Mighty River. The Season of Creation team writes, “Prophet Amos cries out: ‘But let justice roll on like a river, righteous like a never-failing stream!’ (Amos 5:24) and so we are called to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.”

Listening to the voice of Prophet Amos, we are called to reflect on how we as individuals and

communities can work for climate and ecological justice. The Clinton Franciscans will take time during the Season of Creation to reflect prayerfully on our relationship with God and creation, participate in a hands-on project at The Canticle focusing on biodiversity, and participate in advocacy opportunities.

Praying for climate and ecological justice, we commit to a continual conversion in our relationship with God, vulnerable communities, and all of creation. Taking action to care for The Canticle grounds, we demonstrate our commitment and relationship to the land that is our home, the land that gives us so much for our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Advocating for climate justice to protect the vulnerable of creation and vulnerable communities, we call ourselves and our society to be in right relationship with all of creation.



— Actions continued... —

grounds. The Just Living Festival will highlight social and ecological efforts in the seven areas of the Clinton Franciscans’ [Laudato Si’ Action Plan](#) including ecospirituality, care for creation, immigration, income inequality and basic human rights, human trafficking, nuclear disarmament, and the abolition of the death penalty. Local businesses and organizations will have exhibits on eco-friendly and equitable lifestyles and consumer choices.

As Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning for the Franciscan Peace Center, reflects, “The Just Living Festival is an opportunity for the Clinton Franciscan Family to highlight our dedication to our Laudato Si’ Action Plan and invite others to consider how they can learn about diverse social issues and alter their practices to make a positive impact on our society and the rest of creation.” The festival will run from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. and is open to the public.

It is our hope that each of these events will draw us closer to a world free of violence. Please join us in prayer, action, and advocacy to promote our mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking.

The “Center” Podcast

Join podcast host Marsha Thrall, Director of Programming for the Franciscan Peace Center, on the second and fourth Thursday of each month as we explore how active nonviolence and peacemaking are necessary and transformative practices within everyday life.

September 14: Prairie Ecology

September 28: An Introduction to Just Living

All new and previously recorded podcasts can be found on our website at:
www.clintonfranciscans.com/the-center-podcast

Laudato Si' Action Plan Updates

by Jennifer Kryszak, Franciscan Peace Center Director of Strategic Planning

July marked the beginning of our [2023-2024 Laudato Si' Action Plan](#). While we have completed some of our goals from the previous Laudato Si' Action Plan, many of our goals are ongoing, and we have added in some new goals. Here are a few updates on our goals:

Ecospirituality

Ecospirituality is the recognition of our relationship to God and the rest of creation. Thus, this spirituality continues to ground our efforts in our Laudato Si' Action Plan. We participate in prayer services that integrate ecospirituality, including those that marked the equinoxes and solstices and upcoming prayer services for the Season of Creation. We continue to educate ourselves about ecospirituality so that it can guide our efforts. These educational opportunities included a video by Gabriele Uhlein entitled "[The Ecospirituality of Pope Francis](#)" and resources shared with the Clinton Franciscan Family. These prayer and educational opportunities assist us in furthering our commitment to ecospirituality.

Cry of the Earth

As Pope Francis notes in *Laudato Si'*, the Earth is crying out to us. We must respond to heal the Earth and our relationship to all of creation. The Clinton Franciscan Family has made much progress on our goals that center on The Canticle property. This has included assessing our solar panels' efficiency and establishing a vehicle policy. We issued a Single-use Plastic Policy that calls us to change our consumer habits to make a positive impact on the world, and we continue to engage educational resources on plastics. Seeking an even broader impact, we encouraged people to submit comments for the EPA Power Plant Rule and are advocating for a just Farm Bill.



Immigration Reform

Responding to the war in Ukraine, we joined the

coalition [IA NICE](#) to support Ukrainian refugees by sponsoring a family and providing household supplies and financial support. To date, IA NICE has assisted thirteen families. The Franciscan Peace Center continues to advocate for federal immigration reform, including promoting calls to action related to the potential asylum ban, family detention, and better immigration funding.

Income Inequality and Basic Human Rights

We continue to support the local Clinton community in the development of permanent supportive housing units and an emergency shelter. Our "Share Our Sandwiches" program provides lunch once a week to those experiencing food insecurity. The Franciscan Peace Center promoted the Clinton Community Garden to enable more people to have access to much needed produce. At the national level, the Franciscan Peace Center promotes advocacy efforts in the [Action Alert Digest](#), including those related to the Farm Bill. The Franciscan Peace Center joined [Nuns Against Gun Violence](#), a new coalition of women's religious communities and their justice teams, to seek an end to gun violence. To provide educational opportunities about systemic racism, the Franciscan Peace Center screened several movies as well as promoted the canonization of six Black Catholics through a social media campaign and two podcasts.



Anti-Human Trafficking

The Franciscan Peace Center has revived the Clinton Anti-Human Trafficking Committee. The Committee attends to diverse types of trafficking, including sex trafficking, migrant labor, and the prison system. Events such as a screening of *Pushout* and

continued on next page

Trafficked in America enable the local community to learn about the intersecting issues, including systemic racism, that lead to human trafficking.

Nuclear Disarmament

On August 6, we joined in prayer in remembrance of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To further commemorate these tragic events, the Franciscan Peace Center released an [interactive quiz](#) about nuclear weapons to promote informed discussion and advocacy for nuclear disarmament. In addition, the Clinton Franciscans continue to examine their investments and purchases to ensure that they do not invest in companies that support the production and use of nuclear weapons.

Death Penalty

We continue our commitment to the abolition of the death penalty. We hold prayer vigils when executions are scheduled and support the proposed ban on the federal and military death penalty. Seeking a world free from the death penalty, we promote restorative justice. For the Franciscan Peace Center's podcast *The "Center,"* Sister Janet Ryan participated in a [podcast episode](#) that described how Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation promotes restorative justice to change lives and communities.

THE
"CENTER"



— Franciscan Peace Connection Update —

by Sister LaVern Olberding, Director of the Franciscan Peace Connection

The Franciscan Peace Connection in La Mesa, CA, has been an integral part of a summer youth camp for about 5 years.

Peace Camp 2023, held July 10-14, will be remembered as the first one where the primary planning team and leadership voices were those of the twelve 16-year-old peer counselors who had been invited to help shape the week of evening programming. They were students/former students of local elementary and middle schools where they had been well trained as peer Circle Leaders. Their skills and self-confidence as they facilitated the peer groups were poignant examples of what our younger generation is capable of accomplishing. They are already talking about next summer and have called a meeting to begin the planning!



Arts and crafts table
at Peace Camp 2023

Interfaith Awareness Week started seven years ago when the Poway Interfaith Team and the Franciscan Peace Connection co-hosted a week of events in San Diego. It was the first time San Diego had hosted the [Parliament of the World's Religions](#). 200 participants from 20 faiths attended. The feedback regarding a full week of interfaith events was well received. The [World Interfaith Network](#) evolved, and it now includes the membership of 300+ faiths in 107 countries.

Each year the first full week in August is now the week that individuals and groups from countless faith traditions worldwide gather together — in person and/or via Zoom — to share, listen, and learn. All events scheduled for this year were available live on Zoom at designated times. Some originated in the U.S. and others elsewhere in the world. Each was [recorded for later listening](#) and archival purposes.

Sister LaVern expressed, "Interfaith groups and programming are alive and well in San Diego... and around the world! I encourage you to take time to peruse the archived presentations. I think you will find numerous topics that grab your attention."

— Welcoming Two New Associates —

Associates partner with the Sisters of St. Francis in living the values of Saints Francis and Clare, and share in the mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. On July 28, we welcomed two new Associates — Annette Mootz-Hinsch and Rita Mulholland.

Annette Mootz-Hinsch became familiar with the Sisters of St. Francis during her time working at The Alverno, and she was introduced to the Associate program by Associate Sharon Gilbert. “I feel very blessed being brought up Catholic and working at The Alverno for twelve years. I would like to continue my spiritual journey by keeping in close relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis, promoting a more peaceful world,” she remarked.

The Clinton Franciscans have been a part of **Rita Mulholland’s** life since her elementary years, having the Sisters as her teachers and principal. She went on to attend Mount St. Clare Academy



Sr. Anne Martin Phelan, center, looks on as Rita Mulholland (left) and Annette Mootz-Hinsch (right) sign their Associate Partnership certificates.

and College. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare convent in 1965, receiving the name Sister Janel. She left the community in 1973, but remained connected over the years.

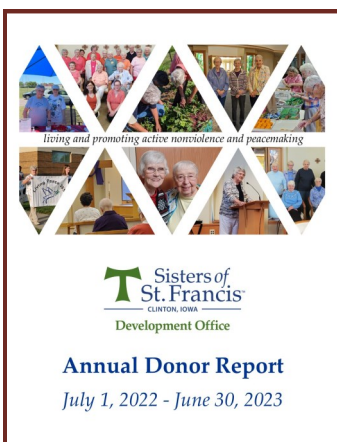
Associate Sandra Jacobs invited Rita to attend the Associates’ meetings. “I came and enjoyed the topics and all of the people. Each and every one of the Sisters has affected my life for the

better. They are kind and caring people, and through their example, I hope to learn how to be a better human being and pass it on to others,” Rita said.

Associates are nourished by mutual support, fellowship, and relationships shared with the Sisters of St. Francis, Sojourners, and each other. Regular gatherings, common prayer, and Franciscan study enrich their commitment to the mission.

To learn more about the Associate Partnership Program, visit our [website](#) or call (563) 242-7611.

— Annual Donor Report —



Our Annual Donor Report for the fiscal period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, is now available on our [website](#).

Listing the names of our donors is one way to show appreciation to the many friends and family that have supported our congregation.

Are you interested in supporting the mission and ministries of the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa? Donations can be made for the needs of our retired Sisters, Franciscan Peace Center, Franciscan Peace Connection, Mary’s Wellspring for retreat and spirituality needs, and/or wherever our need is the greatest.

Thank you for your continued generosity!



843 13th Avenue North
Clinton, IA 52732-5115
(563) 242-7611
www.clintonfranciscans.com