

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | June 2026

— In Memoriam: Sister Marjorie Wisor —



Sr. Marjorie Wisor
1934 - 2026

Sister Marjorie Wisor, a Clinton Franciscan for 73 years, passed away March 20, 2026, at The Alverno in Clinton, IA.

Marjorie Ann was born August 28, 1934, in Clinton County, the thirteenth of fourteen children of Roman and Clara (Manikowski) Wisor. She had seven brothers and six sisters. She was baptized at St. Patrick Church in Villa Nova, IA, on September 2, 1934.

She attended White School #6 in Clinton County and Mount St. Clare Academy, Clinton, graduating in 1952. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent on September 8, 1952. She received the name Sister Marian at her reception on June 16, 1953. She later resumed her baptismal name. She made her first vows on August 12, 1955, and her final profession on August 12, 1958.

Sister Marjorie received an A.A. degree from Mount St. Clare College, Clinton; a B.A. in French from San Diego College for Women, San Diego, CA; a M.A. in French Language and

Civilization from Sorbonne, University of Paris, Paris, France; and a M.A. in Religious Studies from St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO. She also studied at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH. She held a pre-professional teaching certificate in Iowa, a general elementary teaching certificate in California, and an adult education and literacy certificate in Missouri.

Sister Marjorie served as a teacher at schools in El Cajon, CA, and Victor, Fonda, and Clinton, IA. She then went on to study in France. While there, Sister Marjorie visited Trosly and met Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, an international federation of people with and without intellectual disabilities living together in community. After volunteering with the L'Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France, Sister Marjorie worked to establish a L'Arche community in Clinton, serving as director from 1974 to 1986. After, she served as Director of Formation for the Sisters of St. Francis.

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— Announcement of Governance Transition —

After years of careful consideration, contemplation, and discernment, we, the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa, have chosen to transfer our governance to an appointed leader. This change comes at a significant moment in our communal life and is intended to provide stability, support, and continued faithfulness to our mission and charism.

We are pleased to announce that **Sister Kathleen Bauer, SSND**, has officially been named our appointed leader by the Vatican. She will walk with us as we navigate present realities and prepare for the future. This significant milestone will be commemorated with a formal installation ceremony on Sunday, June 28, at 1:00 p.m. in the chapel at The Canticle. A reception will follow. The public is welcome to attend.

Sister Kathleen brings over twenty years of servant leadership experience with a broad healthcare

operations background. She has a solid understanding of operations, finances, contracts, technology, and strategic planning. "Sister Kathleen brings a wealth of knowledge and skills to her position as our appointed leader. She has a passion for religious life, is grounded in faith, curious about people, conscious of the importance of listening, has a welcoming presence, and is pastoral and inclusive," said Sister Jan Cebula, current President of the Sisters of St. Francis.

Most recently, Sister Kathleen ministered as a Clinical Coordinator at the Dallas College School of Health Sciences, where she was responsible for over 450



Sr. Kathleen Bauer, SSND

Governance continued on page 2

— Wisor continued... —

She was a French instructor at Mount St. Clare College, Clinton; Wadhams Hall, Ogdensburg, NY; and St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO. She served in pastoral ministry in Madison and Mosinee, WI, and Paducah, KY. In the St. Louis area, she also ministered as an adult literacy tutor and Literacy Coordinator, caregiver for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and Director of the Carondelet Family Literacy Program.

Sister Marjorie continued to live in St. Louis doing volunteer work until 2017, when she retired to The Canticle in Clinton. She oversaw the library at The Canticle and renewed her friendship with the L'Arche Clinton residents. She moved to The Alverno in November 2023 and remained there until her death on March 20, 2026.

Her concern for people living on the margins was reflected in her membership of several peace advocacy

groups. She participated in prayer vigils and public witnesses. Sister Marjorie also enjoyed flowers, especially sunflowers, and loved reading, listening to classical music, and coloring mandalas. She shared in all the activities offered at The Alverno as she appreciated being around others.

Sister Marjorie is survived by her nieces and nephews and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she shared life for 73 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers and sisters-in-law, Francis (Mary), Joseph (Bernadette), Bernard, Leonard, John, Raymond, and Robert (LaVon); sisters and brothers-in-law, Clara (Laurent) Nugent, Teresa (Charles) Dolan Cotter, Mary (Jene) Jost, Alberta (Steve) Sharnik, Loretta Wisor, and Mary Martha Wisor; and brother-in-law, Bud Dolan.

— Governance continued... —

clinical affiliation, service, and expense/revenue agreements for the School of Health Sciences. She has also served as a project manager for Catholic Charities, Dallas, TX; on the executive leadership team of the School Sisters of Notre Dame; as an IS/IT site manager for Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis, MN; and in clinical department management at New Ulm Medical Center, New Ulm, MN. She was also a licensed physical therapist in Minnesota for twenty-six years.

While this marks a shift from our longstanding practice of elected leadership, the decision to transfer governance reflects years of learning and planning, aligning with our hopes and vision for the future. Beginning in 2018, we started examining future demographics and needs and began discussions about future governance models. Our members determined we no longer had sufficient resources or persons available to serve in leadership roles to operate in the future.

"I am grateful for the involvement of the sisters along the way, the assistance from consultants, and am especially grateful to God. I would also like to thank and affirm the partnerships we have formed in the wider Clinton community all 133 years we have been located here," remarked Sister Jan. "We have spent years attempting to face our reality as an aging community. We transferred the college and The Alverno more than ten years ago. When we discerned together that we could not elect another leadership team, the need to have an appointed leader became clear," she added.

To support Sister Kathleen in the role as appointed leader, a team of advisors will be established. This team will consist of two women religious with the skills and

qualities necessary to provide support and guidance. "We are at a historic moment in our history. While it is always painful to let go, we eagerly await Sister Kathleen's arrival," expressed Sister Jan.

*"We are at a historic moment in our history.
While it is always painful to let go, we
eagerly await Sister Kathleen's arrival."*

- Sr. Jan Cebula, OSF

We are grateful for the dedicated service of our outgoing leadership team and for the many ways they have guided us with wisdom and care. We now welcome the leadership of the appointed leader with openness and trust, confident that this transition will help sustain and strengthen our mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking.

We ask for your prayers as we enter this new chapter, trusting that God continues to guide our journey.



2021-2026 Outgoing Leadership:
Sisters Ruth E. Westmoreland, Councilor
Janice Cebula, President
Marilyn Huegerich, Vice President

— Preserving History, Sharing Hope —

by Marsha Thrall, Director of Programming, Franciscan Peace Center

The [African Methodist Episcopal \(AME\) Church](#) was founded in 1797 to protest slavery and racism in the United States. Clinton, Iowa, has a rich history of AME presence within its community. According to the [University of Iowa](#), Clinton's Bethel AME Church was founded in 1866. Congregational meetings were initially held in the building where the parsonage still stands at 311 S 3rd St. In 1868, the Iowa Land Company Project donated land at the corner of 3rd Ave S and S 3rd St to Bethel AME, and that same year, construction of the permanent church began following a fundraising campaign. In 2010, the congregation moved to an adjacent property at 238 4th Ave S, formerly St. John's Episcopal Church.

Bethel AME Church flourished until it closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, due to building code violations, the congregation was required to turn over the keys and deeds to their property on 4th Ave S and to the original church at 303 S 3rd St. Developers turned the 4th Ave S location into a brewery. Plans are underway for the space at 303 S 3rd St to be a historical site that honors the legacy of Bethel and important Black community leaders.

Amid confusion over these property transfers, the Jetter family was able to maintain possession of the community center property they owned - the original parsonage where the congregation of Bethel AME Church began meeting and worshipping together in 1866.

The Jetter family stood firm in the face of city leaders

who tried to convince them to turn over the parsonage property to brewery developers. In 2024, rehabilitation of the parsonage began. In late 2025, the renovated Vince Jetter Community Center reopened to serve youth and families in the Clinton community.

In tandem with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious' *100 Days of Prayer, Fasting, and Advocacy*, the Franciscan Peace Center and Vince Jetter Community Center will present *This is Our Story: A Community Storytelling Event*. The title references the hymn *Blessed Assurance*, which is often used to open AME church services, reminding worshipers that steadfast faith can strengthen us and provide inspiration to overcome adversity with perseverance, grace, and love.

At this public event, families served by the Vince Jetter Community Center will partner with community members to write and tell short stories that lift-up examples of hope, joy, and victory in the face of social adversity. This event will take place on Sunday, June 7, from 2:00-4:30 p.m. at the Vince Jetter Community Center, 311 S 3rd St in Clinton. If you'd like more information, contact Marsha Thrall at mthrall@clintonfranciscans.com.



— Catholic Women Preach —

Catholic Women Preach is an initiative launched in 2016 by FutureChurch that provides liturgically based video, audio, and written preaching from Catholic women. It aims to address the absence of female perspectives in the Church by offering reflections on Sunday readings and feast days. The text below is an excerpt from the reflection written by Dr. Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning for the Franciscan Peace Center, which was posted for The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity on May 31. To read the reflection in its entirety, visit www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/05312026.

Relationships take work. We hear this again in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. "Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11). Paul notes that the call to be in relationship with God requires that we are in relationship with one another – that we mend our ways and move our daily lives in the direction of peace.

We live at a time of great unrest and conflict within our nation and across the world. Violence and war are normalized, accepted, and even praised by political leaders. Gun violence remains the number one killer of our children. Domestic violence and suicide plague our society, cutting short the lives of our family and friends.

Distrust and fear of conflict paralyze us before conversations or relationships can even begin. We know what is right, and we know what is wrong with those who disagree with us. We hold our beliefs tight and restrict our vision, our willingness to see God at work in others.

What does it mean to live in peace with one another at a time when there is so much division and violence? Does it mean that you avoid difficult conversations with family members who disagree with you? Does it mean that we ignore our role as citizens within a democracy in order to maintain a semblance of peace in our families, communities, and nation?

This is not the peace that God calls us to. True peace requires knowledge, understanding, and action.

— Celebrating Our 2026 Jubilarians —

Six Clinton Franciscan Sisters will celebrate their Jubilee, the anniversary of entrance into religious life, this summer. Sisters Donna Burke, Maria Zeimen, Marilyn Barry, Martinelle Bonnell, Marilyn Shea, and Sarah Martz have a combined 380 years of service to God's people.

Jubilee Mass will be held Saturday, June 27, at 10:30 a.m. at Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Clinton with Bishop Dennis Walsh of the Diocese of Davenport presiding. The public is welcome to attend. A private luncheon will follow.

75 Years

Celebrating 75 years of religious life, **Sister Donna (Donald Marie) Burke** has graciously served in education as a teacher and administrator as well as in pastoral ministry as a Pastoral Associate.



Burke

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1951, at the age of 18. She earned her A.A. from Mount St. Clare College, a B.A. in Education from St. Ambrose College, an M.A. in Education from the University of Northern Iowa, and an M.A. in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University. She also received a Certificate in Cultural and Creation Spirituality from Holy Names College.

Her love of learning was reflected in her ministry in elementary education for thirty-three years. In Clinton, she was principal at St. Patrick School and Seton School. She also taught in Vail and Varina, IA; Cameron, MO; Chicago Heights, IL; and Maysville, KY.

Sister Donna served the congregation as Director of Vocation/Formation at Mount St. Clare Convent, and as director of the Associate Partnership program. She concluded her active ministry years as a Pastoral Associate at St. Athanasius Parish in Jesup, IA, for twenty years.

She retired from full-time ministry in 2016. In retirement, she continues to serve others, for example, by planning spiritual retreat days for the congregation and visiting the elderly at area nursing homes.

Sister Donna shares that her greatest blessing is ***"knowing and delighting in God's abundant love for all of us."***

Sister Maria (Maria Goretti) Zeimen exemplifies a life of service, dedication, and leadership. Celebrating 75 years of religious life, she has ministered in education, pastoral ministry, congregational administration, and social services.

At the age of 17, she entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1951. She attended Mount St. Clare

College, received a B.A. in General Science from the University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. in Animal Biology from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.



Zeimen

She began her teaching ministry in Oak Lawn, IL, and Fonda, IA. After obtaining her doctorate, she spent sixteen years teaching biology at Mount St. Clare College and Academy. She served as a pastoral minister and teacher in Macomb, IL, and as a pastoral minister in Moline, IL.

She answered the call to congregational leadership, faithfully serving as Vice President of the Sisters of St. Francis from 1976 to 1980 and from 1984 to 1988. She served as President from 1988 to 1996. During that time, she led the congregation to a deeper knowledge of and commitment to Franciscan spirituality while defining the mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking.

Her leadership also extended beyond the local community. She was elected second vice president of the Franciscan Federation of the United States and served two years as its president.

Sister Maria's love for all God's people was shown in her ministry with L'Arche. She helped found L'Arche Chicago, and served as its first community leader. She also ministered with other L'Arche communities throughout the United States and was the Assistant Regional Coordinator for Central USA L'Arche.

After retiring from full-time ministry, she remained in the Chicago area and volunteered at Garden Center Services for people with intellectual disabilities. She also dedicated her time to the Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants, praying for and visiting detained immigrants.

She returned to Clinton in July 2024 and continued to show compassion and serve others through her volunteer and advocacy efforts. She expresses deep gratitude for ***"being able to celebrate and rejoice in the present moment whatever that moment might be."***

70 Years

Throughout **Sister Marilyn (Mary Pierre) Barry's** 70-year journey as a Clinton Franciscan, she has served in the areas of education and pastoral ministry.



Barry

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1956, at the age of 18. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from the University of San Diego and completed graduate work for an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry at Seattle University.

She began her teaching career at parochial schools in Macomb and Oak Lawn, IL; Chino, CA; and at St. Patrick

School in Clinton. She dedicated twenty-five years to pastoral ministry and religious education in parishes in Iowa, California, Missouri, South Carolina, and Oregon.

After retiring from full-time ministry, she has been volunteering at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Oswego, OR. She is devoted to the Blessed Mother and the rosary. She enjoys handcrafting one-decade rosaries and distributing them widely, especially to those mourning the loss of a loved one.

Sister Marilyn returned to Clinton in May and is adjusting to her new daily routine living with her sisters at The Canticle. Reflecting on her jubilee, she states, ***"Life as a Clinton Franciscan has been a journey of love, growth, humility, care, and finding God in people, prayer, plants, animals, trees, and rivers...an adventure of finding God in the large mountains and small ant hills. How honored I was to participate in the funeral luncheon ministry at Our Lady of the Lake. The love for the Poor Souls has enriched my daily prayer life. I thank Mother Mary and Jesus for walking with me."***

Celebrating 70 years of religious life, **Sister Martinelle Bonnell**'s passion for teaching and mentoring has transformed the lives of countless students in the communities she has served. Her lifelong ministry in the field of education has spanned elementary, high school, and higher education levels.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on December 8, 1956, at the age of 18. She earned a B.A. in English from St. Louis University, an M.S. in Education from St. Louis University, an M.S.A. from Notre Dame University, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from St. Louis University.

Sister Martinelle ministered as teacher and administrator at schools in Clinton, Hawarden, and Fonda, IA; St. Louis, MO; Chino, CA; and Oak Lawn, IL. She served twelve years as Associate Principal and Academic Dean at Regina Dominican High School in Wilmette, IL. At Mount St. Clare College and its successors, she served in the roles of Dean of Students, Academic Dean, Interim President, and Academic Coach.

During her tenure at the college, she also responded to the call of her community, serving as General Councilor for the Sisters of St. Francis for four years and as Canonical Councilor for four years.

She retired from full-time ministry in 2015. Now residing at The Canticle in Clinton, she continues to live out her commitment to her religious vocation through prayer and social justice advocacy efforts. Sister Martinelle celebrates her abundant blessings affirming, ***"God has***

been so good to me! I loved teaching and meeting new students to challenge. I also enjoyed my years as an administrator as I tried to influence teachers, staff, and students."

Encouragement and support have been demonstrated throughout **Sister Marilyn (Mary Jolene) Shea's** 70-years as a Clinton Franciscan. Whether it was teaching in a classroom, overseeing the school as a principal, or guiding student teachers, her commitment to uplifting and educating others has left a lasting impact.



Shea

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1956, at the age of 19. She earned an A.A. from Mount St. Clare, a B.S. in Elementary Education from Cardinal Stritch College, and a M.Ed. in Educational Administration and Supervision from Marquette University.

For thirty-three years, she served in the ministry of teaching and administration. In Clinton, she served at St. Boniface School, Sacred Heart School, and Trinity Catholic School. She also ministered in Oak Lawn and Chicago Heights, IL; Riverside, CA; and St. Louis, MO. She spent three years at the Adult Education Center in Hayti, MO, providing literacy training and parent education and directing the childcare center.

Helping empower college students as they studied to become teachers, she ministered as the Coordinator of Practicum and Field Experience in the teacher education department at Mount St. Clare College and its successors. Her role expanded to include teaching and supervision.

Throughout her years of religious life, Sister Marilyn has served in leadership roles for the Sisters of St. Francis, including General Councilor for four years and General Secretary for nine years.

Now retired from full-time ministry, she continues to show compassion and serve others through her volunteer efforts with MercyOne Hospital, Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center, and Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Parish. Reflecting on her jubilee, Sister Marilyn shares, ***"I celebrate this jubilee with gratitude and joy for the many blessings I have received as a Clinton Franciscan. The people and events of each day continue to reveal God's presence among us."***

20 Years

Prior to entering religious life, **Sister Sarah Martz** received a B.A. in Art from Mount St. Clare College. She worked as Office Administrator at St. Mary's parish in Iowa City and then received an invitation from the former president of the Clinton Franciscans to join her as a staff member at The David School in David, KY, a non-denominational private alternative high school



Bonnell

■ Jubilee continued...

deep in the heart of Appalachia, where she ministered as a volunteer Art and English teacher.

She joined the congregation's Associate Partnership Program and remained an Associate for three years before becoming a candidate of the Sisters of St. Francis, entering on October 21, 2006, at the age of 26.



Martz

Embarking on her new journey as a Clinton Franciscan, Sister Sarah served as a catechist and youth ministry coordinator at St. Patrick Church in Iowa City and as a site facilitator for the 21st Century Community Learning Center at Washington Middle School in Clinton.

As a canonical novice, she served as a mentor and children's advocate at The Port Ministries in Chicago, providing fundamental needs to under-resourced and underserved residents of the local community. She continued to minister in this setting for five years.

Sister Sarah professed final vows on July 20, 2013. In 2016, she earned a M.A. in Justice Ministry with a

particular interest in Reconciliation and Peacebuilding from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Presently residing in Chicago, Sister Sarah is a long-time choir member in her parish's music ministry. She also ministers as a Recovery Support Specialist at Metropolitan Family Services, first in The Living Room program, a free, walk-in mental health crisis center designed to support individuals experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, or depression in a comfortable setting. Following that role, she now continues her work as Recovery Support Specialist in MFS's general behavioral health program, providing therapeutic support for clients on an individual and group basis.

Reflecting back over the last 20 years, Sister Sarah expresses, ***"I have been loved and supported by my community in ways that I could have never imagined prior to joining the Clinton Franciscans. Their support has encouraged me to try new things and to share the love and support that I have received with every person I encounter each day."***

■ Associates Celebrate Anniversaries

Associates partner with the Sisters of St. Francis in radically living gospel values. They aspire to understand and embody our mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking by living it more deeply in their daily life. They are nourished by mutual support, fellowship, and relationships shared with the Sisters, Sojourners, and each other. Regular gatherings, common prayer, and Franciscan study enrich their commitment to the mission.

We celebrate **Mary Anne Enoch** and **Robert "Bob" McCarthy** as they commemorate 25 years as Clinton Franciscan Associates. Both committed to the Associate Partnership Program on August 7, 2001. Congratulations!



Mary Anne
Enoch

Mary Anne was introduced to the Associate Partnership Program by Sister Eileen Golby, who was ministering in Lexington, KY, at the time. Mary Anne joined our Southern Region Associate group because the charisms of Francis and Clare were meaningful to her and she wanted to enhance her Franciscan nature. When our regions were restructured in 2018, she transitioned to a prayer association in order to continue dedicating herself to the mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. ***"I try to live out the mission by embracing human dignity by consciously not degrading or putting others down and welcoming the stranger. Before this administration, I was helping set up housing for refugees coming to Lexington. That was put on hold as now refugees are not welcome in our country. I do not participate in violent rhetoric and shut it down when I'm in its presence. I also care for the Earth by recycling, driving a hybrid car, and finding a home for items left on the curb before they are taken to the landfill."***

Robert "Bob" became familiar with our Associate Partnership Program through discussions with his late wife, Sallyann, who was the Communications Director for our congregation. He would attend several meetings with her and was impressed with the Franciscan lifestyle and beliefs. He described it as being "so simple, yet the natural and right way." Sallyann passed away in 2013, but Bob remained an Associate reaffirming his long-time commitment to peace and nonviolence. Remarrying in 2015, his wife Denise started to attend community gatherings and Associate meetings with him. She became an Associate in 2024 and now, together, they pray and support the Clinton Franciscan corporate stands and other causes to effect positive change in society. Bob shares, ***"What has been valuable to me as an Associate has been meeting new people that I could pray with for many important intentions. I also enjoy participating in various programs with the Sisters of St. Francis. It's always enjoyable."***



Bob McCarthy

— Grand Opening of 399 Housing —

After more than a decade of research, planning, opposition, and then construction, the YWCA Empowerment Center's permanent supportive housing unit in Clinton held its grand opening on April 7 with an open house and tours of the new space.

The Sisters of St. Francis are among the loyal supporters of the \$6.9 million first-of-its-kind project — named 399 Housing — which includes 24 apartment units with wraparound, person-centered services. It takes its name from its address, 399 6th Avenue South, to reflect respect for the people who will call it home.

The Sisters of St. Francis called a group of people together more than 10 years ago to address the increasing number of unhoused people in Clinton, forming the Clinton County Housing Coalition. The permanent supportive housing initiative grew out of the group's efforts. "We truly would not be here without them, their vision, and perseverance," said Shannon Sander-Welzien, executive director of YWCA Clinton, in her address at the grand opening.

The goal of 399 Housing is to guide once-homeless tenants toward long-term stability and independence with an apartment and supportive services to assist with their other needs. Residents have access to on-site case management, referrals, and partnerships that address physical and mental health needs, recovery supports, and employment readiness. Low-barrier outreach services — such as showers, laundry, and basic necessities — will help meet immediate needs while building trust and connection. These supports ensure housing is a foundation for dignity, wellness, and opportunity.

The National Housing Trust Fund awarded a historic \$4.4 million for the project, administered by the Iowa Finance Authority. Among other large funders were the City of Clinton and the Clinton County Board of Supervisors, with each pledging \$500,000 as a one-time award for construction. An anonymous donor pledged \$500,000 towards an operational reserve account for ongoing operations. Federal Home Loan Bank awarded YWCA Clinton \$1.5 million for construction.

"The city and county's investment in this space — offices, community areas, and essential services — means we can truly wrap support around the people who will call this place home. That's a game changer," remarked Sander-Welzien.

Sister Jan Cebula, President of the Sisters of St. Francis, added, "399 Housing is a wonderful addition to the community, especially in the lives of those who will live there. However, work is far from finished. There are many more people in need of affordable and decent housing. The Sisters of St. Francis are committed to keeping up efforts to serve the needs of the Clinton community however we can."



Kitchen & Living Space

Photos courtesy of Randy Meier and used with permission.

— WRAC Construction Progress —

Construction continues on the [Women Religious Archives Collaborative](#) (WRAC) Heritage Center in Cleveland, OH. The monumental staircase is in place! This future focal point of the two-story lobby marks an exciting step as the interior begins to come to life. Following the completion of the staircase, exterior metal stud framing was done and, as shown in the photo, the walls have started to go up.

Construction is expected to be complete by Spring 2027. The Heritage Center will be the permanent home of the Clinton Franciscans archives. It will be open to the public for research, programming, and presentations in person and online.



— Healing Relationships: Webinar Recap —

by Laura Anderson, Director of Digital Outreach and Advocacy, Franciscan Peace Center

What if the antidote to political polarization isn't found in Washington, but in our own living rooms, around our own tables, in the everyday conversations we've been afraid to have?

That was the animating spirit behind **Healing Relationships Through Nonviolent Communication**, a recent webinar hosted by the Franciscan Peace Center and the Tri-State Network. Three remarkable speakers, each approaching the challenge from a different vantage point, offered practical wisdom and renewed hope for a nation that badly needs both.

The conversation centered on a hopeful premise: that ordinary people, equipped with empathy and a commitment to genuine listening, can begin to heal the divisions that have fractured families, friendships, and communities. Political polarization, the speakers affirmed, is not a force beyond our control. It is something we each participate in and something we each have the power to change.

Dianne Prichard, retired teacher, Lutheran pastor, and co-author of *Raising America: Building a More Perfect Union*, reminded listeners that democracy is not a spectator sport. It lives or dies in the quality of our daily conversations. Dr. Christopher Peters, thoracic surgeon and volunteer coordinator for Braver Angels,

drew on years of cross-partisan work to show that bridging divides is not only possible, it is already happening, one relationship at a time. Kathryn Yanik, whose Catholic Civil Dialogue Initiative has brought people of differing views into genuine encounter, offered that compassion and understanding are not weaknesses in political life; they are its highest expression.

The road back to one another may be long. But as this webinar made clear, it begins with a single, courageous step: choosing conversation over silence.

A recording of the webinar is available [HERE](#).

Coming Up Next:

We are thrilled to announce our next webinar, *Healing Relationships Through Art, Love, and Ritual*, on October 15 at 6:00 p.m. CST. Our featured speaker will be Matthew Fox, an internationally acclaimed spiritual theologian, Episcopal priest, and activist. We hope you'll join us!

Registration is available [HERE](#).

— Transforming Grace Conference —

Sister Jan Cebula, President, and Dr. Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning for the Franciscan Peace Center, gathered in St. Louis, May 4-7, with some 250 others from around the country. They joined for a meeting of member congregations of the national Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) that focused on the meaning and implications of showing moral courage in these challenging times, and the transformative power of personal connection and understanding.

The meeting, entitled "Transforming Grace: Next Steps on the Journey," was attended by elected leaders, justice promoters, and communications staff. It featured presentations by thought leaders from diverse backgrounds, including Episcopal Bishop Marianne Budde, the first female bishop of Washington; David Spicer, policy adviser in the Department of Migration and Refugee Services at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Michelle Sardone, deputy director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); E.J. Dionne, columnist with the *New York Times*; and Irshad Manji, educator, author, and founder of Moral Courage College.

Woven through all the presentations were common threads of empathy, how to learn effective ways to connect with those with whom we have differing views, and the importance of finding common ground in order to facilitate true understanding. Those in attendance were there to learn and find ways for their congregation to enliven the messages of the conference.



Dr. Jennifer Kryszak and Sister Jan Cebula



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