

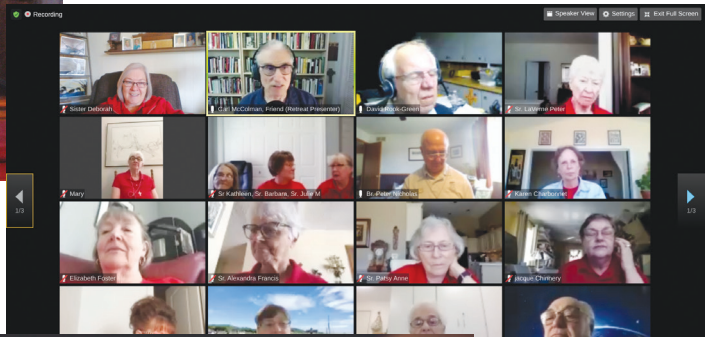
THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



**50th ANNIVERSARY
OUR JOURNEY: LOOKING BACK,
AT THE PRESENT AND TO THE FUTURE
April 2022**

Bulletin Cover

Photo 1 - Sister Angela, Founder, WSHS praying at St. Mary's Church Oct 2008 - Our Community was founded in a Sunday School room at St. Mary's. *Photo 2* - Image of our Zoom Retreat May 2021.

Photo 3 - Photo by Lukasz-Szmigiel-unsplash.com

Community Communication Contacts:

Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin - email Br. Ephrem, apergydesign@gmail.com or see green sheets for his mailing address.

Changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses - email Sr. Christine casturges@gmail.com or Sr. Wendy Samuel virtue54@outlook.com or see green sheets for mailing addresses.

Urgent Community Prayer Requests for email distribution – email or call Sr. LaVerne Peter: Callaghan@aol.com, Sr. Christine: casturges@gmail.com or Sr. Wendy Samuel: virtue54@outlook.com

Financial Contributions –

Members residing in the U.S., make checks payable to WSHS/WBHS and mail to:

Sr. Nancy Teresa, WSHS, Treasurer, United States, 12900 Glenwood Street, Apt. 108, Overland Park, KS 66209

If you pay any bills through your bank, you can easily send your contributions to WSHS the same way. Use the address above to send your check. You can make a one-time payment or a recurring payment. If you have questions, your bank will be happy to help you. And - you don't need any postage!

Members residing in Canada, make cheques payable to WSHS/WBHS and mail to Br. David, WBHS, Treasurer, Canada. 2170 Preston Road, Cavan Monaghan, Ontario, K9J 0G5 Canada

Contributions to Haiti Clean Water Project –

Check contributions to the Haiti Clean Water Project may be mailed to Sr. Alexandra Francis, WSHS 7711 E Waverly Street, Tucson, AZ 85715.

Please make your check payable to Alexandra Zarris. Put "WSHS Haiti Clean Water" in the memo line.

Problems Receiving your Bulletin - If you are not receiving the monthly Bulletin (by regular mail or by email), please email or **call Sr. Christine, not Trina.** Thank you.

If a friend expresses interest in WSHS/WBHS, remember to direct them to our website, www.workersisters.org, www.workerbrothers.org

THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	
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CALENDAR

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS
REGIONAL GATHERINGS
April 2022**

Below is a list of the monthly Regional Gatherings and Corporate Communion. Meetings are open to all members (Sisters, Brothers, Workers, Companions, Friends and Applicants). If you are interested in attending an online Regional Gathering, please contact the Zoom Host and she/he will add you to the group's email list.

<u>Regional Zoom Gatherings</u>		<u>April 30th</u>
Eastern Regional USA	Br. David, WBHS, brdavidwbhs1@gmail.com	11:30 AM ET
Central Regional USA	Sr. Nancy Teresa, WSHS, nancybrooks40@gmail.com	2:00 PM CT
Southern Regional USA	Sr. Kathleen Rachel, WSHS, srkathleenrachel@gmail.com	3:30 PM ET
Western Regional USA	Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS, wguyton17@gmail.com	10:00 AM AZ time

<u>In-person Corporate Communion</u>		
Carthage, Missouri	Sr. Barbara Veronica, WSHS	TBD
Pleasant Hill, Tennessee	Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS	TBD

REGIONAL GATHERING/CORPORATE COMMUNION DATES

April 30 • May 21 • June 25 • July 23 • August 27
September 24 • October 22 • November 19 • December 10

50th ANNIVERSARY RETREAT
April 28-30, 2022
Our Journey: Looking Back, At the Present and to the Future. Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Call to Prayer. Please remember our Community in prayer twice a day 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM in your time zone and pray for World Peace at Noon.



8:00 AM - Prayer for our Community
12:00 Noon - Prayer for World Peace
5:00 PM - Prayer for our Community



COMMUNITY CHANGES

Please make the following alterations to your Green Sheets:

Here is an update for your Green Sheets. Remember that an online copy of the Community Green Sheets is available on our website. It is updated monthly.

To view the online Green Sheets, go to www.workersisters.org; click on MORE, then on MEMBER PAGES. To sign in, the email to use is: WSHS.WBHS@gmail.com – the password is Angela45

Ken Nolen, Friend

has moved.

His address is:

12181 N Bright Ridge Drive
Oro Valley, AZ 85755

Sr. Shirley Evangeline

has moved to Springfield, MO. Her address is:

Sr. Shirley Evangeline (Pace), WSHS
1009 W. Sunset Street
Springfield, MO 65807

Her phone and email address have not changed.



SPECIAL NEWS NOTES

ShelterBox Story

By Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS

At our fall Chapter meeting we made the decision that we would not be able to meet again for our annual international Retreat in April, 2022 because of Covid 19. This was a difficult decision but one we knew we needed to make in order to assure the health of the community.

Chapter decided that we would contribute money that we would have spent for Retreat to those in need in Haiti. We have continued our water project through many difficult times but wanted to do more. Multiple disasters of the past years have plagued Haiti. Our beloved Brother Franz Benedict, WBHS lives in Petionville, Haiti and we have a personal interest in the well being of the people there. It was decided to contribute \$1000 to ShelterBox earmarked for the people in Haiti.

ShelterBox has significant experience working in Haiti. They have worked there five times, including in 2010 after the magnitude 7 earthquake. 200,000 people lost their lives and 5 million people lost their homes. Items they have delivered in Haiti include shelter kits like tents with wooden floors, tarpaulins, thermal blankets, solar lights, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, and water carriers. Our teams is also providing training and technical support with the essential aid items they are providing. Many people in Haiti are still living in their ShelterBox tents after many years.

Everyone deserves a place to call home. It is a human right and the first step towards recovery after disaster. ShelterBox is an international organization that provides for shelter for over two million people a year. ShelterBox is so much more than just a roof. It's the foundation for life, families and communities. It is a place to feel safe after days or weeks of fear. It offers protection from harsh weather, privacy, and helps to preserve dignity. It's a space to heal from trauma.

Shelter and other essential items help people protect themselves from diseases like coronavirus and malaria. Emergency shelter can also prevent communities from scattering. This means people stay connected and build resilience together. When you don't have to keep moving or worry about where to sleep at night, you can think about tomorrow. Items like tents, tarpaulins, tools, blankets, mosquito nets, cooking sets and water filters help to meet the most urgent needs, so people can start to earn a living, send children to school and rebuild their homes.

With over 20 years of experience, they are experts in providing emergency shelter after disaster. They often work in places that others don't, making sure that they reach families who need support to take the next step in resuming their livelihoods.

If you would like more information about ShelterBox, their website is shelterboxusa.org.

May God bless the people of Haiti and the work of this community.



HAITI

Br. Frantz Benedict attends the Central Regional Gathering!

On Saturday, January 22, 2022, the Central Province Regional Gathering had two special guests at our Corporate Communion. Sr. Betty-Lou Shirley appeared, having missed the Canadian / Eastern Province gathering. But she had connected with Br. Franz Benedict ala Skype. Using her iPad, she shared Br. Franz's image and voice from her computer. He reported that there continues to be political instability in Haiti. A large number of people are unemployed, which reduces the tax base and also services. The streets have a half-inch of dirt, piles of trash, and are seldom cleaned. He was offered a political position, which he declined for safety reasons. He simply trusts God to work out what He has in mind.

Br. Franz's school attendance is down to less than 50%, but his school is the only one open in the area. Children can walk there, and their parents feel it is safe because they can easily retrieve their kids, even though the police provide no protection. There are crosses in the open spaces near the school to identify it as church grounds, which apparently dissuades the gangs from becoming a problem there.

He told a story about a man who came into his office with a gun in his pocket. With the force of his moral authority, Br. Franz scolded the man for bringing a gun onto church grounds. When the man heard that he owed a substantial sum for his child's tuition at the school, he left for awhile promising to pay. When he returned, he had a substantial sum in pocket change, from robbing the fare box of a municipal bus.

Br. Franz also reported that he had been contacting clergy to attend next week's diocesan convention. The water purification tablets continue to be well-appreciated. He asked our prayers for the health and safety of Pere François, a fellow priest in Haiti. We were all very thankful that Sr. Betty-Lou and Br. Franz could join us.

Br. Peter Nicholas, WBHS



FROM YOUR DIRECTORS

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION NEEDED

Dear Sisters, Brothers, Lay Workers, Companions and Friends,

We are learning that we sometimes lose contact with our members. There may be a health crisis of a member and the Community needs to be able to reach a responsible person in your family. Members may not be able to actively participate in the life of the Community, but they do need to be prayed for by our members.

In the case of death or incapacitation, your family members need to be able to reach out to our Community to inform us. The Habits and crosses of deceased members must be returned to the Community and we want to add the deceased member's name and photo to our Communion of Saints Memorial Book.

Please fill out this short form; keep a copy and return a copy to Sr. Lucia, WSHS. Her email address is: sluciawshs@gmail.com; her mailing address is 1700 S. Goldsmith Avenue, Meridian, Idaho, 83642-6698.

- WSHS/WBHS Member Name: _____
- Name of Contact Person (Family or Friend) that WSHS may contact if we are not able to contact the Member, or the Member dies: _____

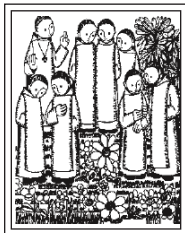
What is Contact Person’s relationship to Member? _____

Phone number of Contact Person: _____

Email Address of Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address of Contact Person: _____

Thank you!



COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Sister Beryl Belcher

November 16, 1921 - February 23, 2022



Sister Beryl Joy’s strong faith in God was an inspiration to many and she was looking forward to her eternal rest. She made her life commitment to our Community December 17, 1988.

Sister Beryl was a Cluster Leader for many years and constructed our Memorial Book under Sister Angela’s direction. In her later years she expressed concern that she could not do anything but pray. For me, that was the greatest gift she could give our Community.

She was predeceased by her husband, Jack, in 2016. Family was central to her life, and she is loved and missed by Joyce, Wendy Anne, Harold, Gordon (Bev) and Valerie. She was a loving Nannie to grandchildren Heidi, Sally, Ben and Paul, and also to 12 great-grandchildren in Australia. Beryl will also be missed by her sisters-in-law Edna Barratt and Barbara Belcher and by her nieces and nephews.

Beryl Allen served in the Women’s Royal Naval Service in World War II and met Jack in England, where they married in 1945; she came to Canada as a war bride in 1946. Jack and Beryl lived most of their married life in Toronto but moved to Tiffin House in Midland in 2014. Beryl lived at Spencer House in Orillia for the past year and celebrated her 100th birthday there.

A memorial service and interment of ashes will take place in early June.

Ruth Platt, Friend, WSHS



Ruth Pyle Platt, 84, wife of the late George C. Platt, passed away at St. Luke's Nursing Care Center on October 20, 2021, following a lengthy struggle with Congestive Heart Failure. In her career, she worked as an office manager for Carthage's Ice and Cold Storage and also, as a homemaker. Ruth was a loving wife, mother, aunt, and sister and will be fondly missed by her family and friends.

Ruth was a wonderful example of true Christian spirit. Her work within Grace Church was widespread, sending cards, taking homemade food items and offering up prayers for so many of others suffering loss or illness. She was admitted as a Friend of Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit in the summer of 2017. She loved her association with our Community and enjoyed Corporate Communion, the *Bulletin* and meeting so many other members of our small group at Grace church.



SPIRITUAL SHARING

This evening I learned that Steve Wilson died today, and suddenly everything else seems diminished. I suppose I should say Father Steve, but I knew him at Christ Church, Springfield, (before he went to seminary) and he's always been Steve to me. Do you remember his beautiful sermon at Sr. Margie Veronica's funeral? He said, "I can state with confidence that every one of you here felt that you had a special bond with Margie. She was that kind of person." Well, I can state with confidence that now every one of us feels that we had a special bond with Steve. He was that kind of person. He had the wonderful gift of seeing each individual as special and letting that person feel it too.

Totally unexpected phone call today. I've been feeling inadequate about my Stephen Ministry. Due to Covid I've never met my care receiver in person (new last November) and we just talk on the phone once a week. She hasn't wanted to zoom. I feel like I'm not really doing anything. So, when our Stephen Coordinator called, I thought he was going to say she wanted to quit. Just the opposite! After church she went to the minister (who is also a Stephen Coordinator) to say thank you for the Stephen Ministry and how grateful she is for me and how I've been a blessing to her. All I can say is that it isn't me. God is working in spite of me! That's what God does, works in spite of us! Grace abounding!

I am doing the best I can to keep up with the life I live. I pray all the time and am grateful for the community's prayers.

I'm doing my best to let everything rest in the arms of the Lord, and often I'm just flailing around too much for that to happen successfully. I'm trying to be present and supportive however I can when I'm not at work so that the kids can feel supported and loved as they navigate those waters of "who am I?"

Journeying with God through my life has led me to value the journey itself. The journey includes new joys but also hardships and challenges and sometimes what feels like great losses and temptations to give up. But when I pause further along the path and look back, I see how those difficult times brought new insights, new growth, new freedom and confidence, and increased trust in God who is leading me on this path. Persons I meet along the way help to challenge and grow me.

Meeting challenges and leaving behind old patterns and assumptions, has enabled me to navigate the next detour with less grumbling, to overcome the next crisis with more confidence and faith, and to expectantly welcome the next person on the path with more love, compassion, and humility. It's a journey within to discover who I am in God's eyes. It is truly a homecoming.

The Rev. Canon Harry Firth's *Bulletin* article for February, "Reflections on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit", got me to thinking about one of the things that our new Curate does when she is officiating at a Daily Office service. She puts emphasis on not only asking for what/whom we wish to pray for, but also, for what/whom we are Thankful. This gives us/me an opportunity to pray during the service for any of the blessings of Seven Gifts.

I had been given FORTITUDE to get through the years of my debilitating eyesight and still trying to help my mother and do some ministry at my parish. I felt so moved by the article that I looked up all the scriptures that Fr. Harry listed at the end of his essay.

I think Zoom has been a wonderful gift from God, to allow us to be together online and for Retreat (which I look forward to). Our monthly Corporate Communion (on Zoom of course) is a great time to catch up with others and to discuss the Community and current happenings.

A very interesting article by Fr. Firth on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how the figure of seven came about. At the end of the article, he states that God is generous and provides more gifts depending upon our needs at the time. I know in my life, God has provided so much when I have been in need, especially when I have had some special project. God is always there beside me to gently guide and direct me as needed.

I know God is with me and in me and all around me wherever I go and whatever I do. But often I forget and try to carry on myself and of course end up with problems. Praise God he is there to correct me and gently push me in the right direction.

We know that God is with us always, "to the ends of the earth". But it is not easy to keep that in mind all day long. My church group has been studying The Living Compass Lenten Study. It begins with "Just remember that God is with you." I have been trying to keep that in mind more than ever before. It keeps me be grounded. We take so much for granted. Our health, our material comforts, etc. But the most important things are summarized: Love God and Love other persons in your life.

I start the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises today, follow the first prayer sheet for a week and have my first Zoom meeting with my mentor next Tuesday afternoon. I'm looking forward to it.

Life remains full of changes, goodbyes, and grieving other loss. Two Canadian cousins have died and we lost two ladies from our Saturday morning women's study group, when one moved and one died. The funeral for our Bible Study sister was followed two days later by the announcement that our Rector would be leaving in January. We also learned an uncle had died. Because of the ongoing shifts in my usual community and small group gatherings, I often feel like I'm walking in slow motion through a fog. I have thought of what my favorite manager once said: "Okay God, just give me an "F" and let me out of the test."

There have been moments of "Wonder", which became a theme in Advent after I saw a single snowflake on my mitten. And the BraveJoy card theme for January of "Unraveling" was certainly pertinent. The reflection talked about unraveling a mystery or letting life unravel in order to remake it into something new. I could relate to both. Among other images that continue to sustain me was one on my October calendar. The drawing and quote about tree roots intertwining and making community. This got me looking to see where my roots are getting nourishment right now. I found I was humming the song we sing at Retreat "In His Presence there is fullness of joy, in His presence, the new wine and oil, and in His Presence is where I long to be. Father draw me, draw me close to where you are, draw me close to where you are." I am putting roots back down, listening to God's Word in music and in print around me.



FORMATION AND TRAINING

Chapter Emeritus Reflect on WSHS – The Past

As we prepare for our 50th Anniversary Retreat, the members of Chapter Emeritus share their reflections on the early days of WSHS and how this Community has influenced their lives.

My Journey with our Community Sr. Carol Matthew, WSHS



I was President of Episcopal Church Women. I cleaned and cooked in the church kitchen. I designed and painted the mural on the wall of the nursery. I taught Sunday school and worked as a youth group leader. I received an award from my rector for all my "good work"! This was in St Joseph, Missouri in the early 1970's. I remember still the feeling of looking into the mirror and saying "God I am so busy doing all I can. There has to be more, I still feel empty and alone, please help me." I was also married raising three small boys.

I found a diocesan bulletin in the church office and read about the two first Sisters admitted into the Order in Kansas City. My heart was so drawn to

this but I immediately thought that I would not be good enough to be a part of something so special. Fr. John Lambert was one of our priests at Christ Church in St. Joe, and also a friend. He understood my struggles and strongly suggested that I contact Sr. Angela of *The Worker Sisters Of The Holy Spirit* and consider applying to this new Order. My heart skipped a beat as I could not believe that he was speaking about my heart's desire. With his recommendation, I wrote to Sr. Angela and I was afraid that once I revealed that I was in therapy working on past childhood abuse issues I would not be accepted. Sr. Angela phoned me and was so encouraging and supportive and accepted me as an applicant over the phone.

In the early days Sr. Angela invited you to become a Sister. You were asked to choose three names and the reason behind each one. I chose Matthew, Matthew, and Matthew. I explained that it was in Matthew that I learned how much Jesus loved children and that the hairs on my head were counted. In Matthew we are told that a sparrow does not fall to the ground without God knowing and He loves us like the sparrow. These are the lessons that spoke to my heart as a child and have stayed with me. Very simple but close to my heart! My three choices went over like a lead balloon! When I explained my love for Matthew, Sr. Angela laughed and called me a "trip" in her endearing way!

Not too long after becoming a Sister my family moved to Ontario Canada in 1978. I am a Canadian citizen born in Toronto Ontario. I have over the years lived in many areas of the U.S. and kept a home in Ontario for 35 years. After a Chapter meeting in Kansas City, I was driving with some of the Sisters, and Sister Angela, when she very calmly said to me "When you move to Canada, I want you to start Worker Sisters there and you will be the National Director!" I sat quietly for a few minutes then replied "Nice little bomb you just dropped there! Are you Crazy? She went into a fit of laughter and said no, I have faith in you and faith in the Spirit! It will work! I spent the rest of the ride stunned and the rest you know is history! We were legally incorporated with the Government of Ontario in 1979.

As your International Representative I have traveled to a World Conference in Brazil. I traveled to Honduras and Zimbabwe. I have had the joy of representing our Community at many Conferences throughout Canada and the United States.

My Journey with our Community **Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS**



It was fun to go back and read my Application to the Community. When I first learned about Worker Sisters, we were living in Washington, DC and my husband was a student at the Virginia Theological Seminary. I was the breadwinner in those days. I read a copy of *The Living Church* in which there was an article about an Episcopal Nun who was starting an Episcopal Religious Community for Lay People and I wrote to Sr. Angela to tell me more about it.

Thus we began a two-year correspondence for me to learn about WSHS and began my time as an Applicant. I was the only other member who lived outside Kansas City. The other one was Sr. Jane Barnabas who was from Birmingham Alabama. Husband Bill, graduated from Seminary in 1974 and we moved to Fayetteville,

North Carolina where he began St. Mark's Episcopal Church. It was an exciting time for us and Sr. Angela came to visit us in 1975 to admit me as a Worker. It was the first time we met.

My story for the next 50 years would begin and as I look back on it, what a gift I was given, the journey of a lifetime!

I must admit, however, that in the beginning there were bumpy roads. I remember well receiving my *Rule of Life* and was delighted. I thought to myself, "this is really nice" and "no problem living this" but I was quite wrong. After living with my *Rule* for several months, I decided this was not the path for me so I wrote to Sr. Angela telling her I was no longer interested in the Community and she could take me off the books. "Well, I thought, that was that" but I was wrong. I received a letter from her and she would not let me go. She suggested that I "read the Psalms and discover what they are saying to me". I must admit I was a bit taken back, but to her words agreed, and thus the journey of my life began.

I could not have had a better companion than this Community. Little did I know that it would be with me through the good times in my life and the bad times in my life to support, challenge, carry me at times, and stood by me accepting me and walking each step of the life journey we began together. We have laughed together, cried together and walked pace by pace each day, each hour, of these 50 years and I am so grateful that we continue to live Sr. Angela's dream which is now a beautiful reality.

My heart swells with joy as I read the Application of a new Applicant. The Holy Spirit guides people to us over all these years and continues. Yes, we are celebrating 50 years and the journey has really just begun. Let us all share in shouts of joyful celebration for this precious gift we have been given.

**Some Fond Memories of Sr. Jacquie Elizabeth, WSHS Chapter Emeritus
By Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS**



Unfortunately, Sr. Jacquie Elizabeth, WSHS is in memory care and unable to be with us for this joyful 50th Anniversary Celebration. I would like to share the following of her love and friendship for those who have known her.

I believe it was in 1976, I made my first trip to Kansas City to meet with the Worker Sisters who had gathered there for a short weekend Retreat at St. Mary College in Leavenworth, Kansas. We were living in Fayettevill, North Carolina at that time. It was an exciting time for me as I had yet to meet all of the other members there whom I have never met. Sr. Angela and I arrived and what a joy to have her introduce myself and Sr. Jane Barnabas to the group. Sr. Jane had been there before and knew some of the others.

As we gathered, Sr. Angela ask that we pick someone to be our Prayer Partner. I remember standing there and wondered if someone might come up to me. Did feel a bit awkward as I didn't know anyone other than Sr. Angela and she already had a Prayer Partner. I remember standing there and all of a sudden, this member came up to me as said "Hi, I am Sr. Jacquie Elizabeth and I am hopeful you will be my Prayer Partner". I was overwhelmed with gratitude and was so pleased someone picked me

who knew no one. To this day, I still remember how welcome I felt and that Sr. Jacquie Elizabeth had reached out to me with love and welcoming me.

That was Sr. Jacquie Elizabeth, full of love, compassion and a dear friend from that moment on over these many years.

My Journey with our Community **Sr. Nancy Teresa**



Back in the early 70s my friend, Carol Sparks, (later to become Sr. Carol Luke) invited me to have coffee with some friends and meet a special person. I attended the coffee and met Sr. Angela. I was immediately interested. When she spoke of forming a group of women for spiritual growth and mentioned having a 'Rule of Life' I was very impressed. I did not have such a rule and thought it sounded like a very good idea.

Sr. Angela interviewed me and I was able to begin my Applicancy period. Months later, I was admitted to the Community. In April of 1974, I became a Sister. I was the only member admitted at that ceremony and I remember how nervous I was. However, the service went beautifully thanks to Sr. Angela's deep spiritual presence and the service she had created.

The early years were tumultuous sometimes. I remember laughing so hard I almost fell off my chair and also times of great seriousness (as the time when we decided to stop wearing our veils). The veils symbolized chastity; most of us were married so we decided it was confusing to wear veils. Our first 'retreats' were simply a few hours of gathering together. Then we gathered for a whole day and eventually, we had an 'all night' retreat.

In the beginning, Sr. Angela created much of our material, from the *Rule of Life for the Community* to the *Rule for Sisters and Brothers*, to the Admission services. At times, we early members assisted in the writing (joined of course by the Holy Spirit). I remember sitting in the room at an early Retreat as we wrote the prayer for the Community (which we still use today). Sr. Angela wrote the prayer for Companions and Friends.

Our original name was Worker Sisters FOR the Holy Spirit, but after our dear first Bishop Visitor, Arthur Vogel, noted it was impossible to do anything FOR the Holy Spirit, we quickly became the Worker Sisters OF.

As the years went by, our Community grew and changed. I do remember one meeting when Sr. Angela asked us to share what drew us to the Community. The answers were varied but the common response was "I am not sure why; I just knew I wanted to do this". Many of us have shared the truth that "we don't know who we would be without this Community".

I treasure so many memories of friendship. Tears and laughter, prayer, singing, and silence. The biggest tragedy in my life was the sudden death of my first husband, Dick Gardner. I was left with a business

to run (and eventually sell), and four children to raise. I truly don't know how I would have gotten through this without the Community. There was always someone I could call, someone who could help. Early after Dick's death, Sr. Angela invited me to fly to Chicago and spend a couple of days with her and her husband Finley (Br. Andrew). I will never forget her hospitality and I know it helped me begin to heal.

One of the things that has surprised me through the years has been how members of this Community dealt with grief, sadness, divorce, loss of a child, loss of a husband as well as the many other traumas in our lives. These women and men came through these experiences and they grew spiritually. It was wonderful to behold.

One thing I know for sure about Sr. Angela, she was deeply in love with Jesus. Her spirituality was without question. And I also know that the deep presence of God in my life, evidenced by this Community, has made all the difference in the world to me.

My Journey with our Community **Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS**



It was in 1977 when I first heard of the Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit. I was twenty-five years old. The Community was in its first years and the Worker Sisters had served at the Diocesan Convention for the Diocese of West Missouri. This had come to the attention of many women in the diocese and our Episcopal Church Women invited Sr. Carol Luke, WSHS to come to our small town of Lexington, Missouri.

Sr. Carol spoke at one of our monthly meetings. She came in full habit which was, at that time, a veil, white with a red band and a white blazer with red trim and the Worker Sister patch. For those of you who knew her, she was a person of deep personal faith. She openly shared her faith, her experience of the Community and very personal struggles with our group. I was moved and, in my heart, knew that I needed to know more about the Worker Sisters.

After our meeting I asked to speak with her. I asked her where she lived, she said, "At home with my children and family." I was surprised, thinking she probably lived in a convent. I asked her about the *Rule of Life* and she shared her spiritual practice. Then she said to me, "Come and see."

That Saturday I traveled 60 miles to attend the monthly Corporate Communion at St. Michael's and All Angels Church in Overland Park, Kansas. It was a long way for me to go in my very old Pontiac but I wanted to know more. It was May of 1977 and the group had just been at the WSHS Annual Retreat in April. They were excited and talked about what they had experienced.

After that I made an appointment with Sr. Angela for an introductory interview. That was quite the experience! I met her at a restaurant in Kansas City, Missouri. She came on her motorcycle, wearing leathers and a helmet. I thought, "Wow! That is not what I expected." Sr. Angela shared why she had begun the Community. She said she believed that women in the Episcopal Church were searching for spiritual Community. She gave me permission to apply to the Community.

That summer I had back surgery and a lengthy recovery, so was unable to attend the Corporate Communion for a while. In the fall my application was accepted and I was admitted as a Worker in December of 1977 at All Saints Episcopal Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

Thus began my journey with the Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Sr. Angela led our monthly Corporate Communion and was a strong spiritual presence. I believed that each of the Sisters were very holy, walked just a little bit above the ground and kept the *Rule of Life* perfectly each and every day. I was well aware of my own spiritual struggles and challenges with living the *Rule*.

A few years later I went to Sr. Angela and asked her permission to become a Sister. She told me I was not ready yet. I was disappointed and did not know what I needed to do to become “worthy.” Sr. Peg Mathias, who was a very good friend and confidant talked with me. She had been in the first group and when their time came to be admitted Sr. Angela had not allowed her to be admitted as a sister. She was admitted in the second Admission Service for Sisters. That is why her name was Sr. Peg Mathias, because Mathias was the disciple who was chosen later, after the resurrection.

As time went on, I was faced with some spiritual challenges. Sr. Angela came to me after that period of time and told me she thought it was time for me to become a sister. In 1985 I became Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS at the Annual Retreat in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. My journey with Worker Sisters has been filled with times of great spiritual growth, times of questioning my faith and times of great joy.

Sr. Angela was a formidable leader. She was loving and seemed to know each of us personally and understand where we were spiritually. She had a sense of each person’s soul. She knew when to reach out, what to say and when to administer discipline. Discipline wasn’t always easy for me to take!

We all grew in the early years through many changes. Changes that weren’t always readily accepted. Some of the husbands of sisters wanted to get involved with our Community. Sr. Angela had resisted it because it had been founded on the principal of a Community for lay women. On a trip to Italy with Sr. Carol Matthew, Sr. Angela was praying about this and distinctly heard God tell her to open the Community to men. Thus began the second order of Worker Brothers of the Holy Spirit. Those first brothers, Br. Charles and Br. Walter forged the way, adding new depth to the Community.

When I was discerning a call to the Diaconate, Sr. Angela had great reservations. Again, Workers Sisters of the Holy Spirit had been founded on the principal of a Community for lay people. Now there were those of us who were seeking ordination. She did not know what to do with us! So, the third order of ordained Brothers and Sisters was formed. Those of us ordained became the Rev. Sr. whoever. That proved to be cumbersome and ordained people were welcomed back into the first and second orders.

In 1987 I became the first Director of Admissions. That meant that I was then placed on Chapter. I was the youngest and certainly the most inexperienced on Chapter. I remember fondly a Chapter retreat at the Franciscan Center in Independence, Missouri. Several chapter members were turning fifty that year. Sr. Angela gave each of us a pair of high-top sneakers and fleece slippers as a gift and we wore them proudly. We formed a circle and sang together as those whose birthday years were being celebrated danced through a circle of arms. It was glorious! That Retreat, I realized that I had not

had many strong and faithful women in my life and that God had provided me with this wonderful Community of women who were showing me the face of God.

Through the years we have had many wonderful sisters who have since passed into our Community of Saints. Of course, Sr. Angela has had and continues to have a great impact on the Community. Through her guidance, discernment and spiritual teaching we have grown and become the Community we now are.

Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit has been a spiritual lifeline for me through out these forty-five years. Without the Community and love I have experienced, I would be a totally different person and a flailing Christian. I have learned so much about God and how much God loves me. I have learned to humbly accept wearing that habit! I have shared my grief, my spiritual journey and entire life with the Sisters and Brothers, and been loved and accepted unconditionally.

We have survived a pandemic and learned that through the power of the internet we can be “together” even when it is not physically possible. We have learned “Zoom” and are able to have monthly Regional Corporate Communion and share our lives with each other from a distance. God continues to teach us and we continue to grow.

And now, I am “Chapter Emeritus”! What happened to that young woman so many years ago that was the youngest on Chapter? She is still plugging away asking each day to be faithful, writing yellow letters (not often enough!) and giving back whenever she can.

We look to the future with joy and expectation. How exciting to be celebrating 50 years! Sr. LaVerne Peter who leads us as our first “Prioress” has both the past for reflection, the vision Sr. Angela gave us and the hope for a wonderful future where men and women can come searching for something more and find community in Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit.

Sr. Angela has gone onto her reward. With a smile on her face, I know she is looking down and saying, “Well done, good and faithful servants!” Her vision is still alive!