

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | March 2021

Vaccination Brings Sign of Hope

A COVID-19 vaccination clinic on January 18 at The Canticle in Clinton brought a sign of hope to sisters, residents, and employees. The first dose of the Pfizer vaccine was administered by CVS Pharmacy personnel from the surrounding area. In total, forty-two individuals were vaccinated.

"We were doubly grateful to receive our COVID-19 vaccines. Not only were we part of the first tier to receive them, but because we were part of the Pharmacy Partnership for Long Term Care Program, personnel came on-site to administer the dosages," said Sister Jan Cebula.

The second round of the vaccine was administered three weeks later on February 8. "We feel we are doing our part to protect not only ourselves, but the wider community. We encourage everyone to receive the vaccine when given the opportunity. We are all in this together," added Sister Jan.

Separate from the clinic, vaccines have been administered to eleven additional employees; four sisters residing at The Alverno; and eight sisters residing in California, Illinois, and other parts of Iowa.



Sister Jan Cebula, President, receives her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.

Celebrating Catholic Sisters Week

Catholic Sisters Week, celebrated March 8-14, shines a light on the spirituality, mission, and community building of women religious. It began in 2015 as part of National Women's History Month.



Exploring Intersections Webinar Series

Launching during Catholic Sisters Week is a yearlong, live-streamed conversation series on the leading social justice issues of our time. Titled "[Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate](#)," each month will focus on a different social issue and explore

how it intersects with racism, migration, and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation. Three panelists from different walks of life, including Catholic Sisters, will bring unique perspectives to each session.

The Sisters of St. Francis are [one of 24 congregations](#) in four states—representing Leadership Conference for Women Religious (LCWR) Region X, Communicators for St. Louis Sisters, and Sisters United News—collaborating on this project, which is an active response to the [2019-2022 Assembly Resolution of LCWR](#).

"This series is intended to provide a forum for constructive conversation on the big issues of our day and how each intersects with the major themes of racism, migration, and climate," says Amanda Eberhart, Director of Communications and Development. "We're looking forward to lively, nuanced conversations among our panelists and hearing what our audience members

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have to say on these topics.”

The live-streamed sessions will be at 3:00 p.m. CST on the second Wednesday of each month, beginning **March 10**. For those who register on [Zoom](#), the sessions will be interactive with opportunities for questions and comments following the 45-minute panel conversation. The series will also be streamed live on [YouTube](#) for those who do not wish to register, and a podcast will be available on Apple Podcasts or Spotify the following Wednesday.

During the first session on March 10, panelists will be exploring equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender and how gender equity is interconnected with issues of racism, migration, and climate change.



Panelists will be Beth Allen, Director of Affiliation for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration; Ga'Nea Jones, a senior at Missouri State University; and Sister Joan Mitchell, a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Additional upcoming monthly episodes will include:

April 14 - Care of Creation

May 12 - Migration

June 9 - Racial Justice

For a complete list of episodes, and to register, visit www.exploringintersections.org.

International Women's Day

The United Nations declared International Women's Day as an official holiday in 1977 to spread awareness of the women's rights movement. Today, we aim to celebrate the tremendous contributions by women and girls worldwide in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and shaping a more equal future. The Sisters of St. Francis and YWCA Clinton will co-sponsor an International Women's Day event on March 8 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. on Zoom, featuring speaker Leslie Bruton. As a renowned motivational speaker and mentor that has dedicated her career to supporting today's youth, Leslie will deliver her speech titled, "Hope in a Crisis." Learn more [HERE](#).

Challenge to End Hunger

Congregations were challenged by LCWR Region IV to [Change the World and End Hunger](#) during Catholic Sisters Week. The challenge seeks a collaborative effort to serve persons in need and bring much-needed awareness to the current increase in food insecurity and its underlying causes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty, unemployment/underemployment, and inconsistent access to healthy food.

We, the Sisters of St. Francis, Sojourners, and Associates, are rising to the challenge by directing funds to local food pantries and advocating in support of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that helps families stretch their grocery budgets.

Our congregation will be paying forward the second round of Economic Impact Payments, or stimulus checks, that each individual sister received. Funds will be donated to assist those more impacted by COVID-19 than we have been, including six food pantries in Iowa and Illinois. (Last spring we also donated our first round of stimulus checks to nine non-profit organizations in Iowa, Illinois, and South Dakota.)

Members of the Clinton Franciscan Family are encouraged to donate to food pantries in their local communities during Catholic Sisters Week. The collection being taken up in Clinton will be donated to [Pantries United](#).

The Franciscan Peace Center has prepared a hunger challenge week of events for Catholic Sisters Week, including advocacy and educational opportunities for all to participate in. View the events on our [website](#).

Share Our Sandwiches, a program led by volunteers of the Franciscan Peace Center since 2014, continues to distribute sack lunches and personal hygiene items to individuals in need every Thursday from 12:00-1:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Clinton.

Sister Ruth Cox Relocates to The Canticle

One of the “joys” of being a homeowner is maintaining the property. Tasks such as lawn mowing, raking leaves, and removing snow are never-ending. And when a derecho storm with hurricane-force winds blows through your city, the clean-up is an even bigger “joy!”

Last fall Sister Ruth Cox felt ready to move from her home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and relocate to Clinton to live at The Canticle with her sisters. She made the personal decision to pack up and leave the home that she had resided in for the past 17 years. She officially moved to The Canticle on November 12, 2020.

Sister Ruth lived with Associate Rev. Beverly Thompson-Travis, until her death in 2016. The home belonged to Rev. Bev, but was gifted to the Sisters of St. Francis through her estate. The house was offered for sale and the sale closed on February 12, 2021.

Sister Ruth is no stranger to Clinton as she served as the administrator for The Alverno Health Care Facility from 1977 to 2003, providing dedicated professional nursing and exemplary care to the residents. During her twenty-six years at The Alverno, she also served as Councilor for the Sisters of St. Francis for a total of twelve years.

“After moving to Cedar Rapids in 2003, I taught first semester nursing at Kirkwood Community College for

six years,” she explained. “I also volunteered at the Cedar Rapids Community Health Free Clinic and West Ridge Care Center until volunteers were required to stay home due to the pandemic.”

Sister Ruth has always had a passion for nursing and was a registered nurse when she entered the Sisters of St. Francis

in 1954. Over the years she has served in various positions in hospitals and universities. Notably, she was one of three sisters who opened the Grand Bahama Hospital in 1963 in Freeport, Grand Bahama. She was also one of the original board members of Ashford University, serving for 10 years.

Presently, Sister Ruth serves as the Parliamentarian and as a member of the Quality Committee of the Iowa Healthcare Association. “I had to resign from local boards due to leaving the Cedar Rapids area, but I look forward to being able to volunteer in Clinton when it is safe to do so,” she remarked. “After several ice and snow storms last year and the derecho in August, I am grateful to be warm and safe inside at The Canticle!”



Sister Ruth Cox

Lenten Activities

The past year has been filled with different ways of living and praying and this Lenten season is no different. Visitor restrictions still remain in place at The Canticle, but residents are continuing a few of their annual Lenten practices.

On Ash Wednesday, instead of receiving ashes as a cross on the forehead, residents were sprinkled with ashes on the top of their heads. This method of distributing ashes is relatively unknown in the United States, but is common practice in other parts of the world.

With social distancing and other CDC guidelines in place, Stations of the Cross are being led by residents each Friday night in place of evening prayer.

We are putting our faith into action through almsgiving by donating to the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl. Through Lenten alms, we have the power to make the world a better place for our sisters and brothers across the globe experiencing hardships like hunger and malnutrition.

Heart of Forgiveness

online retreat led by Sister Kathleen Sadler

Wednesday, March 24

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (CST)

As we journey through Lent, let us walk with Jesus to Calvary. We all long for forgiveness. Today people are suffering in so many ways, so how do we forgive? We have those day-to-day things that get under our skin. Can we forgive others who have wronged us, hurt us deeply, betrayed us? We will delve into the meaning of forgiveness and look at our model of forgiveness, the suffering Jesus, and the Jesus with the open heart of love and forgiveness. \$25 fee. [Register](#)

Hosted by Our Lady of The Prairie Retreat, a ministry of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary.

Living Room Conversations

The Franciscan Peace Center will be leading [Living Room Conversations](#) via Zoom each week in March. These guided conversations are structured to increase understanding, reveal common ground, and allow participants to discuss possible solutions to various topics. Each session will be limited to 6 people to allow each participant an opportunity to engage fully. For full descriptions and to register, visit www.clintonfranciscans.com.

March 5: Free Speech, Fighting Words and Violence

March 9: Hunger and Health

March 18: Being White in the Anti-Racism Movement

March 24: What is Essential?

Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Wear Blue Day

Members of the Clinton Franciscan Family and Carmelite Sisters wore blue on January 11 to raise awareness of human trafficking. Images were shared on social media along with the #WearBlueDay hashtag. Wear Blue Day is part of the [Blue Campaign](#) from the Department of Homeland Security.



From left, seated: Sisters Ann Martinek and Paschal Hocum. Standing: Sisters Eileen Golby, Deborah Schneider, Kathleen Sadler, Joan Theiss, Jan Cebula, Joan McCorkell OCD, Teresa Susan Dreyer OCD, Teresa Kunkel, and Dorothy Mae Stolmeier.



Iowa Freedom Summit

In recognition of January being Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the Franciscan Peace Center and the [Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking](#) co-sponsored the first-ever Iowa Freedom Summit, a webinar that provided an informative update on Iowa's fight to end human trafficking.

Panelists included:

- Maggie Tinsman, former Iowa Senator and founder of Braking Traffik.
- Teresa Davidson, Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator for Mercy Medical Center.
- Jessica Rohrs, Director of Victim Services with Family Crisis Centers.
- Shannon Findlay, MD, MPH, CTropMed, member of the Johnson County Human Trafficking Coalition and the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics Human Trafficking Committee.
- Alyse Hardin, Survivor Services Supervisor at Family Resources of the Quad Cities.
- Heather Brown, survivor and advocate.

The 90-minute presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).



End the Demand Billboard

The Sisters of St. Francis sponsored a billboard to raise awareness and end the demand for human trafficking. The billboard was displayed at the corner of South 14th Street and Lincolnway in Clinton. The Franciscan Peace Center's Anti-Human Trafficking Committee proposed the idea in support of the [corporate stand](#) opposing all forms of human trafficking.



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