

September – December 2023

The Essence of Assisi

Blessed Ash

Vol. 14, No. 1



Assisi Heights Spirituality Center

Rochester, MN 55901
1001 14th Street NW

www.rochesterfranciscan.org

Welcome

Blessed Ash

There is a pall blanketing the country these days. And it is everywhere. Where can a soul go to breathe? Depression effects our soul's DNA. Shall we just close our eyes and it will all be good again?

As the planet warms, air cries out. It seeps, creeps, drifts, blows and storms. Forest fires keep on giving, long after the coals cool. Particles of ash take flight, riding on our beloved Brother Wind. You can't take him to lunch or reach out and touch him, but you can feel him! He holds no shape and his behavior is unpredictable. He has many moods. He can gently embrace you, or he can fling the life out of you. Air with ash does not discriminate. It is untamed and does not stop at the door or even ask directions. It makes its own path.

From the grasp of our initial breath to our final gasp of air, it is intimately connected to its mission of delivering God's breath and fulfilling its function to give life. Once initiated, this breath does not pause or take a vacation, but remains regular, till the last farewell.

Air is now polluted and harmful. Yet air is anointed as the food for the soul. It is the inner connectedness to the ebb and flow of the spiritual life. It thrives on the quiet rhythm of God. Our souls are nourished and christened with air in the gentle, still, quiet in the temple or the cathedral of nature's gifts out of doors. Spirituality is about breath of the spirit. It's life gift to be explored, nurtured and deepened. It is about the inner journey going deeper, going inward of finding the ultimate meaning in an integration of the fragmented strands of our life. This air seeps and creeps in tiny cavities bearing numerous gifts of love, patience joy, kindness and faithfulness.

The Assisi Heights Spirituality Center invites you to breathe the air of invitation to the programs and events that connect their mission of renewing God's life in you.

P.S. Please note our new section on Tours, found on pages 26-27.



Sister Marlys Jax
Program Coordinator
Assisi Heights Spirituality
Center



The Assisi Heights Spirituality Center (AHSC) offers spiritual and educational programs which reflect the mission of the Sisters of Saint Francis “to be a compassionate presence for peace in our world, striving for justice and reverence for all creation” by providing a place of hope, prayer, reflection, and enrichment.

AHSC is located in beautiful Assisi Heights, home of the Sisters of Saint Francis. Assisi Heights Spirituality Center provides a sacred space for individuals or groups. We are open to all faith traditions.

On our website, www.rochesterfranciscan.org, you can:

- View all the events sponsored by Assisi Heights Spirituality Center.
- Register and pay for a retreat online.
- Make an online donation to the Spirituality Center.
- Get directions to Assisi Heights.
- Learn about personal spiritual direction.
- Sign up to receive email notices of upcoming programs.
- Send an email to make suggestions for future speakers/programs.

Things to know:

Registration

Registration for Assisi Heights Spirituality Center events may be completed online. Please visit our website at www.rochesterfranciscan.org and select the “Events” category. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover for all online registrations and require payment in full. If you would like to pay by check or cash, please register by email at ahsc@rochesterfranciscan.org, by phone at 507-280-2195, or mail in the enclosed form. If questions, contact the AHSC Event Coordinator at 507-280-2195 or ahsc@rochesterfranciscan.org.

Deadlines

Please pay special attention to our program and retreat dates. Advance registration helps us make important decisions regarding our programs and retreats, including seating arrangements.

Cancellation

When an event is cancelled by the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center, your registration fee will be refunded in full.

Scholarships

Scholarships may be available to help offset the cost of a program or retreat. Please email AHSC Event Coordinator at ahsc@rochesterfranciscan.org or call 507-280-2195 to inquire about scholarship availability.

Program titles containing (Via Zoom), please read below:

If you have never used Zoom, it is very important to download the Zoom application on your computer/device IN ADVANCE.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a video for instructions, or type: <https://learn-zoom.us/show-me> into your search bar.

Select the video: “Join a Meeting.”

You will be sent a Zoom link via email prior to the event. If you are first time Zoom user, you will first need to download the software application on your computer/device. Zoom is free to download. All persons have to do this the first time you use Zoom on that computer/device. After that, you will only need to sign in with your email.

Program titles containing (Outdoor Program), please read below:

Events taking place outdoors will be held in Assisi Heights Canticle Park & the surrounding grounds. Please park in the Canticle Park parking lot (parking map included on page 28) & join the group in the grassy area. Participants should refrain from attending if experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness or have been exposed to any persons infected with COVID-19. (Event is subject to updated COVID-19 guidelines.)

PLEASE NOTE: As of this printing, masks are optional for in-person attendance. You will be asked to answer COVID pre-screening questions upon arrival. Also, in the case of future outbreaks or large exposure events, more restrictive measures (such as masking) may be put back in place as a means to prevent the spread. We appreciate your understanding!





Image courtesy of Pixabay

Sound Bath – Relax, Release, and Renew Yourself by Listening to Sound

September 7, 6:00-7:00pm (Central Time)

Location: Canticle Park, Assisi Heights

\$8 Preregistered/prepaid.

Register by September 6.

[Click here](#) to register.

Enjoy yourself for an hour as you listen to soothing sounds. Lie or sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes, and listen to sounds as they wash over you. The only thing required to participate in a sound bath is a comfortable position--no special clothing, no musical instruments, no equipment. (You may want to bring a mat, pillow, and knee support if lying down or a comfortable chair if sitting.)

The sound bath performer creates sounds using a variety of instruments like Tibetan bowls, tongue drums, chimes, Native American style drums, flute, rattles and other instruments.

Each person will have their own unique benefits and experience during and after a sound bath. A sound bath may help relieve stress, fatigue, pain, depression and anxiety symptoms or alleviate confusion, tension, and anger. Also, a sound bath may improve mood, sleep and physical symptoms such as blood pressure and heart rate. The possibilities for how a sound bath may support or help you is as numerous as there are songs. Give yourself the gift of relaxing, releasing, and renewing by listening to soothing sound!

Bring a chair or mat. In the event of inclement weather, the session may be rescheduled. Please check for updates prior to the session.

Patty Stupca is a sound bath performer, an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher, and a Reiki practitioner. She enjoys connecting to nature by gardening and hiking.

Be Scam Alert! Internet Safety

**September 9, 9:30-10:30am
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

**Preregistration is requested by
September 8.**

No fee. Donations appreciated.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Based on AARP guidelines, learn to recognize scams and fraudulent offers when you see them. Due to modern technology, we are vulnerable online, through email, mail delivery, on the phone or door-to-door. This presentation will help you recognize shady or misleading offers and how they impersonate more trusted sources like the sheriff's office or the IRS. Scammers will keep succeeding until we all know their methods and stop them in their tracks.

Kim Jaworski is a volunteer at Assisi Heights. She has had a lifelong interest in helping seniors adapt to technology's rapidly changing landscape. She is committed to make this learning process both beneficial and fun at the same time.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Forest Bathing

**September 11, 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Rain date: September 18, 6:30-7:30pm

Location: Canticle Park, Assisi Heights

\$15 Preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by September 10.

[Click here](#) to register.

Inspired by the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku (forest bathing), this exercise offers potential benefits for mind, body and spirit. Experience the healing and wellness promoting effects as you connect with nature's gifts on the beautiful lush grounds of the Sisters of St. Francis at Assisi Heights. Forest bathing is sometimes called Forest Therapy. The practice supports health, wholeness and well-being through guided immersion in forests and other natural environments. It's slow-paced, suitable for all fitness levels and ages. Come dressed appropriately and leave refreshed and renewed!

Sarah Holger is a certified Forest Bathing guide. She is an education guide at Whitewater Park near Altura, MN. Trees are her specialty.

“Resting with the Sky”: Intermediate Meditation

**September 12, 6:00-7:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and Outdoors

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by September 11.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register outdoors.

This meditation is for those who are seeking a type of relaxation that brings calmness of spirit and a feeling of stabilization and an ability to rest in the open-awareness with the sky. It is a mind and body practice, in which a person focuses their attention to a phrase or breathing in an effort to minimize stressful thoughts or feelings. It is often used to improve one's overall health and wellbeing. This meditation will begin with 20 minutes of formal mediation in the Spirituality Center, followed by 20 minutes of conscious relaxation on the ground, as you look up at the sky, allowing your mind, body and spirit to connect with the vastness of the sky. Please bring a mat and a blanket.

Natalie Jo Baker has spent the past 15 years practicing meditation and subtle body relaxation through a variety of modalities. She is authorized to teach meditation through the blessings of Karma Gomchen Rimpoche from the Rumtek Monastery at the University of Calcutta in India. Natalie is a 200+HRCMT certified meditation instructor, living and working in Rochester, MN.

Yoga

**September 13, 20, 27, October
11, 18, 25, 9:30-10:30am
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$55 preregistered/prepaid; \$60 at the door.

Registration requested by September 12.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

The physical practice of yoga helps us to improve our body's strength, flexibility and balance. It also helps our minds, hearts and spirits to become stronger, more flexible, balanced and resilient to the challenges of our daily life. In this class, we will progress through a gentle practice along with some breath work and reflection.

This six-week class is suitable for the adult beginner, as well as those experienced in yoga who wish to deepen their practice. Please bring a yoga mat and towel. This is a six-session series, not a drop-in class.

Patricia Barrier is a registered yoga teacher (E-RYT200/RYT500). She teaches gentle and adaptive yoga, beginner yoga and Vinyasa flow classes at public and private venues in the local area.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



From Mayo Clinic Archives

Meet Edith Graham Mayo and her Diary

**September 14, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: Canticle Park, Assisi Heights (If weather does not permit, we will meet in Walter's Conference Room.)

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by September 13.

[Click here](#) to register.

Edith Graham Mayo was the wife of Dr. Charlie Mayo and Rochester's first professionally trained nurse. She graduated from the Chicago's Women and Children's School of Nursing in 1889. In those days, a new nurse took a job as a

private duty nurse or worked in a doctor's office. Edith got a job working with a Chicago physician. But when she arrived for her first day of work, the doctor took one look at her and said "you're too young and too beautiful" and fired her. But old Dr. William Worrall had no qualms and hired Edith to be his office nurse. In time, he trained her to deliver anesthesia. When the Sisters of St. Francis were opening their hospital, Dr. Will lent Edith to the Sisters to help set up the surgery unit and train the Sisters to be nurses. Edith faithfully kept a detailed journal of her work. This presentation comes alive with "Edith" reading her journal, recalling the early procedures and techniques, how she accomplished her tasks and her reflections about nursing in Rochester. This program will touch your heart!

Diane Wroblewski is a nurse, a health care educator, an archivist, a quilter and a Cojourner with the Sisters of St. Francis.

An Invitation to Mindfulness

**September 20, 27, October 11,
17, 6:00-7:00pm (Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$25 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by September 19.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Embark on a transformational mindfulness journey with this experiential introduction to formal and informal mindfulness

Continued on next page

practices. Explore your inner landscape through guided meditations, direct experience and thoughtful reflection. Reconnect with your innate capacity to be aware in the present moment, intentionally and without judgment.

Paula Smith, co facilitator, was introduced to mindfulness and meditation practices over 40 years ago while studying with Dr. Rita Gross, a student of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. A retired school psychologist, Paula is a Certified Dynamic Mindfulness trainer for Niroga Institute, and currently serves on the boards of Compassion Rochester MN and the Rochester Meditation Center. Paula has previously taught classes in Yoga and Mindfulness for Children, Mindful Self-Compassion and Fierce Self-Compassion.

Cathy Ashton, co facilitator, began mindfulness meditation 30 year ago. She has received training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, CA, where she attends a yearly 9-day silent day retreat. Her current practices include 16 years of teaching meditation, including directing retreats to inmates in the Federal Medical Center. She serves as chairperson of the Compassion Rochester MN Board.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Harvesting the Seasons Wisdom - Fall Retreat

**September 23, 9:00am-2:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$25 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by September 22.

[Click here](#) to register.

Gather at Assisi Heights on the dusk of summer, and dawn of fall, just to reflect and collect the seasons wisdom in your life. Whether you wander a worn foot path or recline silently in the warmth of a summer garden, you cannot escape the notion and mystery of the Divine. Stand by and absorb the celestial allure and find strength and resilient supportive sharing of fellow travelers. The rhythm of the day will include time in nature's cathedral by reflecting, praying, gathering wisdom, journaling, and enacting rituals. They will help solidify meaning and harvest the gifts on hope, expand your potential of self-compassion and generous love, for you to take way and give away.

Sister Linda Wieser will co-facilitate this day. She is a Spiritual Advisor and Life Coach with over 30 years of leading and facilitating soul seminars and reflective retreats.

Kileen Smyth will co-facilitate this retreat with Linda Wieser. She is a Clinical Social Worker, and Therapist at Mayo Clinic, and a Cojourner with the Sisters of St. Francis, invested in developing soul space.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Kiss the Ground – A Documentary Film

**September 25, 2:00-3:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

Registration requested by September 24.

No fee. Donations appreciated.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Kiss the Ground is a stimulating and groundbreaking film that discloses the first feasible solution to the climate changing crisis. *Kiss the Ground* displays that by regenerating the world soils, we can totally and quickly balance and preserve earth's climate to bring back lost ecosystems and generate abundant food supplies. Along with NASA footage and colorful storyboards, the film demonstrates how, by reducing atmospheric carbon, soil is the missing piece in the climate puzzle. Discussion follows.

Season of Creation: Taizé Prayer Service

**September 25, 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

No fee. Donations appreciated.

Registration requested by September 24.

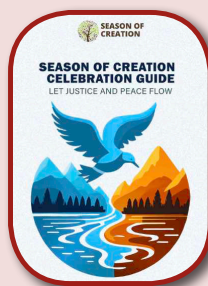
[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Taizé Prayer is a repetitive prayer set to simple music, interspersed with meditation. Meditation is a form of contemplative prayer in which we move beyond words, thoughts and images, and opens us to God's mysterious silence within us. There is no teaching or preaching. It is a series of short chants repeated over and over in low light. Brother John of Taizé says, "It is a time to rest in God and let the words listened to and sung penetrate one's being."

John, a Swiss Brother, initiated this prayer form more than 70 years ago, in the small village of Taizé. As a community of brothers, they emphasize service, ecumenicalism and reconciliation between divided faith traditions.

Facilitated by Rochester Franciscan Sisters and Cojourners. Bruce Rohde, Cojourner will be the accompanist for this ritual.



The Synod: Where are we NOW?

**September 28, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: via Zoom

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Register by September 27.

[Click here](#) to register.

In 2021, Pope Francis called forth a *Synod of Synodality* that is now intended to continue until 2024. As we move through this historic event certain questions arise: Where are we with the process? What have we learned? How will the synod impact the church moving forward?

Dr. Kristin Colberg serves as the only theologian from the United States on the Theological Commission supporting the synod. She had participated in many of the phases of this event and will lead us in reflecting on what the synod hopes to achieve, how it works, and a discussion of what it means for our local communities, the whole church and us.

Kristin Colberg, Ph.D., is an associate professor at Saint John's University and School of Theology and the College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN. She began studying theology as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame. A required class helped her see the ways that a theological tradition helps people make sense of their experiences of God, themselves, and the world. Since that time, she has focused on the question "how can the church speak meaningfully to the questions of modern people?"

Her research and writing related to this question centered in the areas of ecclesiology and ecumenism. She has been appointed by the Vatican as a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the theological commission supporting the Synod on Synodality.

Sound Relaxation Meditation

Session 1:

**September 30, 9:30-10:30am
(Central Time)**

Session 2:

**September 30, 10:30am-Noon
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

**\$20 per session, \$35 for both Sessions,
pre-registered/prepaid.**

Registration requested by September 29.

[Click here](#) to register for Session 1

[Click here](#) to register for Session 2

[Click here](#) to register for Both Sessions

Singing Bowl meditation uses the pure tones of quartz crystal bowls to guide the body into deeper states of calm as a person lays or sits quietly. Singing bowl are a way to feel and maintain a relaxed state of mind, body and spirit. Sound relaxation meditation can be a great starting point for those newer to meditation or support those who have a daily practice. Sustained notes serve as an anchor for mind chatter.

This meditation is indoors while seated on chairs.

Natalie Jo Baker has spent 15 years practicing meditation and subtle body relaxation through a variety of modalities. Natalie has found that Singing Bowls are a way to maintain a relaxed state of mind, body and spirit.

Blessing of Animals

**October 1, 1:30-2:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: Canticle Park, Assisi Heights

No fee. Donations appreciated.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

A Festival of Animals! Bring your feathered, furry or finned companions! Join other animal lovers to celebrate the special grace that pets bring to our community. Whether paws are padded, hooved or webbed – all are welcome!

Arrive with the ‘Top Dog’ or the ‘Purrfect Feline’ and you will leave with your tail waggin’ friend and a blessed attitude. All are winners of a genuine blessing at “Assisi’s Best in Show”!

Rochester Franciscan Animal Whisperers will conduct the blessings in Canticle Park at Assisi Heights.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



Assisi Heights Stained Glass Story

**October 2, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 1.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Stained glass has been admired for its utility and beauty since ancient Rome, when colored glass was assembled in patterned window frames. Emil Frei & Associates created the stained-glass windows at Assisi Heights. This group of artists and crafters were known for their synthesis of theology, art and architecture. In earlier days, windows incorporated biblical scenes, but in 1952, when Assisi Heights was being built, designs were shifting. Innovative designs and variety of new ideas brought about new liturgical landscapes. Emil Frei Jr., the second-generation member, designed the windows for Assisi Heights. Aaron Frei, the fifth generation Frei family member, anchored in St. Louis, MO, will deliver this evening’s presentation.

Reconciliation: From Wounded Knee to Black Elk Peak

**October 9, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 8.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Join us in celebrating National Indigenous Day, discussing how the past paved a new vision for the future. Learn insights and the lived experiences of the First Nation Peoples and Basil Braveheart's search for peaceful, successful reconciliation efforts across the United States.

Valerie De Cora Guimaraes is an enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation with Dakota ancestry. Valerie has a doctorate in nursing practice, with a specialty in Transcultural Nursing Leadership, and works solely with Native American patients at Mayo Clinic. She also has a passion for social justice issues with respect to reconciliation efforts, health equity, and education regarding the Dakota and Ho-Chunk people.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Tai Chi Chih – A Moving Meditation 2023

Fall classes:

Registration requested by October 8.

Beginning Classes:

**Tuesdays, 6:00-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

**October 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7,
14, 28, December 5**

[Click here](#) to register.

\$59 preregistered, prepaid; \$64 at the door

Continuing Classes:

**Tuesdays, 9:00am-10:00am
(Central Time)**

**October 10, 17, 24, 31, November 7,
14, 28, December 5**

[Click here](#) to register.

**Mondays, 6:00pm-7:00pm
(Central Time)**

**October 9, 16, 23, 30, November 6,
13, 20, 27, December 4**

[Click here](#) to register.

\$55 preregistered, prepaid; \$60 at the door

Location: Assisi Heights

Are you looking for calm in your daily routine? Consider circulating and balancing your inner energy or “chi” in the peaceful and serene space at Assisi Heights. The form is composed of nineteen easy, slow moving meditative movements and one pose. People around the world perform this practice for many different benefits.

T'ai Chi Chih is very adaptable and benefits persons of any age or physical condition. It may be done seated or standing and requires no special dress or equipment. You may find yourself enjoying greater flexibility and balance, better general health, more serenity, increased joy and an improved immune system.

This is an 8-session series, not a drop-in class. In the beginner's class, you will learn and practice all 19 movements and the final pose in 8 weeks. The continuing class is for those who have already learned the form and will work on any questions for about 15 minutes, followed by a full practice with the group.

Judy Trousdell is an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor and has been practicing the form herself for many years. She is a regular Instructor at Assisi Heights Spirituality Center.

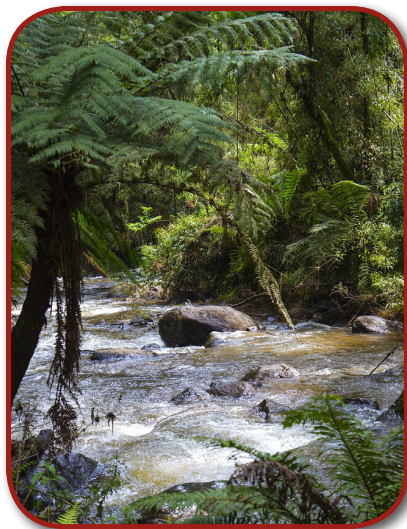


Image courtesy of Pixabay

Little Beauties (and a few BIG ones) at Nelson's Pasture: A Visual Meditation

**October 10, 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 9.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

John Weiss, who has been the outdoor writer and photographer for the Rochester Post Bulletin for 47 years, will show what he has seen, during the four seasons, on the North Branch of the Root River! Sit back and enjoy the beauty and gifts right in your own neighborhood.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Visio Divina

October 12, 2:30-3:30pm (Central Time)

Location: AHSC

No fee. Donations appreciated.

Registration requested by October 11.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Visio Divina is a method of prayer for the visual learners. It invites the viewer into 'divine seeing' through images. It is a practice similar to *Lectio Divina* that uses words. It is a prayerful encounter of the Divine, inviting the viewer to experience the Holy One by considering and interacting with an icon, piece of art, by means of the eye. It is accomplished in a small group using a piece of art and, on occasion, paired with Scripture, a reflective reading or poetry.

What is a Cojourner?

**October 12, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

No fee. Donations appreciated.

Registration requested by October 11.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Cojourner is the name given to a lay associate with the Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, MN. Cojourners are adult men and women who may be single or married. They are from various professions, various faith traditions, and may be ordained or vowed religious of other communities. Cojourning describes a relationship in which individuals join with the Sisters of St. Francis, who believe in similar values, share common interests and efforts in prayer, ministries and justice activities in the spirit of Francis, Clare and Mother Alfred. Cojourning explores a wide range of opportunities for spiritual growth and deeper connections to faith-in-action.

Come with questions for a panel of local Cojourners and Sisters and find out about growing spiritually alongside religious women. This connection may be just what you are seeking!



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Healthy Aging Strategies

**October 14, 9:30-11:00am
(Central Time)**

Location: Walters Conference Room, Assisi Heights

No fee. Donations appreciated.

Registration requested by October 13.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Is there anything we can do to keep our brain and body humming along as we age? Yes, there is! And it isn't complicated, expensive or sold in a pill. Based on guidelines presented by Dr. Rudy Tanzi, Alzheimer's researcher and professor of neurology at Harvard, we will review these strategies and propose easy ways to implement them. Even 2 months of this approach can make a difference in your aging process.

Kim Jaworski an adult learning mentor. She has a degree in psychology and vested interest and how we can focus on aging with grace, adapt to aging limits throughout our lives and make the process practical, fun, and at least interesting! Kim is a volunteer at Assisi Heights.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Nature: The Essence of Divinity

October 16, 6:00-7:30pm (Central Time)

Location: AHSC

\$30 preregistered/prepaid

Registration requested by October 15.

[Click here](#) to register.

Nature is the original place humans experience God. Our culture has become separated from the Divine, often perceiving God as distant from us, or imperceptible. We often consider nature as separate from ourselves, instead of experiencing our divine interconnectedness as part of nature. Connecting with nature is imperative for mental, physical and spiritual health.

This workshop will help you reconnect with the sacredness of nature. Experience the Divine through deeper connection with nature; including experiences with the healing power of each of the elements: earth, fire, water, and air. This will provide an opportunity for personal healing with one of the four elements. Part of this experiential workshop will be held outside, weather permitting. Dress for the weather.

Thomas Barry says, “the world of life, the world of dawn and sunset and starlight, the world of soil and sunshine, of meadow and woodland, of hickory and oak, of maple and hemlock and pineland forests, of wild life dwelling around us — some of us are discovering all of this for the first time as the integral community in which we live. This is the revelatory experience of the ultimate mystery of things.”

Sisters Seekers, Marie Neher and Diane Anderson, will provide the opportunity for meaningful connections with the Divine and aligning with your soul’s purpose.

Black Cake: A Book Discussion

**October 17, 1:00-2:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 16.

[Click here](#) to register.

A Black Cake and a startling recorded message are two of the puzzling surprises Eleanor Bennett leaves behind for two children, Byron and Benny when she passes on. Charmaine Wilkerson's deeply evocative novel embodies unrevealed birth, tragedy, all the hidden secrets that Eleanor takes to her grave, while the estranged children try to unravel the real story and their legacy. The black cake hails back to Eleanor's Caribbean upbringing. This book discussion finishes with a special treat of the black cake!

Barb Arel is an avid reader, former teacher and a library regular no matter what city she lives. She loves hobbies all related to fabric-sewing, quilting, crocheting and knitting.

Mary Paquette is a voracious reader also and a former nurse by profession, retired care-giver, gardener and a great cook and baker.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Vedic Chant

**October 17, 24, 31 (3-part series), 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 16.

[Click here](#) to register.

Vedic Chants are an ancient and vast collection of Indian Sanskrit hymns drawn for the Vedes over 3500 years ago, and presented by oral tradition to this day. These beautiful chants are considered a sacred foundational guide to spiritual life and transformation open to all peoples. Vedic chants are the source of mantras used in meditation.

In these sessions, we will learn the basic concept of Vedic chants, using the traditional method of listen and repeat. We will learn two chants for peace and

Continued on next page

one chant considered to be fundamental to living a truthful and fruitful life.

All are welcome to participate. No knowledge of Sanskrit is necessary. No musical or vocal ability is needed. Just an open ear and heart.

Patricia Barrier, RYT-500, is a registered yoga teacher who has been studying Vedic Chant for 10 years. She meets weekly with her chant teacher and a dedicated group of chanters.

A Swiss View of Berne, Minnesota

**October 18, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 17.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Join our panelists from the Berne, Minnesota community to learn about its extraordinary history from the book, *The Berne Church: Rooted and Grounded in Love*. This is a compilation of oral history, articles and research, told in storytelling style, which brings to life the Swiss pioneer families who settled among the indigenous peoples in the 1850s. The Berne Church, established in 1872, overcame challenges, including discrimination of their German speaking community during WWI with the Americanism movement and the rise of the KKK in the area. The Berne Swissfest

established in 1949, entertained and introduced Swiss cuisine and culture for 58 years. Today, Berne is known for its Wednesday, Wood-Fired Pizza nights. At its center, is the country Church, which is "Small enough to know you, and big enough to do God's Work."

Some of the voices you will hear include:

Catherine Eayrs, researcher and editor of *The Berne Church: Rooted and Grounded in Love*. She grew up in Berne, participated in the Berne Swissfest and lived in Switzerland for three years. She is a retired teacher and writer.

Colleen Hayne, a Director of the West Concord Historical Society, is a retired teacher, writer and musician who lives with her husband, Greg, in the Berne area.

Qigong 2023

**October 23, 30, November 6, 13,
20, 27, December 4, 11,
10:30-11:30am (Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$60 preregistered, prepaid.

Registration requested by October 22.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Qigong, the art and science of cultivating the body's energy, has been practiced in China for thousands of years as a technique to improve the body's self-healing abilities. Qigong, simply stated, is the cultivation of Qi or vital life energy.

The gentle rhythmic movements of Qigong reduce stress, build stamina, increase vitality and enhance the immune system. It has also been found to improve cardiovascular, respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic and digestive functions. Those who maintain a consistent practice of Qigong find that it helps one regain a youthful vitality, maintain health, even into old age, and helps speed recovery from illness.

Qigong practice includes gentle movement with postural alignment, deep breathing techniques, and relaxation/meditation practices. During this session, participants will learn Vitality Enhancement Qigong as well as other techniques. They are easily adaptable to every lifestyle and can be done while standing, seated, and even lying down. This is an eight-session series, not a drop-in class.

Bonnie Sokolov began studying T'ai Chi in 1998. She was certified to teach T'ai Chi Chih in 2001. In 2008, she graduated from the Institute of Integral Qigong and T'ai Chi.



Image courtesy of Pixabay



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Seeing the Sacred Beyond the Beautiful

**October 23, 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$30 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 22.

[Click here](#) to register.

Photographers are inspired by taking a loving look at nature's beauty; whether it be a flower, dragonfly or landscape. Affection grows from the awareness of how light reveals the object of one's attention. The image becomes the revelation of the sacred beyond the beautiful and then, joy comes alive in the heart of the photographer. The image captures a moment in time. Photographic practice makes the experience live on. There is a wonderful excitement of taking the camera out in nature to a place where one discovers a spider's web adorned with dewdrops on a humid morning or a field of blossoming sunflowers. Nature provides the mystery in "beautiful".

Continued on next page

Sometimes there is a palpable experience of an image finding the photographer. Most often that image lasts long after the exposure and tells the story of discovery. Join me in a visual meditation in the church of the outdoors and inviting a reflection that reaches your soul.

By day, Denise Dupras is a general internist at Mayo Clinic and lives in Rochester. Birds and nature attracted her photographic quest. She soon realized there is much more to the first glimpse. Denise discovered that the experience made the moment special and deeper appreciation of the image made it sacred.

Heartwood: The Art of Living with the End in Mind: A Book Discussion

**November 2 and 9, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by November 1.

[Click here](#) to register.

As hospice volunteer, author Barbara Becker, learns first hand of what it means to be mortal. This book describes the real-life stories of walking with hospice patients and her own parents on their final journey. Life's intersections leave the reader to access meanings for themselves. When the author's grade school friend is diagnosed with a terminal illness, Ms. Becker searches to find the meaning of

life. She approaches the many twists and turns with hope on how to live life to the fullest.

A panel of professionals whose life work is to accompany persons on the journey will lead the discussion. Maureen Bigelow has been a Registered nurse for 38 years, with the last 8 years with Hospice. Brent Moos is a licensed social worker for 20 years and the last 8 years have been with Hospice. Joining them is Mike Liga, pastor and chaplain with hospice. All work together in the Mayo Hospice Program.

Kiss the Ground – A Documentary Film

**November 7, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

Registration requested by November 6.

No fee. Donations appreciated.

[Click here](#) to register.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Kiss the Ground is a stimulating and groundbreaking film that discloses the first feasible solution to the climate changing crisis. *Kiss the Ground* displays that by regenerating the world soils, we can totally and quickly balance and preserve earth's climate to bring back lost ecosystems and generate abundant food supplies. Along with NASA footage and colorful storyboards, the film demonstrates how, by reducing atmospheric carbon, soil is the missing piece in the climate puzzle. Discussion follows.

Inspired Birding and More in Uganda, Africa

**November 8, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by October 30.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Uganda is one of five countries making up East Africa. It borders Lake Victoria and the countries of Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania. In August 2023, Jerry spent 22 days in Uganda visiting the Mabamba Wetlands, Murchison Falls, Kibale Forest, Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. Six birders on tour with Partnership in International Birding, had the opportunity to see many of the nearly 1000 birds native to Uganda, along with the larger iconic game animals for which Africa is so well known. One day was dedicated to searching for Mountain Gorillas, which is included in this presentation.

Jerry Pruett, a world-experienced birder, participated in national and international tours operated by professional companies specializing in exotic bird adventures. He witnessed many birds show off their brilliant colors in their natural habitat.

Jerry has been birding internationally since 1992, visiting 27 countries. He has also taken birding trips to nearly all the states, many times over, photographing his beloved bird species. You will be in awe!



“All Things Considered”

**November 14, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by November 13.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Meet Don Voegeli! He was a prolific composer who wrote the theme song for National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered,” a program NPR has been using the theme song for 47 years! Don, a University of Wisconsin professor, worked as music director and in other roles during his 41-year career at Wisconsin Public Radio. He wrote lots of music for public broadcasting, and other purposes, including national jingles in the 1950s and 1960s theater, television and educational films.

Don’s son, Jim, will speak about his father and play sound clips. He will talk about the history of the “All Things Considered” theme, public radio in Wisconsin, and the creation of National Public Radio.

A Bonus! Everyone attending will be given or sent a four CD set of music, along with a booklet containing a detailed history and musical linear notes.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

A Soul Question for Our Time: What Does it Mean to Be Human in a Radically Warming Climate in 2023?

**November 15, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: via Zoom

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by November 14.

[Click here](#) to register.

Climate Change is here, now. We witness daily to droughts, heatwaves, flooding, storms in the south, food insecurity and growing national and international refugees. We live in a time of grief from the losses, and at the same moment hold beauty of living in sacred time. How can we grow in an apprenticeship to grief and

fling open our hearts to compassion and beauty? Explore the questions, insights and ways forward on this sacred journey as a human.

"Until we can grieve for our planet we cannot love it—grieving is a sign of spiritual health. But it is not enough to weep... we have to put our hands in the earth to make ourselves whole again... I choose joy over despair, not because I have my head in the sand, but because joy is what the earth gives me daily and I must return the gift."

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*

Sister Joan Brown lives and works in Albuquerque, New Mexico where she serves as the Executive Director of New Mexico International Power and Light (NMIPL). NMIPL is a national faith-based organization working in more than 40 states to address climate justice. Originally, from a small family farm in Kansas that still operates, her life has always revolved around the love of and care for creation and social justice. Her BA is from St Mary College in Leavenworth KS and she hold a Master's degree in Religion and Philosophy and Cosmology from the California Institute of Integral Studies. She believes that climate change is the greatest ethical, spiritual, and moral concern of our times intersecting with so many other concerns like poverty, racial justice, immigration, refugees, health and intergenerational justice. Climate justice work has been a focus for decades and led her to participate as an NGO in several UN COP meetings including Paris in 2015. She was one of twelve recipients of the 2015 Whitehouse Champions of Change award for faith leaders working on climate change.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

SMIILD brings Smiles!

**November 8, 6:30-7:30pm
(Central Time)**

Location: Location: Walters Conference Room, Assisi Heights

No fee. Donations appreciated.

Registration requested by November 7.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to donate.

Southeastern Minnesota Interfaith Immigrant Legal Defense (SMIILD), is a local organization advocating for human rights and legal representation. On a given night, as many as 44 people, who live and work in southeastern Minnesota, are in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Roughly 50% cannot afford legal representation. Without representation, they are 6-10 times more likely to be deported. Most often, those who are held are eligible for release on bond, but the “fee” amounts are far beyond the ability of low-income immigrants to pay. Hear the stories of individuals and families who have suffered, then benefitted from these services, and how you might be able to assist.

This discussion will be facilitated by board members of SMIILD.

Keep at it, Riley! Accompanying My Father Through Death into Life: A Book Discussion

**November 20, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: Walters Conference Room,
Assisi Heights

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by November 19.

[Click here](#) to register.

In *Keep at it, Riley*, Nancy Madden McInnes weaves her story of ‘walking her parents’ home’ through the aging process to their deaths. The mysteries of her family’s Irish rituals of faith and her studies of current sacramental spirituality widen the meaning and understanding of God. *Keep at it, Riley* is a marvelous book of practical theology laced with laughter, tears and classical humor.

Sister Briana McCarthy, OSF, is an educator, counselor, artist, and playwright. She holds Masters Degrees in Theater Education, Spirituality and Counseling. She works with persons living with grief, alcohol and drug addition, sexual and ritual abuse.



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Disrupting Healthcare: Reengineering the Business Model of Healthcare

**December 7, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC and via Zoom

\$10 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by December 6.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

[Click here](#) to register via Zoom.

Dr. John Schupbach will discuss the impact of his work leading the *Squalor to Scholar* program in India for the past decade, followed by his journey to becoming an Emergency Medicine Physician at Mayo Clinic, and his pursuits to use the power of business model innovation to improve healthcare and education on a global scale.

John Schupbach, MD, MBA, is a Senior Associate Consultant Emergency Medicine Physician and instructor of emergency medicine at Mayo Clinic. He is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of *Squalor to Scholar*, a non-profit organization that provides scholarships, education and healthcare services in India. His focus is on fostering disruptive business model innovation of healthcare markets internationally through entrepreneurship, education and investment management.

Icons of Mary and the Christ Child

**December 11, 6:30-8:00pm
(Central Time)**

Location: AHSC

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Registration requested by December 10.

[Click here](#) to register to attend in person.

Dr. Jane Rodeheffer will introduce participants to various Icons of Mary and the Christ Child honored during Advent. These Icons are specialized depictions of Mary, and are not intended as realistic portraits, but rather windows linking earthly and heavenly realities. Andrei Rublev, a Russian monk of the fifteenth century, is widely revered for his writing distinctive Russian elements common to Byzantine spirituality. Jane will present how to pray with these Marian Icons as symbols, indeed sacraments of presence, during this holy season of waiting.

Dr. Jane Kelly Rodeheffer is a Fletcher Jones Chair of Great Books Emerita at Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA. She holds degrees from Boston College, Harvard, and Vanderbilt University, where she earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy. Dr. Rodeheffer is a Benedictine Oblate of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN.



Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is an ancient process of accompanying a person in their spiritual journey toward freedom and peace. It is an encounter to explore a deeper relationship with the spiritual aspect of being human. Spiritual direction helps people tell their sacred stories, seeking clarity on how the divine interacts with them concretely in their daily life. It is an endeavor to grow in personal insights and understandings.

For more information, contact Sister Elaine at 507-282-7441 or email: elaine.frank@rochesterfranciscan.org.



Assisi Heights Spirituality Center Advisory Council

Tammy Adams - Retired RN, Patient Educator, Servant Leadership

Don Baldus - Retired RCTC Math Instructor, Social Justice Advocate

Dennis Brooks - Townsquare Media - Rochester and Preston

Rev. Emily Carson - MN ELCA Office

Lonnie Fynskov - Retired RN, Wellness Coach, Creative options for Cancer patients

Jan Manahan - Rochester Cojourner Coordinator

Tracy McCray - KLSE Radio

Bruce Rohde - Semi-retired Engineering/Construction, Cojourner

Barb Schroeder - Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist, Life Coach

Jim Voegeli - Retired, Community Volunteer

Sister Linda Wieser - Spiritual Director, Therapist

Kathleen Zarling - Mayo Nurse

Tours



Assisi Heights Tour: Stories of Franciscan Life

Mondays and Thursdays, 2:00pm (Central Time)

Saturdays, 1:30pm (Central Time)

Preregistration is required at least 1 day in advance.

Register early, as tour group size is limited.

Call 507-282-7441, ask for Sister Alice to register.

Visit the hilltop home of the Sisters of St. Francis, once on the edge, but now again in the middle of the city of Rochester, MN. Hear the stories and ministries that have evolved to meet the changing times. A unique building with resemblances of earlier connections to St. Francis / St. Clare in Assisi, Italy. Though the building tells its own story, it is the lives of Sisters that make the tour vibrant!

Tours



Wilson House Tour: Stories of Louis J. Wilson, Maud Mellish and Grace McCormack

September 2, 1:00pm (Central Time) *

Location: Wilson House

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

Preregistration is required at least 1 day in advance.

Visit the home of the Wilsons, on Walnut Hill on the property of Assisi Heights. The house was designed by Harold Crawford, built in 1924. Grace McCormack Wilson, Louis' third wife, lived there until her death in 1964. Come inside and learn its story.

Architectural Tours: Stories in Stone

September 9, 1:00pm (Central Time) *

Location: AHSC

\$15 preregistered/prepaid.

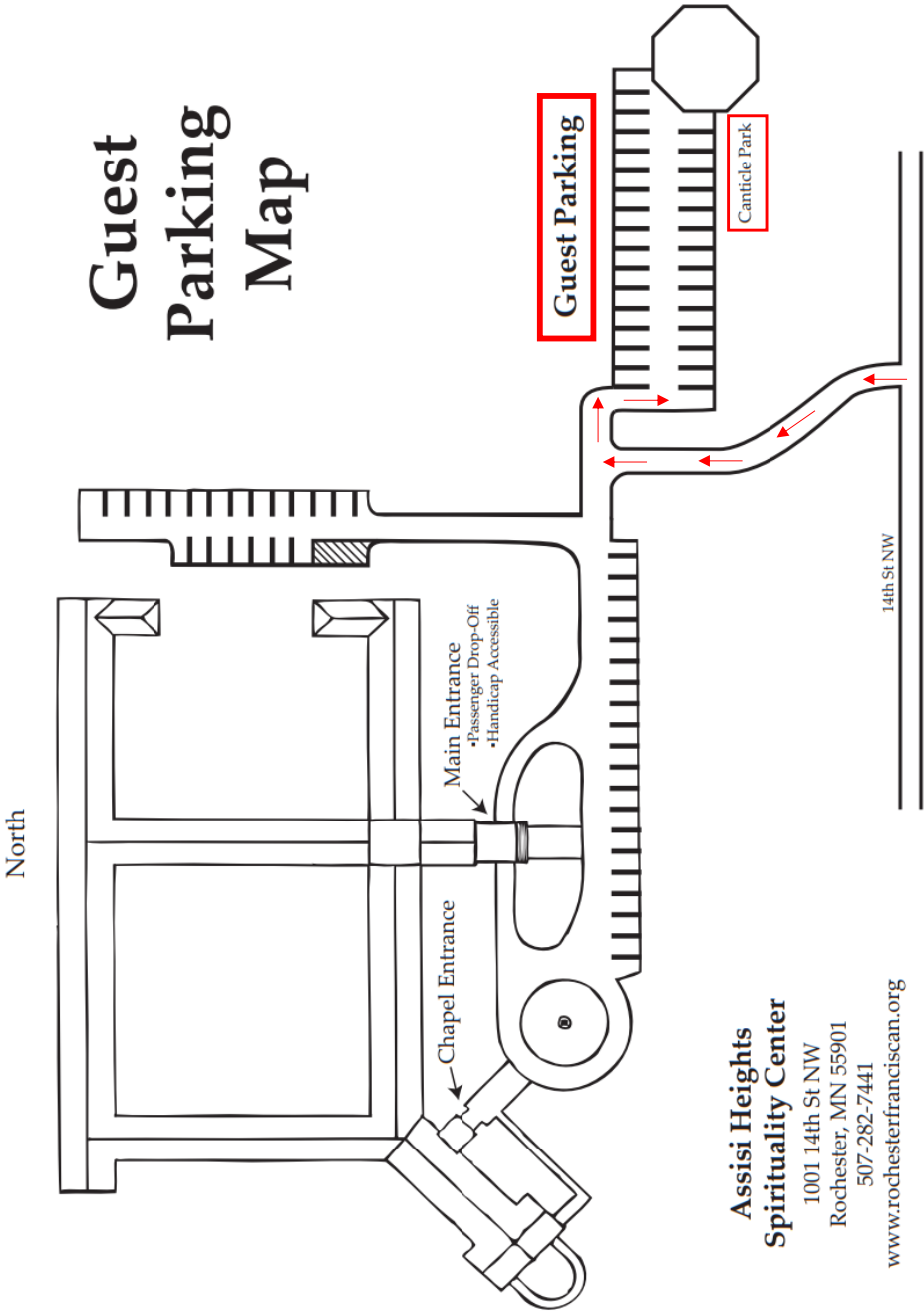
Preregistration is required at least 1 day in advance.

[Click here](#) to register for September 9.

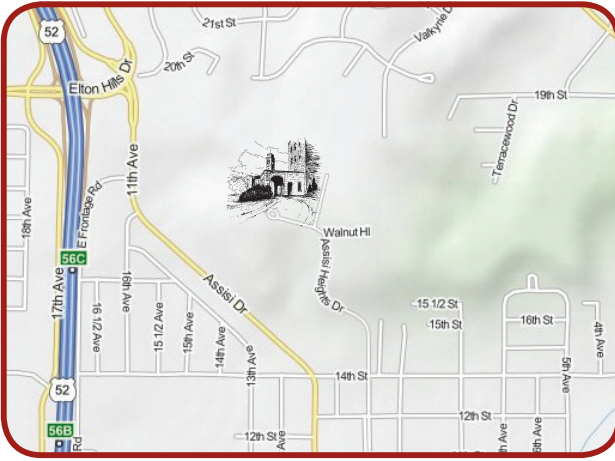
Assisi Heights has stories engraved in the walls. Literally! However, many more anecdotes tell the stories that chronicle the history hidden in the walls. Come up close and see some of the architectural features, aesthetic design aspects and a few of the often-overlooked artistic Franciscan features. Hear the stories stored in stone. Unravel the mystic nature of Assisi Heights. Please wear walking shoes for this indoor and outdoor event.

* More tour dates are continually being added. Check for listings at www.rochesterfranciscan.org/events or contact Bob Taraba, event coordinator, at 507-280-2195 or email: ahsc@assisiheights.org.

Guest
Parking
Map



Directions



From the South

US-52 N toward Rochester

Take the ELTON HILLS DR/19TH ST NW exit, EXIT 56C

At traffic light merge RIGHT onto Assisi Drive

Turn LEFT at 14th St/11th Ave NW traffic light.

Assisi Heights' entrance is directly on your LEFT: 1001 14th St NW Rochester, MN 55901

From the North

US 52 S toward Rochester

Take the ELTON HILLS DR/19TH ST NW exit, EXIT 56C

Take a LEFT over the bridge Turn RIGHT onto Assisi Drive

Turn LEFT at 14th St/11th Ave NW traffic light.

Assisi Heights' entrance is directly on your LEFT: 1001 14th St NW Rochester, MN 55901

From the West

Merge onto US-14 E

US-14 E becomes CIVIC CENTER DR NW.

Turn LEFT onto 11TH AVE NW. Turn RIGHT onto 14TH ST NW.

Assisi Heights' entrance is directly on your LEFT: 1001 14th St NW Rochester, MN 55901

From the East

Merge onto I-90 W.

Merge onto US-52 N via EXIT 218 toward ROCHESTER.

Merge onto CIVIC CENTER DR NW via EXIT 56A toward MAYO CLINIC.

Turn LEFT onto 11TH AVE NW. Turn RIGHT onto 14TH ST NW.

Assisi Heights' entrance is directly on your LEFT: 1001 14th St NW Rochester, MN 55901

Become a Franciscan!

Have you, or someone you know considered:

- Becoming a Sister of Saint Francis of Rochester, MN?
- Becoming a Cojourner? (Women and men associates joining on a spiritual journey with the Sisters.)

Visit our website: www.rochesterfranciscan.org and click the button "Become a Sister or Cojourner" on our home page.

For more information:

- Email: srcoj@rochesterfranciscan.org, or call: 507-282-7441.



Volunteer Opportunities!

Would you like to volunteer at Assisi Heights? We have opportunities to fit most schedules. Activities such as art classes, music sessions, art appreciation, registering participants for Spirituality Center programs, movies and more. Weekly or monthly celebration events are an option. Volunteer on your own or with a friend. Orientation provided.

Performers, do you have a talent to share? Music, dance, magic, bird calls or another talent you would like to share. We welcome your group's dress rehearsal here. For more information call 507-282-7441 and ask for Sister Sue Reif.



Registration Instructions

To register, mail this form and payment to:

AHSC Event Coordinator
Assisi Heights Spirituality Center
1001 14th Street NW
Rochester, MN 55901

To register online, go to:

www.rochesterfranciscan.org
and click on "Events"

Questions? Call 507-280-2195

or email: ahsc@rochesterfranciscan.org



Program Title: _____

Program Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please note: if enclosed
amount is for a deposit, balance
is due upon arrival.

Check enclosed for
\$ _____

Please charge my credit
card \$ _____



Exp. date __ - __ Security code _____
(on back of card)

Signature of card holder

Date



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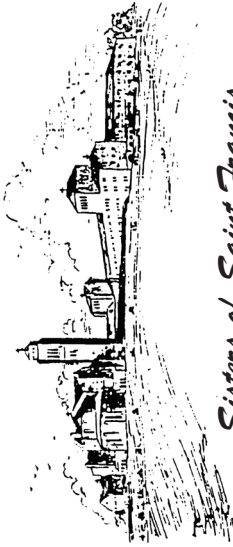
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Sisters of Saint Francis

Assisi Heights Spirituality Center

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If your address changes, you prefer to receive additional news via email, or be removed from the mailing list, contact:

AHSC Coordinator at 507-280-2195
or: ahsc@rochesterfranciscan.org