



Sisters of
Benet Hill
Monastery

The Review

Volume 62, No.1
Spring/Summer 2024

Loving God, you are present in all creation, in all that separates us, and in the invitation to build bridges of relationship.



Kaleidoscope of Life © Frankie Dutil, CSJ,
www.ministryofthearts.org.
Used with permission.

Introducing
Transformation

Letter

from the prioress

Dear Wonderful Friends,

The lovely art piece by Frankie Dutil, CSJ on the cover has drawn me back to a retreat where I was blessed to touch the mystery of God through art. One day we made a kaleidoscope, and I learned about the importance of light. The more intense the radiance of the light, the more profound were the designs, patterns, colors, and inspiration.

From this simple PVC pipe with mirrors and broken pieces of colored glass inside, I realized that I am like a kaleidoscope. I am just a pipe, a humble conduit of God's life flowing through me. My personal brokenness is changed by the colors that God's light creates. This awareness teaches detachment, helping me embrace the great mystery of evolution in all creation and the reality of the ever-changing nature of life. Letting go of certainty in life is a grace! Letting go blesses us with infinite possibilities of more magnificent patterns, beauty, and colors along with new insights, growth, balance, and harmony. Letting go can shift thoughts, behaviors and demeanor.

This kaleidoscope symbol beautifully fits with our community's commitment to participate in a program entitled Transformative Grace: the work of transformative justice. Transformative justice is a way of living into the gospel call at a critical juncture in human history. Of being aware that the world's future depends upon the decisions, attitudes, and actions that we make this year and in the very near future. Transformative justice requires us to detach from our long-held prejudices, uninformed opinions, and impulsive reactions.

We traveled recently to Pittsburgh as leader (me), communicator (Ruth Roland), and justice promoter (Sister Jan) to gather with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) staff and 85 other communities committed to this work of transformation. We were asked to answer two questions individually and as a community: What is ours to do? How are we to be?

The keynote speaker at our gathering was Sister Chris Koellhoffer IHM. She offered these words of motivating wisdom to us as individuals: "Let us create together a field of healing presence by giving full conscious attention to the person in front of us. Let that person know they are being heard because it's like feeling loved. Pray, meditate, and send forth love into the world. Brain wave studies show that the vibration from our brains go to other brain waves and influence outcomes of conversations."

Chris counseled us to not get stuck in worrying about outcomes. "Start by dwelling in openness and possibilities. Imagine the possibility of transforming consciousness. Be a conduit of the reign of God's love that is already breaking forth."

I particularly appreciated Chris' wisdom on ways to deepen our consciousness of the presence of God in our daily lives. She suggested blessing the space for our meetings, pausing and breathing before responding, listening to understand rather than to respond, and acting with intention to inspire God's love.

We know that the slightest movement of a kaleidoscope brings new patterns. So too for us as we intentionally move toward contemplative consciousness. This intentionality allows the radiance of God's life, love, way, and truth to pass through the colors of our innate goodness. This poem, *Life is a Kaleidoscope*, by Linda Montgomery describes it so well.

*Changing patterns,
changing concepts,
changing colors,
the kaleidoscope of my being is shifting.*

*New life is emerging.
There is struggle, change, transformation.*

*I am called to let go of the past.
I am drawn into the newness of this moment,
to see the beauty of each
kaleidoscopic pattern,
to acknowledge the gift of each experience,
and to let it go.*

*I am reminded of God's loving presence.
If I live in the consciousness of love,
each moment can be more
beautiful than the last.*

*I am called to acknowledge these gifts.
Each lesson, each experience, allows
me to become something greater.*

*My life is a kaleidoscope
of changing thoughts and patterns,
evolving into a multi-faceted perspective.*

*Then the colored glass
becomes precious gifts of joy and truth,
harmony and balance.
Rearranging themselves
it can stretch and expand and
reach for New Life.*

I invite you to join us in our commitment to embrace our responsibility to make choices that support the good of all life on this planet. Walk beside us as we engage in practices and processes that foster the needed evolution of consciousness from Us vs. Them thinking that causes polarization. Let us together integrate the work of justice into every aspect of our lives so that we may navigate and heal the polarization in homes, countries, nations and across our world.

Sister Marie Therese "MT" Summers, OSB
Prioress



Sister M. Phyllis Echterling, OSB

May 31, 1932 – February 9, 2024

Sister Mary Phyllis Echterling died peacefully at Benet Hill Monastery on February 9, 2024. She was preceded in death by her mother Ruby Marie and her father Julius Echterling, brother Edward and sisters Mary Lewis and Betty Lewis. Sister Phyllis is survived by her sister Helen Welch.

She was born in Conception Junction, MO on May 9, 1932, and grew up on a family farm in Marysville, MO. As a young child, she knew that she was called by God to be a sister and remembered her dad as supportive of her vocation. She attended high school at Mt. St. Scholastica Academy in Atchison, KS, which reinforced her call to religious life. She entered St. Scholastica Convent in 1950 and made her final monastic profession on January 1, 1955.

Sister Phyllis was an elementary teacher, serving in KS, IA, MO, and CO, and a Head Start teacher in Walsenburg, CO. The 1960s brought many changes to her life, when she became a charter member of Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs. She was one of several sisters who spent the summer of 1963 cleaning and preparing for seventy-seven sisters to journey from Atchison to establish the new monastery.

Sister Phyllis became the Food Manager and a cook at the new Benet Hill Academy for high school aged girls. Later, Sister Phyllis was asked to enter a nursing program, and this new ministry brought

everything together for her. She said, "...my life was a puzzle with a missing piece. After I started nursing, I found the missing piece and completed the puzzle. I am excited about serving my sisters in this capacity, especially since I get so much personal wisdom from the wisdom of the sisters I serve." Sister Phyllis ministered as a Certified Nursing Assistant in Missouri, Wyoming, and Colorado, and served as the Nursing Supervisor for the monastery.

Later in life, Sister Phyllis started a new ministry: "I acquire stuffed animals and then distribute them to adults or children who visit the monastery. They or their loved ones will benefit and take comfort from having one of the stuffed animals. Something so simple can bring so much joy to another."

Sister Phyllis is remembered for the joy, compassion, and comfort that she brought to so many lives. She is also remembered for her playfulness and love for ice cream. Most of all, we remember Sister Phyllis for her deep love for God and her community.



Transformation through beautiful liturgy

By Sarah Groh
Liturgist

It is with much humility and gratitude that I find myself in the wonderful opportunity as the next Liturgist of Benet Hill Monastery. A path was laid by Sister Anne Stedman and Sister Mary Jane Vigil as past Liturgists of this community. Their insight, experience, musical ability, and care for the liturgy as it moves into our future has allowed me to step in gracefully with their support. Each week, I meet with Sister MT Summers, Prioress, for direction and with Sister Anne for her vast knowledge of music choices. I also meet regularly with the monastery's Liturgy Team. I thank God for both the community that has embraced me and the gifts of service I offer each day.

I am excited to be here and working on liturgy planning, playing, and singing for this community. Over the last 17 years, I have been connecting with Benet Hill through spiritual direction, music, and retreats. My commitment to St Benedict's Ora et labora (pray and work) has begun as I have been assigned my own books and chair for Liturgy of the Hours!

As we plan liturgy for 2024-2025, we invite new singers to join Schola, our monastery choir. We are a "community within the community" supporting the transforming journey of this worshiping assembly as they seek a deeper understanding and connection with God and with themselves. We provide music for two liturgical seasons (Advent/Christmas and Triduum/Easter), not year-round. However, it is super important to understand and make the commitment for Advent/Christmas and Triduum/Easter so that we have a blended sound and cohesive group. If you would like to become a member of the Schola for one or two of these seasons, we welcome you to the events we are planning!

- 1 This summer, we will have a Schola Retreat to go over what it is to be a member of Schola, dates for rehearsal, commitments, music reading, listening, and expectations. We will also be signing singers up for the Advent Rehearsal that begins in October 2024.
- 2 In the fall, we will have a Schola Rehearsal Kickoff Dinner. This event will include dinner, fellowship, and some rehearsal of the Advent season music.

Please watch for these dates announced in the newsletters, emails, and during mass. You are always welcome to ask me questions on Sunday or by email: liturgy@benethillmonastery.org.

Thank you for your support as we move together and continue our planning of beautiful liturgies. I pray that our work together may be pleasing to God and contribute to the work of God's Holy Church. Peace.



Transforming by reading the signs of the time

As a Benedictine monastic community formed during the Vatican II Council (1962 – 1965), the sisters take very seriously their responsibility to “read the signs of the time” to inform their work in the world. This phrase comes from Matthew 16:3 and Luke 12:56 and was used by Pope John XXIII when he convoked the council, in the statement *Humanae Salutis* (1961) and also in *Pacem in Terris* (1963). In Latin, the phrase is *Signa Temporis*.

What does it mean to say the Church reads the signs of the times? It means that we who are the Church have the responsibility of looking at the particular circumstances of each generation and of interpreting them in the light of the Scriptures, Catholic Social Teaching, and Catholic Tradition. And, we are to do this before responding in any way!

The sisters are now retired from active careers, but the daily work of their hands (*ora et labora*) still includes being well-informed about important issues of our time. This work includes reading a variety of sources, individual prayer and reflection, and community discernment. Their response to issues takes many forms: a prayer and liturgy focus, an action, an invitation for the broader Benet Hill community to learn and act, or a public statement or action.

At a January community meeting, the sisters discerned what is theirs to do in this time of intense polarization in the world. They voted to join the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) program *Transforming Grace*: the work of Transformative Justice. This program provides resources to ground participants in contemplation and to learn the skills and practices that will lead to decision-making and action that leads to being in right relationship with Earth and all human persons.

They subsequently offered a 5-week study opportunity during Lent for the sisters and broader community to learn these skills and practices. Wow! It’s fair to say that everyone who attended these lively sessions left better informed, challenged, and equipped with some new skills for listening deeply. There is still work to be done to create an environment and format to foster and practice deep listening skills - it’s not easy to switch from “listening to respond” to “listening to learn!”

In April, Sisters MT and Jan traveled with staff member Ruth Roland to Pittsburgh at an LCWR gathering of 85 religious women communities who are participating in the work of *Transforming Grace*. It was a phenomenal learning experience, and they returned inspired and hopeful for this work.

They are looking forward to forming a task force of sisters, staff, oblates, and other engaged community members to carry this important work forward.

During Holy Week, the sisters discerned about another sign of the time: making a statement advocating for an immediate, sustained and bi-lateral ceasefire between warring parties in the Middle East and joining the Franciscan Action Network’s *Christians for Ceasefire Campaign*. At Easter Sunday evening vespers, they approved a public statement and officially joined the ceasefire campaign. On April 15, the sisters co-led a Prayer Service of Lament, Hope and Action for a Ceasefire with First Congregational Church UCC at their downtown location. It was a powerful service and a call to action for Christians everywhere.

The sisters invite you to learn more about their *Signa Temporis* work by going to their website. The interactive study guides from the five Lenten sessions on *Transforming Grace* are available to you as well as the full ceasefire statement and the news article about the Prayer Service. If you’d care to learn more, email Sister Jan Ginzkey, Justice Promoter, or Ruth Roland, Director of Mission Advancement.



Scan to see the Study Guides, Statement, and News Article or reach out to sjan@benethillmonastery.org or rroland@benethillmonastery.org.



Transforming by retreating or volunteering

by Sally Rothstein,
Director of Operations

When I ask people about their retreat experience staying in the pine forest at Benet Hill Monastery, they often bring their hands to their heart and exclaim “Oh! It is so peaceful here.” They usually say they’ll be back for another retreat, and we’re delighted when many can do just that.

This consistent response from retreatants finds me pondering why this place, these 100 acres of pine forest just off CO 83, is a place where so many find peace? I’ve been pondering this myself, along with how the ‘spirit of a place’ is a real and palpable experience.

Does the spirit of this place come through the wind in the trees, whispering its memories of all the living creatures that walked here in the past? Is it sensed from the indigenous people who once freely migrated through the forest, leaving their mysteries for us to ponder today? Do the birds from their perches keep a mindful watch over the comings and goings of the current residents and visitors? Do the trees radiate peace knowing the sisters, as passionate stewards and inhabitants of this land, will protect them and their offspring?

How does the Benedictine vow of stability that the sisters professed during their final vows contribute to the spirit of this place? Benedictines take a vow of stability to a place and to the people living and visiting there and to the creatures and to the flora and fauna. Benedict was present at the fall of Rome in 476 CE and was deeply affected by the destruction of the city and its people. In his Rule, he set down the wisdom of the Benedictine path to root in a place, to know it, to come to understand the ecology and seasons, and to live in harmony with the environment and the people residing there. The sisters have faithfully lived this Benedictine way of life for so long and have carefully stewarded this place according to these monastic values. I imagine the wisdom of the land, the forest, and the Benedictine monastic way of life have naturally merged into the tangible presence of peace, adding to all that has contributed before the sisters.



How does the spirit of this place sense the transformation that Divine Love is even now revealing about the future of Mother Earth? How does the constant presence of individuals seeking and practicing transformation through retreats, spiritual direction, centering prayer, a forest walk, or worship, add to the transformation toward wholeness with the Divine? Is this sacred place and energy contributing to a cosmic shift?

I continue to wonder.

A song came to me this morning and I smiled at its simplicity and leaned once again into its truth. Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

Yes, let it begin with each of us and all of us. Wherever you are on your life’s journey, please do come. All are welcome. And our collective listening and learning will continue to become the spirit of this place.



Explore retreating at Benet Hill.

You may have heard of the book by Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. Chapman, a marriage counselor, felt called to write his book after watching couples transform their marriage from bad to a more loving relationship through an awareness of their communication styles for expressing love.

One of the five love languages is “acts of service.” This love in action language is heard quite often at Benet Hill Monastery from the community of oblates, friends, family, employees, worshipers, and neighbors who volunteer at the monastery or at Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique.

Let’s just be real and acknowledge that religious women sometimes have a hard time asking for help. For years they’ve shoveled sidewalks, plowed roads, tended to the flower beds and forest, cooked, cared for ill sisters, and drove to appointments – all while holding down jobs and leading ministries. They are strong, independent women who are used to doing it all and doing it for others. They have always been doers not receivers but getting older, as the saying goes, is not for the weak of heart.

Are you someone who has time or skills to offer in the name of love? The language of acts of service transforms both the giver and the receiver. It creates a deeper, more loving relationship.



We would love to hear from you about volunteering as a:

- Driver to medical appointments and other outings (some maybe even just for fun!)
- Kitchen helper, regularly scheduled or on-call
- Forest worker on July 13, August 17, or September 14
- Sunday morning greeter
- Hospitality helper for Cinnamon Roll Sundays
- Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique volunteer



Complete the volunteer interest form and Sally Rothstein, Director of Operations, or Sister Clare Carr, Assistant Prioress, will respond to you!

To inquire about volunteering at Sisters’ Thrift & Boutique, call Shari Middlemist or Judy Haefner, Senior Managers, at (719) 282-0316.



Transforming through study and formation

Please keep our Oblate Novices and their families in your prayers as they discern making their final oblation or beginning their oblate formation. You are invited to attend the ceremony in Our Lady of Peace Chapel on Sunday, July 14 as we welcome them all into the extended Benet Hill community.

Oblates are adults who desire to seek God by living in harmony with the spirit of Saint Benedict as revealed in the Rule of St. Benedict and its contemporary expressions. Oblates of St. Benedict offer themselves for service to God and others. By integrating prayer and work, they manifest Christ's presence in the world through their own families, friends, and work relationships. The oblates also form a community among themselves and the sisters.

These 2023 oblate novices who live in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Wyoming and Australia have spent the last year engaging in study with each other once a month and in private on a daily basis. All desire to deepen their spiritual relationships. They include a:

- » Retired university educator
- » New university graduate
- » Retired Ph.D in forest genetics
- » Catholic high school theology educator
- » University educator on break while raising children
- » Medical doctor
- » Chaplain to first responders
- » Registered nurse

- » Businessperson who travels extensively
- » Admirer of Keating, Merton, and Richard Rohr with a call to serve those without housing

These 2024 oblate novices who live in Colorado, Mississippi, and Texas will soon begin their formation, and we so look forward to knowing them better. They are seeking deeper connections to others and to God. They include an:

- » Episcopal priest
- » Entrepreneur
- » Spiritual directors
- » Pastor
- » Parish worker
- » Ph.D in public health
- » Helper to nursing homes and migrants
- » Chaplain
- » Administrator and designer seeking community with a deeper connection to other believers



Learn more about Benet Hill Oblates.

Vincent Crowder, OblOSB was living in Boulder in 2013 and attending First Congregational Church UCC when he first heard about Benet Hill Monastery. Vincent remembers sharing with Rev. Marti McMane his feeling of being called to serve others in some way. Marti taught the enneagram portion of the Benedictine Spiritual Formation Program (BSFP) in Denver with Sister Marilyn and was very familiar with Benet Hill. She suggested that he consider training to become a Benedictine Spiritual Director. Vincent recalls, "I told Marti that I was raised in the Southern Baptist Church and had no idea what a spiritual director was!" Soon after, Vincent enrolled in the BSFP program. When his qualifications as a real estate developer became known, Sister Rose Ann tapped Vincent to serve on the monastery's Property & Land Committee.

In 2016, the sisters learned that the 50 acres of pine forest across from Benet Lane with stupendous views of Tava Mountain was for sale. Fearing that a large developer would purchase the land, raze the forest, and build McMansions, the sisters dipped into their retirement savings to purchase the property. Their initial goals were to create an open space buffer around the monastery and to preserve the forest, but they also needed a return on their investment and to replenish their retirement fund.

Shortly before graduating from BSFP in 2017, Vincent dreamed that he was building small, energy-efficient homes at the monastery. Three weeks later while on retreat at Benet Hill, he mentioned his dream to Sister Mary Colleen. "She literally jumped out of her chair and insisted that I talk to the leadership team about my dream." The dream became known as Sanctuary of Peace. The initial goals were to keep much of the 50 acres untouched while developing a community for lay people with a monastic spirit.

The sisters told Vincent that to be successful at developing this community, he needed to experience living in community. On September 5, 2017, Vincent moved into the 220 sq ft hermitage named Jesu Rama (Jesus' Room) on the monastery grounds.



Vincent laughed, "I had never had a bedroom this small let alone an entire house this tiny! This move required me to simplify my life and I so needed that. When I stepped across the threshold for the first time, I heard the scripture phrase 'my grace is sufficient for all your needs.' Residing here has been transformative for me. The spirit of all the retreatants who have lived here in the past is palpable."

Four years of meetings, planning, testing, approvals, a global pandemic, and supply chain delays followed before the infrastructure project broke ground on June 19, 2021. Three more years have passed but Phase 1 (twelve homes in six duplex structures) will be completed and sold by the end of June 2024. Phase 2 (six homes in three duplex structures) will begin this summer.

Looking back, Vincent sees the Holy Spirit moving throughout the project. First, in the confirmation of his dream by Sister Mary Colleen. Second, in the way that people from all over the country have heard of Sanctuary of Peace and purchased homes though the project hasn't been advertised. Third, in the creative ways that water and wastewater rights issues were resolved without spending millions of dollars. Fourth, in how professionals in the development community have backed this project and helped in any way that they could.

The sisters add one more move the Holy Spirit made – bringing Vincent and his heart for service to Benet Hill Monastery!



Transforming by expanding the community

New Sanctuary of Peace neighbor Kathleen Emry has always wanted to go deep with people.

A Washington state native, she completed a master's degree in ministry in 1986 after a practicum as chaplain at Harborview Hospital in Seattle. "I loved being present and holding space for people but was uncomfortable sharing a prayer or even divulging a miniscule of my own spirituality. Yet, I could feel in my bones that ministry work was my life work. This Catholic program was helping me claim my queerness yet paradoxically I realized that ministry work within the walls of the institutional church would demand being back in the closet."

She floundered a bit until she took a bike repair class and realized that she was good with her hands and that repairing bikes was tangible and satisfying work. Ten years later, she opened FreeRange Cycles (the logo was a chicken with dreadlocks on a bicycle) and morphed into the "Bike Lady" of Seattle's Fremont District. It was highly unusual in those days, even in Seattle, for a woman to own a bike shop. The shop became a neighborhood sanctuary, including for members of the growing Seattle houseless community. It became a place where Kathleen could be authentically herself and go deep with people.

Kathleen attended a Catholic Women's Conference in 2013 and left it knowing that she wanted to become a spiritual director. A friend found the online Benedictine Spiritual Director Training & Certification program at Benet Hill and Kathleen called about applying. No one called her back. It was the summer of the Black Forest fire, and the sisters were otherwise engaged. But eventually Kathleen did learn that she had been accepted into the online program.

"I did the online program and first visited Benet Hill for graduation in 2015. My program companion Mary Ann Spiker told me that I needed to talk to Vincent Crowder about the Sanctuary of Peace co-housing

community. I thought it was an interesting idea, but I still had the bike shop and was anchored in Seattle." But when Sister Mary Colleen asked Kathleen to become a student companion in the program, her connection to Benet Hill grew. She began to seriously consider becoming an oblate of Benet Hill and moving to Colorado.

Needing a break from the bike shop, Kathleen went on a bike pilgrimage from St. Bernard Pass in Switzerland to Rome. She returned to Seattle knowing that it was time to let go of the bike shop and determined to do a weeklong discernment about Sanctuary of Peace.

During her week of discernment, Kathleen experienced something each day that pointed her to saying yes to Sanctuary of Peace. These signs included comforting visions of her mother holding her while combing her hair and her father tenderly cradling her in his arms. She interpreted all of this as indicators to say yes to this space that promised comfort.

And so, Kathleen now resides on Promise Point in the Sanctuary of Peace! She has become a Benet Hill Oblate, volunteer director of Benet Gifts, and a source of a lot of fun revolving around ping pong and card games (she says that fun is her middle name). The tag line on her spiritual director business card is "Unpredict your Journey" – let go of control and let life unfold. It's a motto she definitely follows herself.



by Sister MT Summers, OSB

These are exciting times for the sisters as the first residents of the Sanctuary of Peace are moving in and living in the pine forest.

When this land became available, the sisters decided to purchase it after a short, intense period of prayerful discernment. We trusted that God, who has walked with us since we arrived in Colorado, would create something good from those 50 acres. Eight years later, after countless meetings and thousands of hours of hard work from our wonderful managing director, Vincent Crowder, the development of a community Land Ethic, a global pandemic and massive supply chain problems, the Sanctuary of Peace is a reality. Alleluia!

Our first phase of 12 units is coming to completion with our new neighbors moving in every two weeks through mid-June. The homes are elegantly beautiful and in alignment with our Land Ethic. Vincent has done an amazing job in managing this challenging development plan from the large picture of conception to the tiniest details in each home.



This reality moves us forward in preparing for the next phases of development. For a variety of reasons, we decided on a phase two and phase three approach. In Phase two we will be constructing 6 units, 4 C Models and 2 B Models. We are pleased to have five "purchase reservations" for these six, and we hope to start pouring foundations by the end of June, early July.

Once phase two is completed in early 2025, we will begin the final phase of the remaining 8 units. These homes are attractive, and we frequently receive calls from interested buyers. If you wish to be part of creating this vibrant, caring community with 26 residents at Sanctuary of Peace, with 19 sisters from our monastery as welcoming hospitable neighbors, and more great neighbors on Benet Lane, you may want to contact Vincent soon. We plan to have periodic neighborhood gatherings and imagine caring for our mutual home in the pine trees together.

If you are interested in the final nine units, please contact Vincent Crowder at 719-355-1639 or VCrowder@benethillmonastery.org.



Transforming through service to others

Sister Evangeline Salazar, OSB



The wider Benet Hill community knows and responds to the gospel mandate found in Matthew 25 to see Christ in people who are strangers and hungry.

To honor the Sisters of Benet Hill during Catholic Sisters' Week (March 8 – 14), the worshipping community at the monastery and the shoppers at Sisters' Thrift & Boutique stuffed a truck with supplies

for the food pantries hosted by Westside Cares. In addition, Westside Cares received nearly \$3,000 in donations in honor of the sisters!

Thank you for continuing to honor the sisters in this way.

Earlier this year, my 30-year-old grandnephew Eric Salazar stepped out of the Seventh Circle Music Collective, 2935 W. 7th Ave, Denver, Colorado and encountered a bus load of immigrants. They had just been dropped on the street by representatives of the Texas Governor. It was snowing in Denver and the immigrants were dressed in summer clothing. Eric called his mother, who speaks fluent Spanish, to help him. The 200 immigrants had been on the bus for 10 hours without food, water, or proper winter attire. Eric gave his coat, gloves, and hat to one of the men and returned into the collective to ask his friends to contribute their coats to the people standing in the cold. They also gathered pitchers and cups of water, ordered pizza, and called one of the ten centers in Denver to shelter the immigrants.

Eric and a friend immediately organized a coat and food drive; he called me because he knew of my work with immigrants. The next Sunday after worship, I made an announcement, asking the Benet Hill community for contributions. We collected over \$500.00 and four van loads and at least one carload of winter clothing that were delivered by faithful volunteers. We clothed and fed the immigrants at the Collective and delivered winter coats and jackets to the Samaritan House, several shelters in Denver plus the Springs Rescue Mission in Colorado Springs.

I am so proud of my grandnephew Eric Salazar, his parents, my nephew Robert and his wife Francie, and my Benedictine community for stepping up and supporting the immigrants. In my vocation to serve immigrants to this country, the strangers among us, I have worked with Casa de Paz in Denver, Annunciation House in El Paso, and Catholic Charities in Albuquerque. Today, I continue to work with Spring Rescue Mission and the Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition in Colorado Springs. If you'd like to learn the real-life stories of immigrants, instead of reading another news headline that makes a political point, I'd love to talk with you.

Email Sister Evangeline at svangie@benethillmonastery.org.





Transforming through care of creation...

Benet Hill Oblate Rii Atha Saaby approached the sisters earlier this year about the possibility of a joint venture between Benet Hill and Compassion-in-Action, Inc. (CnA) to pack area food pantries with peanut butter. CnA is a Colorado 501(c)3 tax exempt corporation founded in 2017. Labor and other costs are all donated by their volunteers. Rii proposed that CnA would match up to 1,000 16 oz jars of peanut butter (or an equivalent \$2 gift) donated by the wider Benet Hill community. We agreed to make the first Sundays of each month Peanut Butter Sunday at Benet Hill. The response has been overwhelming already with only one month of participation. Thank you Rii, CnA, and dear friends of Benet Hill!

Sister Jan Ginzkey, OSB is passionate about educating others on caring for and taking action to bring all creation back to right relationship with Mother Earth. Director of Operations Sally Rothstein connected the monastery with Mike Mazzola, founder of Galvanize Recycling. Mike created Galvanize in response to the low 15% recycling rate in Colorado Springs to increase

recycling and to repurpose recycled materials into usable products.

During Earth Day (April 22) week, the sisters prayed and learned about additional recycling opportunities for “stretchy plastic” and the need to reduce overall consumption of single use plastics, much of which is not recyclable. Sally challenged sisters and employees to “Stuff the Bin” with stretchy plastic for one week, just to see how much accumulated. Wow! It was amazing how much plastic we gathered in just one week.

The sisters have signed up with Galvanize Recycling to take our stretchy plastic to a manufacturer that uses it to create outdoor decking material. The sisters are pleased to expand their recycling program with Mike’s help and to continue to find ways to reduce plastic use.



Check out Galvanize Recycling.

...and aging well



The sisters continue to enjoy the many benefits of collaborating with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs students and faculty as a community nursing rotation and Innovative Aging Center. Weekly movement, balance, and fun classes include meditation, exercise, and brain puzzlers like the now infamous Bible Quiz Puzzler that only included 9 commands on the whiteboards, not 10. That’s probably why no one figured out that the answer was The Ten Commandments!

The sisters also look forward to informative presentations on topics such as nutrition. Thanks to Support Our Aging Religious Foundation for their generous grant that helps the sisters continue to age well in place at Benet Hill Monastery.



Transforming by living in community



We pray for those who have lost loved ones

Compiled by
Sister Lucile Hartmann, OSB



**Sister Clare Carr, OSB and the Carr family
Brother, Scott Carr**

"Our Scott died on January 31, 2024, at the age of 63. He was an intelligent and courageous man who overcame everything life threw at him, including his muscular dystrophy. Scott conquered all with a scowl on his face and his love for the challenge."



Carolena Steen, Ph.D, BHA '79, the Steen family, Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery and Alumnae

Maria Sergia Steen, Spanish Teacher at Benet Hill Academy and Professor Emerita of Spanish Languages & Culture, University of Colorado Colorado Springs



**Anne (Elbert) McMullen, BHA '74 and the McMullen family
Husband and father, Ernie McMullen**

**Sister Evangeline Salazar, OSB and the Salazar and Rush families
Nephew, Shane Rush**

"My sister Viola's son Shane died at age 52 of cancer. He had a great sense of humor and we could always count on him for a great laugh. He was sensitive, reflective, open to new ideas and always ready to give a helping hand to anyone in need."



**Julie (Witzig) Cozad, BHA '76 and the Witzig family
Step-mother, Phyllis Witzig**

**The Green family, Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery and Alumnae
Pat Green, an Art Teacher at Benet Hill Academy**

**Theresa (Augustin) Bliss, BHA '73 and the Henkel family
Sister, Mariama Nanette (Augustin) Henkel**



Explore memorial service and columbarium options at Benet Hill Monastery.





Sisters of
**Benet Hill
Monastery**

3190 Benet Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80921-1509

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2882
DENVER, CO



Sisters of
**Benet Hill
Monastery**

The Review

For there is still a vision
for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end,
and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry,
wait for it;
It will surely come,
it will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:3