

The N.E.W. Koinonia News

Summer 2022

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Chair newsletter article - June 2022

At each retreat someone will ask, "what does Koinonia mean?" Our response is usually one word - Community. It sounds simple but, for me, it's so much more than one word can express.

"Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Col 3:23.

So often during our weekend and day retreats I've seen this directive in action. Smiles, hugs, tears, laughter, tasks, personal outreach shared time and time again. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. Underestimated or not, it happens when we come together as the Koinonia Family to share our diverse and unique gifts. I know there is strength in the differences between us. I also know there is comfort where we overlap.

The following quote from Jean Vanier speaks to another view of community: "One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing."

This statement resonates deeply within me when I think about all who are members of this family. Our retreats are overflowing with sacrifice and personal commitment. Christ's love is so clearly reflected by your loving service offered to candidates, teams and to one another. How blessed I am to be part of this family.

*Saint John Paul II, offered this in his book, *Things of the Spirit*, "Whatever you make of your life, let it be something that reflects the love of Christ. The whole people of God will be all the richer because of the diversity of your commitments.*

In whatever you do, remember that Christ is calling you, in one way or another, to the service of love: the love of God and of your neighbor."

Dear Koinonia Sisters and Brothers, I treasure the giftedness you bring to our Family, and your willingness and support to continue our efforts to grow Koinonia. Please know that I hold each one of you in daily prayers of gratitude.

Your sister in Christ,

Bluette



Community Room

**Assistant Spiritual Director
Message**

On May 13-15, 2022 our 59th Retreat was held at Catawba, WI. It was a wonder-full retreat! Through the shifting sands of events that played out during the retreat it is evident that the Holy Spirit was with us and blessed our gathering. The adaptability and resilience of our retreat teams and new Koinonians' was amazing. Thank you to all who participated in whatever form or manner. For it was this unique mixture of personalities that made #59 a successful event, a most memorable weekend that has In-Spirited us to go forth and do God's work. Thank you also for the many prayers that has been extended to our family from our Koinonia Family. You are all a gift from God. As we prepare for the next N.E.W. Koinonia Retreat I would encourage you to consider being a participant. Your presence

is being requested by Jesus Christ so that he may give you Life and that you may live Life more abundantly.

God Bless,

Deacon Craig
Assistant Spiritual Director

Lay Directors Message

How wonderful to be back at St. Paul the Apostle in Catawba after so many years absence! Reflecting on Koinonia #59, held on a beautiful Spring weekend, we wholeheartedly acknowledge the blessings of sharing that time with so many faith filled people. Our deepest thanks to each member of the Retreat Team for giving so freely of their gifts – Father Lou's sprit filled and joyful presence and his gift of bringing the Gospel to life was complimented by Deacon Craig's guidance and powerful spontaneous teachings. Deacon Jeff Austin and Margie Novak led the "Faithful Five" (Steven and Therese) with wisdom, Rita Austin

and Bill Polacek brought new insight to life with "Open Minds to Christ" (Jennie, Carrie and

Ed). Thanks to Maureen Knetter for taking our collective musical gifts and turning them into a Heavenly Chorus. Three wonderful Gophers provided for our every need and kept us on schedule – blessings on Sharon, Mike and Annamarie. Your efforts to provided us with the opportunity to experience the Living Rosary in the beauty of God's creation was a very special gift. Being held in prayer by "Toots' Troops" was clearly and strongly felt by everyone in the community Room. We send our love and gratitude to each of you for the many acts of service: the placemats, gift bags, delicious meals, your love and prayers - all that you did to make this such a powerful and Spirit filled weekend.

We hold you in prayer and look forward to being together again very soon,

Roni Ann Tobias and Bluette Puchner
Lay Directors, Koinonia #59



Community Room Front row: Fr Lou, Roni Ann Tobias, Bluette Puchner, Deacon Craig Volberg, Middle Row: Annamarie Novak, Sylvia Kerner, Steven Kerner, Sharon Volberg, Maureen Knetter, Therese Detmar, Jennie Kleinhans, Carrie Ann Van De Voort, Back Row: Edwin Kotlewski, Deacon Jeff Austin, Rita Austin



Wheat Team: Vic Schizik, Sr. Mary McDermott, Diane Weber, Sue Ann Kwasniewski, Vicky Ellias, Missy Wiener, Denise Lutz, Gloria Lyons, Jane Schizik, Lynn Van De Voort, Nicolas Lynch, Diane Freund, Debbie Osborn, Abigail Lynch, Heidi Lynch
Not pictured: Kathy Rominske and Lori Hoogland

- The Wheat Team -

Greetings from the Wheat Team Lay and Assistant Lay Directors; Jane and Vic Schiszik

Koinonia #59 was set in motion at the Planning Meeting held April 30th at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Catawba. Members of the Wheat Team decided the theme for this retreat would be "Toot's Troop" in memory of Florence "Toots" Runnheim. Toots was an active and vibrant part of our Koinonia community and touched the hearts of many of our Koinonia family. The retreat was also held in Toot's home parish of St. Paul the Apostle which added to the excitement! The Lord of the Dance was selected as the Wheat Team theme song. This was so appropriate a song as Toots loved to dance.

With all that planning set in motion – the members of the Wheat Team gathered on Friday, May 13th to start preparing for the retreat! Just like the

words of the song we danced and prayed and were joyful Wheaties all day long! Our goal was to welcome the new retreatants to our Koinonia family and provide them with a memorable retreat!

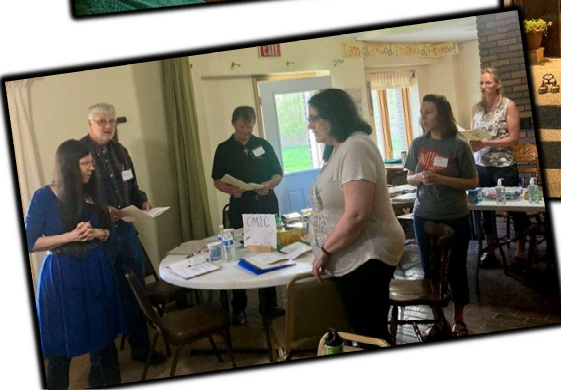
Missy Wiener and Vicky Ellias were our Wheat Team Co-Spiritual Directors and presided over our Wheat Chapel. Sharing the cooking, food prep and kitchen duties were head cooks Kathy Rominske, and Gloria Lyons assisted by the cook's helpers: Diane Freund and Debbie Osborn, and Lori Hoogland. The food prepared for our meals was awesome and much appreciated. While the cooks were busy in the kitchen the Wheaties were also getting many of their tasks started and completed.

We had 17 Wheaties who kept busy praying, serving, and assisting wherever and whenever needed. We are proud to announce our Wheat Team welcomed 4-First Time Wheaties! Denise Lutz from Mellen, Sue Ann Kwasniewski and Sr. Mary

McDermott, both from Ladysmith, and Gloria Lyons from Kennan. We also had 2 individuals, Abigail, and Nickolas Lynch, from Holcombe that had attended their 1st Koinonia in North Dakota and were warmly welcomed to our N.E.W. Koinonia Community. Nicholas served as our candid photographer and captured many great happenings! A few other members of the Wheat Team: Heidi Lynch, Diane Weber, and Marilyn Van De Voort were busy helping mentor our new Wheaties and guiding and directing the many activities needed to be completed.

Our Wheat Team was blessed with many hands willing to serve, joyful spirits and beautiful voices, especially those of Abigail, Nicholas, and Heidi Lynch. Thank you all for your service and for sharing your time and talents which added to the success of the Wheat Team!

Wheat Team Lay Directors
Jane and Vik Schiszik



Greetings from the Wheat Team Spiritual Director

It was a blessing to be able to come together in Catawba and serve the candidates and team as Toots' Troop!

Our chapel was set up as a holy space, holy ground. A place to be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and spend time with our dear Lord. Our chapel was filled with love, tears, joy, empathy, compassion, laughter, praise, song, silence, gratitude and peace. We sent our speakers off with blessings and a

sweet angel, along with support and our confidence in them. We are sure that each meditation was presented with the Spirit of Christ. Speaking of the Spirit, we called on the Spirit to fill our chapel and our hearts. The Spirit heard us and was on the move like tongues of fire.

We were Phillipsians, Holcombers, and Melleniks, inhabitants of Fond du Lac, Weyerhaeuser, and Ladysmith, and the districts of Catawba and Kennan, as well as travelers from Taylor County and Medford Proper, yet we all heard the speaking in our

own tongue, telling of the mighty acts of God. Our troop was bold and intentional in our prayers and worship.

It was a complete joy to serve as your Wheat Team Spiritual Directors and to be part of this amazing dance. We thank each one of you for sharing your gifts, your hearts, and your love for Christ. God bless each one of you!

Your sisters in Christ,
Vicky Ellias and Missy Wiener



UPCOMING RETREATS

Koinonia #60 Weekend Retreat

Sept 23rd – 25th 2022

At Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Medford, WI

Planning Meeting Sat, Aug 27th 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Gathering Oct 9th 11:30 – 3:00pm

Koinonia #61 Day Retreat

Saturday Nov 5th, 2022 at St. Anthony Social Hall in Tony, WI

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Presenter is: Bob Lechler



N.E.W. Koinonia

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