

# Ministry Report

News/Views  
From the Franciscan Sisters  
of Christian Charity  
Sponsored Ministries, Inc.

VOLUME 34 NUMBER 2 SPRING 2026



## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries is to carry out the commitment of the Sponsor to the healing and educational mission of the Catholic Church through the provision of quality health care and educational services.

In a spirit of partnership with dedicated religious and lay leaders, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries will strengthen the Sponsor's commitment by leading change, ensuring stewardship of resources and integrating mission and values.

## Franciscan Legacy

By Sister Kay Klackner, OSF, Vice President of Mission

**A** legacy is the lasting impact created through values, leadership, and service. This impact can be left by a person, recognized after leaving a position or passed away, or by an active advocacy group. Through the emboldened courage of the foundresses of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, the Sisters have ensured that their legacy mission continues through strong leadership.

Sister Laura Wolf is an important part of the legacy for the health care ministry. Through her strong leadership of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries, her legacy laid the foundation for today's healthcare organizations rooted in Franciscan values.



A 1983 Chapter decided that health care had become so complex for the Community leadership to govern the major responsibilities and research for decisions. Sister Laura Wolf was sent for education. On March 6, 1985, the first meeting was held and by May 13, 1985, the Health Advisory Services office was created. The "office" was set-up in the Motherhouse former laundry supply room. The staff included Sister Laura, Mark Fraser, finance officer, and Sister Mary

Stephen, secretary. The work of these small and meager beginnings soon included constitution and by-laws. Over the 41 years of existence, the location and name have changed several times. The words of the mission statement have been revised, but the original purpose remains true, "To assist the General Council in providing a more active governance role to our Health Care apostolate."

Although Sister Laura Wolf is no longer serving in her leadership role, her decades of leadership laid the foundation of the health care ministries that today continue to provide compassionate, Catholic-based care in hospitals and eldercare facilities to communities in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Nebraska. These health care organizations focus on and uphold human dignity as they provide quality care with compassion and love.

The continued strength of these health care ministries shows that legacy is built through mission and service of people and their relationships. Through the dedication of leaders like Sister Laura Wolf, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity have created a lasting Franciscan legacy in health care that continues to serve others and honor their founding values.



## Message from the President

### Friends,

Legacy is not only what we leave behind—it is what we intentionally build each day through faith, service, and formation. At Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Ministries (FSCCM), we are beginning a thoughtful journey to strengthen Christian formation for leaders, employees, board members, volunteers, and the communities we serve.



Ryan Neville

FSCCM is currently writing a proposal for a five year, \$2.5 million grant through Lilly Endowment Inc. The purpose of the grant is to multiply opportunities and increase access to settings that help individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds explore and engage in Christian practices—addressing spiritual interests and questions, building community, nourishing religious lives, and growing in faith. As the proposal is still in development, details will be shared as they become available.

While we do not yet know exactly what this initiative will entail, we see value in creating, within each organization, additional opportunities for faith filled discussion, pilgrimages, shared reflection, and other meaningful formation experiences.

Regardless of the outcome of the grant application, our commitment remains strong. Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora will join the Sponsored Ministry Office half time to support this important work.

Through intentional formation, we honor our past and build a faithful legacy for the future.

## INTRODUCING NEW TEAM MEMBERS TO FSCC SPONSORED MINISTRIES



SISTER MARIE KOLBE ZAMORA  
Formator



VINCE GALLUCCI  
Chief Administrative Officer

*Ministry Report* is published quarterly by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries, Inc., corporate office.

Please help us maintain our mailing list. Send additions and deletions to: [kstenzel@fscm.org](mailto:kstenzel@fscm.org)

**Editor:** Karen Stenzel



## Legacy and Leadership at Clement Manor

For over 40 years, Clement Manor has been more than just a workplace to me; it's been a calling, a community, and a home. Reflecting on my journey here, I am humbled by the incredible progress we've made together—a progress driven by our steadfast dedication to compassion and quality care.

I've been here for the long haul, and memories of our history are not that distant. The story of Clement Manor started in 1981, when the School Sisters of St. Francis planted the seeds of compassion on a 40-acre farm. A year later, the first cornerstone was laid, and our beautiful chapel was dedicated, establishing the spiritual foundation that still guides us today. The momentum continued in 1983 with the opening of our independent living apartments, followed by assisted living in 1997, creating a true continuum of care that adapts to our residents' needs.

Milestones such as receiving numerous deficiency-free state surveys, earning the Step III Quality Award from the American Health Care Association in 2008, and achieving national accreditation from The Joint Commission in 2022 affirmed our dedication to excellence. A particularly significant moment came in 2024, as the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity assumed sponsorship from the School Sisters of St. Francis, bringing renewed energy and vision for our future while honoring our shared Catholic faith and values.



We are dedicated to supporting our community and local partners, including working with the Greenfield Police Department, as our residents assembled survival kits for the homeless.

And in 2025, we were deeply honored to have Archbishop Grob preside over Mass here, a spiritual highlight for our community.

And as I look ahead, my deepest hope is that the legacy we have built together endures—one rooted in faith, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to those we serve. I hope Clement Manor continues to be a place where people feel loved, valued, and cared for, and where our mission is reflected in every interaction. May the momentum we've created inspire future leaders and staff to carry this work forward with the same dedication, ensuring Clement Manor remains a trusted sanctuary of dignity and hope for generations to come. The future of

Clement Manor is bright. I leave with confidence that our shared mission and vision are in capable hands, guided by the leadership of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Ministries.

With deepest sincerity and gratitude,  
Dennis Ferger, CEO



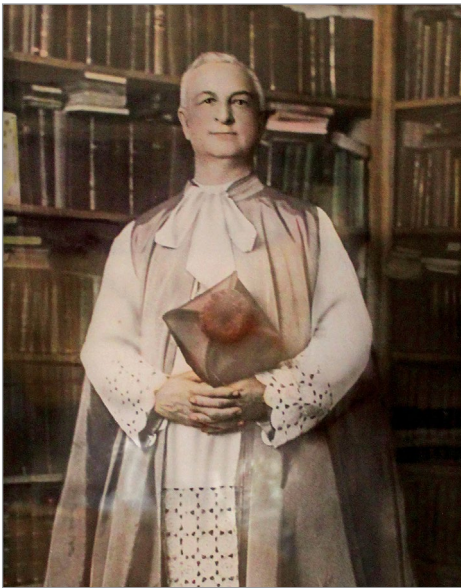
*For 40 years, Dennis has been a steady presence at Clement Manor—serving with dedication, compassion, and heart. As he prepares to retire, we celebrate the legacy he leaves behind.*



## Where Legacy Lives: Healing, Service, and Faith Across Generations

Legacy is not measured simply in years, buildings, or milestones—it is revealed in lives touched, hearts healed, and a mission faithfully carried forward. At Franciscan Healthcare, that legacy began as a response to God’s call: to serve with compassion, humility, and love.

In 1905, St. Joseph’s Home for the Aged opened its doors, offering comfort and dignity to elderly pioneers in northeast Nebraska. What began as a simple act of mercy soon grew into something greater. By 1923, the first hospital was established, extending that same healing ministry to the broader community. In the 1950s, a dedicated hospital building rose—a visible sign of a mission taking deeper root.



*The history of Franciscan Healthcare begins with Monsignor Joseph Ruesing who became resident pastor of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, West Point, Neb., in 1884.*



*Pictured left to right are St. Joseph’s Home in 1950 and Franciscan Healthcare today.*

As the ministry grew, so did its reach. In 1995, the healthcare system was renamed Franciscan Care Services, reflecting a broader vision of care. Just a few years later, beginning in 1998, satellite clinics emerged to better serve surrounding communities. Today, as Franciscan Healthcare, that commitment is visible across the region, with clinics in Scribner, Wisner, Oakland, and Howells, along with pharmacy sites, a daycare, and additional services designed to meet people where they are.

This spirit of service extends even further through JOYRIDE Public Transit, providing affordable transportation throughout Burt and Cuming counties. Whether for medical needs or everyday life, this service reflects a deeper truth: care is not confined to a building—it is carried into the community, wherever it is needed.

For generations, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity answered God’s call with unwavering devotion. Their presence helped shape not only the organization, but the very spirit of care that continues today—

one rooted in dignity, compassion, and faith. Their work was never just about care—it was about love in action, about seeing the face of Christ in each person they served.

That spirit remains alive today.

Grounded in the words of Matthew 25:40—“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”—each act of care becomes something more than service; it becomes a reflection of Christ’s love. This mission extends to patients, families, employees, and the most vulnerable among us.

Yet legacy is not only what we inherit—it is what we choose to build.

As Franciscan Healthcare looks to the future, it does so with faith and intention. With each new service, each expanded program, and each life touched, the organization continues to answer a calling that began more than a century ago. Growth is not pursued for its own sake, but as a way to better serve—to reach farther, care deeper, and respond to the evolving needs of the communities it calls home.



## An Enduring Legacy at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital

**F**roedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital in Manitowoc, Wisc., carries a legacy rooted in faith, perseverance, and compassionate service. Its origins trace back to the late 19th century, when the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity first responded to the healthcare needs of the community. Between 1881 and 1888, they operated the small St. Mary Hospital, caring for the sick of Manitowoc County despite limited resources. Ultimately, financial hardship and social barriers forced the hospital to close. However, as Manitowoc continued to grow, so did the demand for accessible, modern medical care.

Undeterred by past challenges, the Sisters moved forward with remarkable courage and trust in Divine Providence. In April 1898, they purchased the former Gerpheide's Park, a scenic site overlooking the city, river, and harbor. Their vision became reality on September 28, 1899, when Holy Family Hospital was officially dedicated. This marked



*Pictured is the original Holy Family Hospital.*

the beginning of a new chapter in healthcare for the region.

Central to this effort was Mother Alexia Fullmer, born Pauline Fullmer on November 9, 1859, in Manitowoc Rapids. Entering religious life in 1881, she rose to become Mother Superior in 1891. Her leadership, grounded in faith and determination, guided the hospital through its formative years. She inspired the Sisters to remain steadfast, emphasizing that work rooted in faith and good intention would ultimately succeed.

During the hospital's first year, Sister Seraphica Oyen served as Superior. Under her direction, essential improvements were made, including the construction of a laundry facility, wooden sidewalks, and a protective shed over the entrance. At that time, thirteen Sisters staffed the hospital, making extraordinary sacrifices to ensure continuous care. They often slept in cramped, poorly ventilated spaces and rotated in eight-hour shifts to provide round-the-clock service to patients.

Another notable figure in the hospital's early history was Sister Clarence Hennessey, who served as cook from 1899 to 1939. Much of the hospital's food came from its own garden, reflecting the Sisters'



*Sisters Kay Klackner, Mary Ann Tupy, and Marcollette Madden portray Sister Clarence Hennessey, Mother Alexia, and Sister Seraphica for a historical reenactment during FHF's 125th anniversary celebration in 2024.*

resourcefulness. During the Great Depression, they extended their compassion beyond patients, feeding hungry men who came to their door. In 1933, Sister Clarence documented the hospital's early history, preserving the story of its founding and mission.

Today, Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital continues this enduring legacy. As part of the Froedtert ThedaCare Health system and its only Catholic hospital, it remains committed to holistic, compassionate care. The spirit of Mother Alexia and the Franciscan Sisters lives on, reflected in a mission grounded in faith, service, and the belief that extraordinary good can be accomplished through humble means.



## A Legacy of Faith, Service and Community Care

In 2025, the current Genesis Hospital marked its 10th anniversary of opening. This milestone reflects the incredible community we serve and the generations of team members who built our tradition of compassionate care.

### Our two sponsors

Genesis HealthCare System’s commitment to faith-based healthcare began in 1891, when 84 dedicated Protestant women founded the 12-bed Zanesville City Hospital. The facility would later become

Bethesda Hospital, one of our two sponsors.

In 1900, the Margaret Blue Sanitarium was donated to the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, marking the beginning of our second sponsor. Five sisters came to Zanesville to lead the facility, further establishing compassionate patient care in Southeastern Ohio. As the community’s needs grew, the sanitarium moved and was renamed Good Samaritan Hospital, a 25-bed facility.

Meanwhile, Zanesville City Hospital expanded with a 12-room addition in 1901, adopting the name Bethesda, inspired by Jerusalem’s healing pool. By 1915, community support led to a new 60-bed building. These early expansions reflected the growing demand for quality healthcare in the region.

### More expansion

The 1950s and 1960s brought steady growth for both hospitals. Bethesda moved to a 40-acre site, which is now the Genesis Hospital campus. By 1966, Good Samaritan expanded to 420 beds and became Good Samaritan Medical Center. The name change reflected new services,

including outpatient, emergency, intensive care, rehabilitation, and critical care.

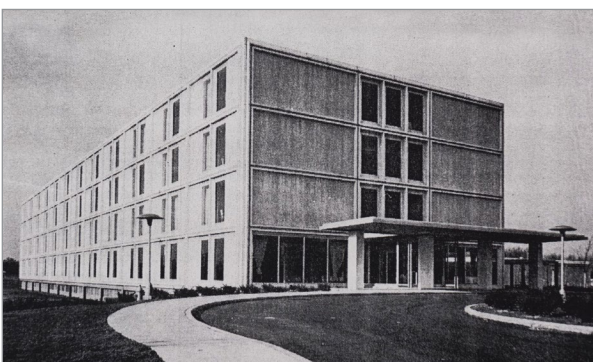
Bethesda added a laboratory, cardiac catheterization lab, psychiatric center, and an outpatient pavilion with physician offices in the 1980s and 1990s.

### Forming Genesis HealthCare System

Bethesda and Good Samaritan began combining resources and expertise to offer more services for the community. Trauma and oncology registries began in 1989, followed by a cardiac catheterization lab in 1990 and an MRI facility in 1991. In 1997, the two hospitals formed Genesis HealthCare System.

In 2011, planning began for a new, modern facility, guided by valuable input from our community. Genesis Hospital opened in 2015. Designed for the patient experience, the facility prioritizes patient comfort and privacy with the convenience of moving throughout the building without stepping outside. A dedicated Cancer Care Center was also added, offering “WrapAround Cancer Care” in one location to better meet the needs of our patients.

Today, Genesis remains committed to providing high-quality care in Southeastern Ohio. Guided by our faith-based mission, we care for the body, mind, and spirit of every patient through exceptional care, compassion, and service.



*Good Samaritan Hospital (top) originated from the Margaret Blue Sanitarium and expanded under the leadership of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Bethesda Hospital, pictured before expansions, originally opened as Zanesville City Hospital.*



## Decades of Service, Powered by Faith and Generosity

**E**xcellence in the core ministry and in service and out-reach to the local community does not just happen. It began at St. Joseph's Elder Services with Monsignor Joseph Riesling and the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. A need was recognized and action was taken. The dedication of the Sisters has been consistent throughout the years and helps keep the legacy alive.

Many people have joined the Sisters in both daily service and in administrative roles. There have been ups and downs, but the legacy of St. Joseph's Elder Services has remained in the hearts of those who minister there and in the heart of the local community.

Whether through the annual fund drive or special projects, the local community has been supportive financially. Just recently, the local community, with a legacy of support from Franciscan Healthcare, gave generously to the remodel of St. Joseph's Retirement Community. The legacy of giving is well-established.

Perhaps, the strongest evidence of the legacy of giving is the role and actions of the St. Joseph's Elder Services Foundation Board. The foundation solicits and accepts funds from the local community and beyond. It is involved in the public projects, but it also supports other unbudgeted needs. In recent years, it has provided vehicles for transportation of residents to



*The Easter Bunny arrival to West Point, Neb., in 2025 and by horse and carriage in 2026.*

medical appointments and to food service for the delivery of meals on wheels.

On an annual basis it makes donations to help cover the reimbursement short-fall of Medicaid for residents who do not have the finances necessary to cover their care and other needs. This allows us to serve the broader population of the elderly.

Recently, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries office has become involved in strengthening the legacy of giving for both the present and the future. The office has a coordinator who helps those on the local level reach out. The designated person for St. Joseph's Elder Services is Terry Nelson.

Of course, legacy goes beyond finance. St. Joseph's Elder Services is home to our residents. Caring for their spiritual needs is an important aspect of legacy. Mass is offered several times a week, and Lutheran

services are also provided each week. There are many little things that contribute to the homey atmosphere and shine the light on the residents and their families. Resident days are filled with a multitude of activity choices. There are many meals served in a highly decorated atmosphere whether for holiday seasons or for special days. In a recent obituary for one of the residents, the family pointed out how important the special Valentine dinner had been to the resident and his wife.

Preparation for Easter has involved residents filling over 2,300 plastic Easter eggs for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The arrival of the Easter Bunny is always a surprise. This year the bunny came in a horse and buggy. Surprises are part of the legacy too.



## A Legacy in Motion: Faith, Service, and the Future of St. Paul

Our legacy at St. Paul Elder Services has been built through faith, service, and the courage to respond to the changing needs of those we serve and our community. Since the beginning, we have continued to expand our services and outreach to the community. What was once a visiting nurse center for the poor is now a thriving retirement community.

Our history is grounded in the vision and commitment of those who understand that aging should never mean losing community, purpose, or dignity. Religious leadership, our Franciscan Sisters, community supporters, board members, associates, volunteers, and those we serve each played a vital role in shaping what St. Paul has become and what it will be in the future. The decades of dedication and putting our mission first have sustained our legacy and helped us adapt to the realities of healthcare, senior living, and the evolving expectations of our community.

Today we are actively shaping our legacy for the future. One of our strongest commitments is remaining the Catholic provider of choice in our area and offering care that is clinically strong, spiritually grounded, and deeply personal. This means listening carefully to the needs of our current community and anticipating what future generations will expect from senior living and healthcare services.

Our efforts towards the future have already been taking shape through



*Associates of St. Paul Elder Services complete a mission tour at the Motherhouse of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. This is a great opportunity for all our associates to get a deeper understanding of our history and who we are.*

our rebuilding and redesign efforts. This project represents more than an updated building; we are creating spaces that are comfortable, promote independence, and are resident-directed to allow us to better honor everyone's dignity and preferences.

Our legacy also includes expanding what we offer so people can remain within our community as their needs change. The addition of a new assisted living creates an important next step in the continuum of care, allowing individuals to transition seamlessly while maintaining relationships, familiarity, and trust. At the same time, we recognize that future service

models must also speak to a younger aging population where individuals seek independence, wellness, flexibility, and meaningful lifestyle opportunities earlier in the aging journey.

Finally, our organization has been evaluating the impact of a future rebranding plan to reflect legacy in motion. Exploring ways to remove the word "elder" from our name is not about leaving our past behind, but about ensuring our mission feels welcoming and inclusive to all who may need us in the future.



## From Three Pianos to 15,000 Voices: A Century of Musical Legacy

If you have not yet heard, Holy Family Conservatory of Music is celebrating 100 years of awakening and nurturing a love for music in the Manitowoc Community. Here's our story!

The Franciscan Center, an impressive building on Hwy. 151/Calumet Avenue in Manitowoc began humbly in 1925. In September of that year, Sisters Davidica, Benjamin and Celerine, Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, were sent to live at St. Boniface Convent to generate musical interest among the school students. Soon there were so many students interested in music lessons that a separate building just for music was needed. The Sisters moved into a big house on 11th Street directly across from Washington Park and Holy Family Conservatory was born.

Holy Family Conservatory began with only three pianos and little else. It is said that at first the Sisters ate their meals using piano benches for their table. Adjustments were

made, furniture was found, and the Conservatory began a true legacy for music and arts in Manitowoc and the surrounding communities. Luella Spadaro tells how she and her brother traveled three hours one way by train to respond to the opportunity of being taught by such expert teachers. Over the years, the Conservatory has offered art, music, and dance lessons, though music, both instruments and voice, has been a primary focus.

It is estimated that over 15,000 students, ages 3 to 80, have found a place to learn and enjoy music because of the Holy Family Conservatory. The Conservatory on 11th Street hosted its final recital on May 19, 2013, but that certainly was not the last.

On August 15, 2013, Holy Family Conservatory moved into the newly-constructed Franciscan Center for Music Education and Performance located on the campus of Silver Lake College of the Holy Family in Manitowoc. Though the college no

longer exists, The Franciscan Center continues to offer music, dance, drama, and venues for numerous groups.

Today the Conservatory continues to transform the ordinary by offering instruction for beginners to advanced musicians in Music for Tots, voice, choir, strings, piano, organ, percussion, and wind instruments. The Franciscan Center is constantly searching for ways to broaden its outreach to all interested. The well-loved Concert Series provides special performances from near and far and of many styles and genre each year to add to the culture of the Lakeshore. Various groups perform using the spacious performance center and the atrium offers a beautiful setting for meetings and celebrations.

With such a rich legacy, The Franciscan Center and the Holy Family Conservatory is working to plan and prepare for another 100 Years of "Transforming the Ordinary" for future generations.



*The Holy Family Conservatory in 1925 to the current Conservatory located within The Franciscan Center.*