



**“Give thanks to the
Lord, for He is good;
His love endures
forever.”
– Psalm 107:1**



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A Letter from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

When I reflect on the theme for this newsletter Harvesting Blessings: Celebrating the People, Gifts, and Moments That Make Our Community So Special, I can't help but focus on the past 8 years as we worked through the renovation project on the Saint Anne side of campus.

This project began as a couple simple questions: Where do we go from here? How do we best move forward with our aging building? There were many individuals involved in this discussion; including associates, Benedictine, and the broader Winona community. We knew these decisions would have an immense impact on our residents and discussions were not taken lightly. Everyone had an opportunity to weigh in with their thoughts. It became abundantly clear that our building held a special place in the hearts of the Winona community. ***So, we looked at harvesting our blessings.***

Once we determined renovating our current spaces was the right thing to do, we brought members of our team together for



further discussion and planning. We needed every department involved as together we create the experience for our residents. This was an important part of our renovation process and it was evident our associates embrace what is best for those we serve.

Renovation began, and it wasn't without trials. Renovation schedules changed, construction work impeded on workflow, we had a few floods, the noise, the dust, the inconvenience of providing our best to residents while maneuvering around work zones, and needing to move all of our residents before the end of the project. And all of you did this despite how frustrating it could be. ***Thus, we celebrate our people (all of you).***

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A Letter from our Executive Director *continued*

In order to accomplish this project, we needed to raise money. We held a capital campaign led by Mark Metzler. Our donors responded. Our associates responded. Some supported us with their time or their talents. ***We are truly blessed by the gifts we received.***

On April 30, 2026, the project was declared “completed.” Again, our team responded. We now needed to plan our blessing and open house. When we had a vacancy in our Sales & Marketing department, Michelle Repinski voluntarily stepped up to take the lead on this event. Throughout the past few months while we were planning our event, we saw our teams across campus pull together once again as we truly had something to celebrate. An event such as this is no small undertaking. Members from every department were involved in some way to show our appreciation to our donors and the community of Winona. Our team’s talents were shining brightly. Many willingly

offered their assistance. We had A LOT of work to do. It took us three months to organize updated spaces, clean our building both inside and out to make it look brand new, implement new workflow processes, clean up our landscaping, and plan our event.

On September 1st, we blessed our building and celebrated our gifts. Benedictine leadership team, donors, and members of the broader Winona community were on campus to help us celebrate. It was a beautiful event that ended way too soon. We truly have so very much to be thankful for. ***These are the moments that make our community so special.***

Sincerely,

Carol Ehlinger
Executive Director



Thank You



Thank you to everyone who joined us for our Blessing and Celebration, and to all who contributed to making this renovation possible. We are deeply grateful for the generosity and support of our donors, associates, board members, residents, volunteers, families, and friends.

This transformation would not have been possible without the many contributions made along the way. Whether you shared a financial gift, your time, your talents, or your encouragement, every contribution mattered and was truly appreciated.

Because of your kindness and commitment, our residents and associates will benefit from a more welcoming and enriching environment for years to come. Your generosity has made a lasting impact, and we are sincerely thankful for your support.

Benedictine Annual Conference

Benedictine Spirit Award - External Community Focus

We are honored and excited to receive the Benedictine Spirit Award for External Community Focus, which celebrates innovative partnerships and initiatives that positively impact the broader community while reflecting the Benedictine Mission and Core Values.

This recognition highlights our partnership with Winona State University through our reimagined Scrubs Camp, a full-day immersive healthcare experience for 52 local high school students. Participants spent the entire day on our campus, exploring both clinical and non-clinical career paths through hands-on experiences, meaningful interactions with residents, and time spent alongside staff members across nearly every department.

More than 230 staff hours were dedicated to making this experience possible, demonstrating our community's commitment to mentoring the next generation of healthcare professionals. Together, we provided students with valuable insight into careers in senior living while fostering meaningful intergenerational connections.

We are incredibly proud of our team and grateful to our partners, residents, and staff who helped make Scrubs Camp such a meaningful and impactful experience. This award reflects the dedication, collaboration, and spirit of service that define Benedictine Living Community-Winona every day.



Recreation



Esther Zimmerman
Recreation Director

As the leaves begin to change and we settle into the beautiful season of fall, the Recreation Department has been reflecting on just how many blessings surround us every day. One of the greatest gifts of our community is the incredible number of people who come together to create moments of connection and joy for our residents. This fall, we have so much to look forward to!



A Halloween Tradition: Trick-or-Treating with Our Residents One of our favorite Halloween traditions is just around the corner! On Friday, October 30th at 1:00 p.m., we will welcome children from area schools and our community for a special campus-wide trick-or-treating event. Our residents absolutely love seeing the costumes, hearing the laughter, and being able to hand out treats to all of our little visitors. It is a wonderful opportunity for generations to come together and share a little Halloween magic. Because we typically welcome hundreds of children, we are asking our families, staff, friends, and community members to help us fill our candy supply! Candy donations are greatly appreciated and will help make sure there is plenty for everyone. Every bag of candy donated helps us create another smile for one of our residents and one of our visiting trick-or-treaters.



Calling All Costumed Canines! October wouldn't be complete without a little four-legged fun! We are excited to host a Pet Costume Parade on Thursday, October 22nd at 2:00 p.m. We are looking for lots of friendly, furry friends to join us as we make our way across campus. Our residents love pet visits, and seeing our canine friends dressed up for Halloween is sure to bring plenty of smiles and laughter. If you have a dog who enjoys people and would like to participate, we would love to have them join the parade!



Volunteers Needed: Help Us Deck the Halls! As we look ahead to the holiday season, we are reminded that some of the most meaningful moments happen because people are willing to give their time. Our campus is transformed into a winter wonderland each Christmas, including nearly 40 Christmas trees decorated throughout campus! That is a lot of decorating—and we would love your help! We will be looking for volunteers during the holiday season to help decorate trees, put up decorations, and bring that special Christmas feeling to our residents. Whether you can help for an hour, an afternoon, or throughout the season, your time makes a difference. There is something especially meaningful about decorating for Christmas alongside residents, sharing stories about favorite holiday traditions, and creating beautiful spaces for everyone to enjoy.



A Community We Are Thankful For Perhaps our greatest blessing is the amazing community of people who make these events possible. From our incredible Recreation team and dedicated staff to volunteers, families, community partners, and residents themselves, it truly takes a village to create the special moments we celebrate. We recently had the opportunity to celebrate Assisted Living Week, complete with wonderful activities, including our Car Show, and we have even more fun planned as we continue celebrating our residents and the community around them. Events like these remind us that recreation is about so much more than activities on a calendar. It is about connection, belonging, laughter, memories, and creating moments that residents can look forward to and remember. As we enter this season of thanksgiving, we are grateful for every person who helps make our campus a place filled with life and joy. Thank you to everyone who donates, volunteers, visits, participates, brings a pet, shares a talent, or simply takes the time to brighten someone's day. There is truly an abundance of blessings growing in our community—and we are so thankful to harvest them together.



Minnesota Master Gardeners Help Enhance Butterfly and Bee Gardens at Benedictine Living Community-Winona

Benedictine Living Community-Winona recently welcomed volunteers from the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program for an assessment of its butterfly and bee gardens, marking an important step toward strengthening habitat for local pollinators and enhancing outdoor spaces for residents.

During their visit, Master Gardeners evaluated the gardens which are Certified Monarch Waystations and volunteered their expertise to help create a long-term plan for identifying plant species, improving garden health, and supporting butterflies, bees, and other beneficial pollinators.

Pollinator gardens play a vital role in supporting ecosystems. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 75% of the world's flowering plants and about 35% of food crops depend on animal pollinators such as bees, butterflies, birds, and bats. Pollinators are responsible for helping produce many fruits, vegetables, and nuts that people consume every day.

By planting and maintaining pollinator-friendly habitat, communities can help address the challenges pollinators face, including habitat loss and environmental changes. Native plants that bloom throughout the growing season provide critical sources of nectar and pollen while creating beautiful, vibrant landscapes.

The gardens also offer meaningful benefits for older adults. Research has shown that gardening and spending time outdoors can promote physical activity, support flexibility and balance, reduce stress, encourage social engagement, and foster a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Gardening environments can also provide calming connections to nature that support overall well-being.

"We are grateful to the Minnesota Master Gardeners for sharing their time, talents, and knowledge," said Benedictine staff. "Their guidance will help us continue improving our butterfly and bee gardens while creating a welcoming outdoor space for residents, families, and the many pollinators that visit our campus."

As plans move forward, the gardens will continue to serve as spaces of beauty, learning, and environmental stewardship, helping both residents and pollinators thrive.

Thank you to the Minnesota Master Gardeners for their dedication and volunteer spirit. Their partnership is helping cultivate a healthier habitat for butterflies and bees while enriching the lives of those who enjoy the gardens every day.

Sources: [usda.gov], [fws.gov], [nracs.usda.gov], [stacks.cdc.gov], [nationalgeographic.com], [actsretirement.org]



Callista Court



Katy Johnson
Director of Housing

Greetings!

At Callista Court, autumn isn't just a change in the weather—it is a season of feeling thankful. It is a time to look around and gather the many blessings, large and small, that make this place feel truly like home. When we reflect on our blessings, we find that our greatest riches are the people who share this journey with us. We see it in the daily acts of kindness that pass between neighbors in the hallways, the warm hospitality that welcomes new faces to our dining tables, and the deep, meaningful connections that turn neighbors into lifelong friends.

Callista Court is also rich with the dedicated service of our exceptional staff and volunteers, whose hands and hearts keep our community thriving every day. From a beautifully prepared meal to a comforting word during an afternoon walk, their care is a gift we cherish deeply. Together, we share laughter during morning activities, conversations over coffee, and the collective joy and caring.

As we move through this fall season, we invite everyone to pause and take stock of our collective blessings. Let us be thankful for the gifts of today and the memories of yesterday. Thank you for bringing your unique light, your stories, and your warmth to our community. You are the truest blessing we have to celebrate.

Saint Anne



Megan Baer
SNF Administrator

As we move through the fall season, this theme invites us to reflect on the abundance of blessings woven throughout our community. From acts of kindness and hospitality to meaningful connections, dedicated service, and moments of joy, we have much to be grateful for.

This summer, we had the opportunity to attend a local Celebrate Aging Expo and spend time connecting with older adults, families, volunteers, and other members of our greater community. It was a wonderful reminder of how meaningful simple conversations and connections can be. It was especially wonderful to visit with family members and volunteers who continue to be such an important part of our community. We are grateful for every opportunity to build relationships, share a smile, and celebrate the people who make our community so special.



Spiritual Care



Dennis Kunkel
Spiritual Care Director

A while back I was meeting with someone and wished them luck. She replied, "Luck has nothing to do with it, it's a blessing." This saying surprised me. She went on to explain that we have remember where these little blessings come from. If it were just by chance then we keep God out of the picture. I hear more people say that nothing happens by chance. Which I believe to be true. Lori Feuerhelm a music performer told me that she would pray that I would get a priest for all the Masses at Callista Court. Shortly after, I got them all filled.

Let us take a look at our blessings.

#1 The remodel of the Chapel of Our Lady. The Chapel looks so great and fills me with joy whenever I enter it. Not only do the new lights and carpet give a sort of refreshed look, it also enhances a lot of the beauty that was already there. For example, the new lighting has brought a lot more attention to the stained glass windows.

#2 The blessing of all of our volunteers that not only make our services better but also helps us see Christ in the world, country, state, city and each other in our community here at Benedictine - Winona.

#3 The residents and the significance all of them bring to our little community. Each person brings a little something to all of us. I personally cannot imagine this place without any of our residents.

#4 The joy of those that have gone before us. We have been gifted by so many special people, each giving us a special light. Every person that has lived here no matter how long has given us something special.

Another blessing on the horizon is our Annual Memorial Service on November 5. We will gather to remember and honor all those who have passed away during the past year.

Two services will be offered:

- **10:30 a.m.** at **Callista Court**
- **1:30 p.m.** in the **Chapel of Our Lady at Saint Anne**

These services provide an opportunity for residents, families, and staff to come together in prayer, remembrance, and gratitude for the lives of those we have lost since last November.

Minerva Ratz

Nearly 100-year-old Resident receives Long-Awaited Eighth-Grade Certificate

A Benedictine Callista Court resident recently received a dream nearly a century in the making when she was awarded an honorary eighth-grade certificate from Cochrane-Fountain City School District.

Minerva Ratz, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday, never had the opportunity to complete eighth grade. As a young girl, she was needed at home to help her family on the farm and was unable to finish her eighth-grade year. She was only one regular class or 2-weeks of summer school shy from graduating. That missing milestone remained a part of her story for decades.

Cochrane-Fountain City School Principal, Steve Stoppelmoor, presented Minerva with an honorary eighth-grade certificate in a heartfelt ceremony. Family members, fellow residents, and Benedictine staff gathered for the special occasion and were overjoyed to witness the long-awaited achievement.

“This was a very meaningful moment for Minerva and her family,” organizers said. “To see her finally receive this recognition after so many years was incredibly special”.

The ceremony was made possible through the efforts of a fellow Callista Court Resident, Ardell Nadesan, who learned Minerva’s story and wanted to help make her dream a reality. Ardell coordinated the presentation alongside Benedictine Winona’s Wellness Director, Esther Zimmerman. Esther and Ardell worked with school officials and Minerva’s family to arrange the award ceremony recognizing the education she was unable to complete in childhood.

Surrounded by loved ones and friends, just before she turns one hundred years old, Minerva proudly accepted her certificate. Proving that it’s never too late to celebrate an accomplishment and honor a remarkable life story.



Therapy

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.” Psalm 107:1



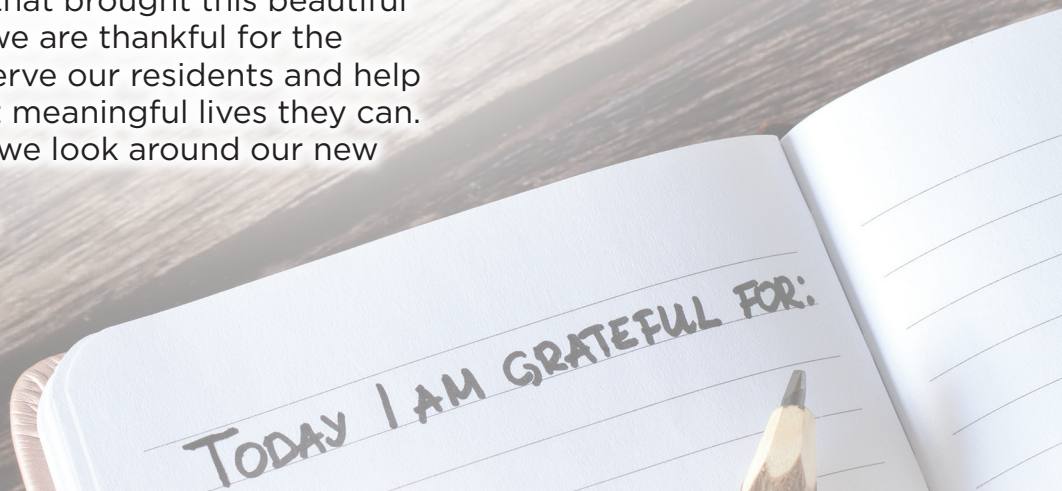
Karen Zibrowski
Therapy Team Lead

Oh, the blessings we have to be thankful for in our Therapy Department are plentiful! After a long renovation journey, the wait to move into our new space was finally over. The move itself was a whirlwind, followed by weeks of organizing, reorganizing, rediscovering old treasures, and making lists of the things we needed to make our new space feel like home. There was certainly a lot of thought, time, and teamwork that went into settling in—but today, we are grateful to pause, look around, and admire the beauty of our new therapy home.

While our “old” space holds many wonderful memories and served our residents so well, our new space has brought a renewed energy and excitement to both our team and the residents we serve. We are especially thankful for the abundance of natural light that fills our OT kitchen and stretches across our PT gym. There is something special about a bright, welcoming space that invites people to explore, learn, and grow. And our new space is already being put to good use! Our residents are practicing meaningful everyday skills—cooking in the OT kitchen, working on laundry skills, walking the endless loop of our ceiling track, enjoying the privacy of a closed treatment room, practicing a real tub transfer, and finding a quiet place to focus during speech therapy. These are more than just features of a new department; they are opportunities for our residents to build confidence, maintain independence, and participate in the activities that matter to them.

Perhaps one of the sweetest parts of this journey has been watching our residents take ownership of the new space. They have been excited and curious to explore, asking questions, sharing ideas, and offering suggestions along the way. Their anticipation and enthusiasm have reminded us that this space was created not simply for our residents, but with them in mind.

As we look ahead, our Therapy team feels incredibly blessed and thankful. We are grateful for the many hands, hearts, and hours that brought this beautiful space to life. Most of all, we are thankful for the opportunity to use it to serve our residents and help them live the fullest, most meaningful lives they can. It was a long wait, but as we look around our new Therapy home, we can truly say it was worth the wait. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.



Training Center



Kimberly Nahrgang, RN
Staff Development
Director / Training Center
Coordinator

Harvesting blessings brings our minds around the corner from summer vacations to changing leaves, corn mazes, pumpkin patches, and good food. As the lead nurses for Staff Development and Infection Prevention/Quality, harvest has an especially personal meaning. Both of us have farming families. Harvest season isn't just something on the calendar—it's something we experience at home. Early mornings, long days, changing weather, and conversations about crops, equipment, and whether the rain or snow will cooperate consume our worlds. Good luck going anywhere without a comment on potential yields from various fields of corn and beans or if we can get that 3rd crop of hay in.

Bear with me on this deep thought that sprouted: Harvest is like education. Farmers spend months preparing, planting, nurturing, watching, and adjusting before seeing the results. Training works much

the same way. We teach, practice, review, reinforce, and encourage—and eventually those seeds grow into confidence, knowledge, and excellent care.

Moving into a new-to-us, larger training space on the ground floor of Saint Anne's has been a blessing the past month. The space more closely simulates a resident living environment, giving a realistic place to practice skills. We have skill review days planned during Sept and Oct., and are welcoming back nursing students from Saint Mary's University and Minnesota State College Southeast. Seeds that have been planted will grow into confidence and knowledge for many who will go out into the world to provide care. Our Training Center will also host a fall open house on Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2-6 p.m. in our CNA lab at Saint Mary's University. Come check us out!



Scan for
more info

This season, we celebrate those who provide food for our tables, those who teach, those who learn, and our residents and clients whose harvest stories are part of our community's history. The best harvests come from good preparation, hard work, and a little help from above.



Sales



Michelle Repinski
Sales and Marketing
Manager

Fall is a blessed time of year; the weather cools, there's abundance in the garden, and there are subtle reminders of abundance in our lives. For me, this year is especially rewarding as I have intensified my journey with Benedictine and am transitioning from the Benedictine Foundation into the role of Sales and Marketing Manager for Winona. This opportunity allows me to further my connections to a place I have truly grown to love. It's only fitting that the theme of this edition of the newsletter is Harvesting Blessings!

**“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”
– Psalm 107:1**

As the days become shorter and the colors of autumn begin to brighten the landscape, we are reminded that harvest season is about much more than gathering crops and settling in for winter. It is a time to reflect on the blessings we have received, the relationships we cherish, and the opportunities that lie ahead. In senior living, the season of harvest beautifully aligns with the journey many older adults and their families experience when considering the next chapter in their lives. For many aging adults, the decision to move into a senior living community comes after a lifetime of hard work, family, friendships, and service to others. These years of dedication create richness of memories, wisdom, accomplishments, and meaningful relationships. Moving into a senior living community is an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of a life well lived while embracing new possibilities.

One of the greatest blessings found in senior living is the gift of compassionate care. Families often carry concerns about safety, health, and social isolation. Compassionate caregivers help ease those worries by providing support with dignity, kindness, and respect. Whether assisting with daily activities, offering a listening ear, or celebrating life's special moments, caregivers become trusted partners in helping residents thrive. It is such a blessing to be a part of a community that delivers excellent and compassionate care for those we serve in such a beautiful setting. For those living in our Assisted Living and Memory Care apartments, the blessings continue in the form of comradery, faith, and support from our outstanding staff. For their families, there is peace in knowing that a loved one's journey will continue in the safety of our compassionate caregivers.

If you or a loved one are ready to begin those next steps in finding the right fit for your needs, please reach out at 507-457-3867. I look forward to connecting with you and beginning this journey together.





Benedictine

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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2026

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Thank you



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to the residents and families
who call Benedictine - Winona
their home 