



## Challenges Today for Our Community

by S. Brenda Lisenby

Listening to the signs of the times, entering communal discernment, exploring new and challenging areas of ministry—these are just a few of the things that our community is actively engaged in as we move forward with our strategic planning process in regard to the community's efforts to intensify support for justice issues and advocacy over the next three years and to respond to our changing neighborhood. Bridging has always been important in our ministry of prayer and presence on the Northside. In the past, the "bridge" has primarily been between volunteers, individuals, schools, and churches as we host a variety of seasonal activities. Now seems to be a time to explore how we can promote dialogue about race and other areas of systemic injustice. We hope to "bridge" by providing safe space for conversations, so that all may be heard.

How have we come to this? What have we heard while listening to the signs of the times? When we first came to north Minneapolis in 1989, children were some of the first to welcome us. They were our "bridge" to the neighborhood. We provided tutoring and other after school and summer activities for them. They introduced us to their families. We developed family outreach. These

## NEWS from the Northside

neighbors have in turn become acquainted with friends who come to the Northside to get to know us and join us in our ministry of prayer and presence. In the early years, the neighborhood families were relatively stable and relationships more easily developed and sustained. Yet in recent years, the neighborhood families struggle with being stable and are more diverse. Families with financial challenges move frequently. They are in and out of homeless shelters. They are always in transition. We are listening and learning about how systemic issues impact the daily life of our neighbors. Racial and economic injustice contribute to instability for our neighbors. Systemic issues include lack of access to the things many of us take for granted: adequate housing, safe streets, convenient transportation, education, health care, the internet or even a phone, three meals a day. Families are also more diverse. In addition to African Americans, we are friendly with Hispanic families, Somali families, families from Ethiopia. We are listening and learning to navigate a variety of languages and cultures. We thank you for your prayers and support that allow us to continue to be present and listening to our neighbors in north Minneapolis.



SHARON LE FLORE, shared *The Sankofa Healingway: A Sacred Journey*. This day of prayer, praise and gratitude is the Sisters' Mothers' Day gift to neighborhood women—a tradition since 1998!



News from the Northside is published three times a year by Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis, 1527 Fremont Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55411 612-521-6113

We are an urban monastic community. Please contact us for more information about our way of life.

-  Visitation Monastery North Minneapolis
-  @MinneMonastery
-  Visitation Monastery

This newsletter is available on our website. If you prefer the online format, please contact the Sisters at [vmonastery@aol.com](mailto:vmonastery@aol.com).

## Happenings in the 'Hood

By S. Mary Frances Reis

As we prepare this update on 'Happenings' in our monastery garden on the Northside, we are still in the afterglow of our dear Sister Karen's Golden Jubilee celebration which took place the week-end of June 4th. Besides having the joy of welcoming family, friends and neighbors to honor her, it was an opportunity to 'showcase' the very best of our North Minneapolis community!

A few highlights follow:

- We rang in the New Year with our **Mendota Heights Sisters**, welcoming them for high tea, party and games. They also joined us for Holy Thursday dinner followed by Celebration of the Lord's Supper at Ascension Church. The Mendota monastery and school communities have been a key bridge in bringing Salesian spirituality and life to our neighborhood over these 27 years. Whether through the prayerful presence of the Sisters or the array of services provided by students, faculty and staff, Jesus lives here! Thank you, Mendota Vis! This spring six Visitation Seniors came for an annual two week Urban Immersion Experience. Our neighbors look forward to having these beautiful young women serve in the community each year.
- We continue our **strategic processing** around the three proposals of quality community life, outreach, and social justice/advocacy mentioned in our previous newsletter. This summer we are engaging in important listening and futuring sessions with neighbors, partners, benefactors and volunteers as we make every effort to be good stewards of the gift of TRUST you have given us in our ministry of prayer and presence.
- This spring we welcomed **Brenda Lisenby** into the Novitiate, a formal period of preparation for religious vows. Brenda brings a mature prayer life, many natural gifts and talents, and most importantly a love for Salesian spirituality. She fell in love with the community and we with her when she participated in our Monastic Immersion Experience for 6 months. Now, when she answers the door, folks no longer ask to see one of the Sisters; Sister **Brenda's** the real thing!
- We have a new Archbishop! As you have most likely heard or read in the media, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has had a few years of turmoil. **Archbishop Bernard Hebda** will provide a stabilizing presence as he deals with many challenges ahead of him. Please pray for him.
- This spring **Sister Suzanne** represented our Federation in Rome for the close of The Year of Consecrated Life; this summer Sister **Karen** will



SISTER BRENDA was glowing with pride as the sponsor of EUNICE THOMPSON, a regular member of our Wednesday morning worshipping community. Eunice was confirmed and welcomed into full communion in the Catholic Church during Mass in the presence of her mom and many other out of town guests.

represent us in Annecy, France, as she participates in a conference on St. Francis de Sales' signature work: Treatise on the Love of God. We are grateful to be bonded with the International Visitation. On the local level Anne Goetze's traveling art exhibit on Annecy and the First Visitation monastery came to our City.

- Just as in our schools it is gratifying to be in touch with Alums and hear about their activities, we have a version of this with our Windsock alums. Two of our 'graduates' warmed our hearts recently. **Herbert Johnson** had a principal part in the Broadway production of Chorus Line performed here in the Twin Cities, while **Kiara Jones**, now a junior at Visitation in Mendota Heights, had a principal role in The Wiz.
- We have had the usual round of amazing volunteers for various activities. One new group we want to mention is the **St. Thomas University Choir**. Their spring concert focused on solidarity with all peoples. In preparation for the concert, their directors wisely encouraged choir members to do community service with diverse communities. We were the recipients of this service, and it made the concert all the more meaningful.
- The **St. Jane House** with its many gatherings is thriving as it enters its 9th year!

Finally, please visit [www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org](http://www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org) for a fuller sharing on our abundant life here. We want to commend Melissa Borgmann-Kiemde, our social media specialist, for her wonderful work in keeping us connected!



Eagle Scout JOHN GUNSBURY (and friends) gave our yard and garden a good start this spring with a project that involved removing a buck thorn bush, part of a cyclone fence and transplanting and replanting flower beds at both houses. What the Eagle Scouts began, SISTER KATHERINE will continue during the summer with Gardening Volunteers on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. Just show up at the Fremont House back yard.



Many hands make light work. Among the many volunteers at Sr. Karen's Jubilee Celebration were VISITATION ALUMS FROM THE CLASS OF 1960.

**Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis**  
1527 Fremont Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55411-3232  
[www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org](http://www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org)

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO. 4690

Address services requested

*"MERCY is the very foundation of the Church's life."*

—Pope Francis



**Thank you for celebrating  
50 years with me!**



*I have wished to stitch this  
motto upon your heart:  
Live Jesus.*

*—St. Francis de Sales*

SISTER KAREN MOHAN and her mother, Agnes, shared the glow of the golden jubilee. They brought their jubilant smiles and light hearted spirits to all of us at every event of the celebration.

Please visit our website for more coverage of the Jubilee: [www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org](http://www.visitationmonasteryminneapolis.org)