

The Community of St. John Baptist



Reaching Out
to God's People



On October 1, 2021, we reopened St. Marguerite's Retreat House after 18 months of closure due to the pandemic. This month, we are happy to announce that we are beginning the process of reopening the Convent as well. This has been a long, lonely, and surreal time without the usual flow of 2000+ guests per year on our property. Our ministry of hospitality is one of the foundations of our spiritual life, and we are glad to open our doors once again to day groups, meetings, and guests at our meals and worship. Please email Sister Monica Clare at superior@csjb.org if you'd like to visit or bring a group. We'll be so happy to see you!

Your generosity has sustained our ministries throughout the anxious uncertainty of the pandemic, and we can never adequately express our gratitude. After New Jersey halted its grants to religious organizations, our operating budget began to escalate, and we lost revenue from the retreat house shutdown, we honestly didn't know how we would make it. Our mission is funded primarily through donations from individuals like you, and it is you who have continued God's work through our Community.

This year we are Reaching Out to you for help in sustaining our ministries. Our Mother Foundress, Mother Harriet Monsell, always sought to meet the needs of the day and we are committed to her dream of helping in any way we can, whenever someone comes to us in need. No contribution to our mission is too small. We rejoice and give thanks to God for every person who believes in our Community.

We, and all our guests, thank you for funding the replacement of our 114-year-old septic system. The project cost nearly half a million dollars, and a long list of our kind friends pulled together and made it possible. There were unexpected costs towards the end of construction, and a generous soul came forward to donate \$50,000 to complete it. To us, the funding of a project this large is a miracle. Your contributions, from \$20 to \$50,000, all made the difference. Thank you for providing this important part of our hospitality for many generations to come.

There are many more families in need these days due to the high cost of groceries and essentials, and your help has provided more fresh produce than ever before to local food pantries through our Garden of Hope. We thank all the volunteers, donors, and local community partners who have increased and expanded this vital food service. Our Sisters also volunteer regularly at local shelters and soup kitchens and we serve in several local parishes. It is our joy, honor, and privilege to serve. If you'd like to learn more about our outreach, you can read our monthly newsletter at www.csjb.org/newsletter.

Our ministry of prayer is, as always, central to our lives. Our weekly Zoom Centering Prayer, monthly Zoom Intercessory Prayer, and Zoom retreats and programs have been a wonderful new way of connecting with the world, and we plan to continue them indefinitely. The daily rhythm of the Divine Office, combined with the Eucharist and our private prayer time, is our life blood. We keep all our Associates, Oblates, and friends in our daily prayers, and we are always glad to pray for any of your concerns.

The children of the Good Shepherd Home want to express their thanks to everyone who has kindly given from their hearts to keep the Home going in the midst of pandemic and the Cameroonian Civil War. The children have endured danger and disruption in their lives, but thanks to you they have had enough food and supplies to keep going. Some of Sister Jane Mankaa's first "babies" are now adults who are starting their own ministries and programs to help the poor. "Mama Jane" lives on in the kindhearted Christian children she raised so well. To learn more, go to www.goodshepherdhome.org.

Words of appreciation from friends of CSJB:

"I can feel the difference when I drive onto the property. This is a place of prayer."

A retreatant who visits St. Marguerite's annually

"The Sisters of the Community of St. John Baptist gave me a spiritual foundation that sustains me to this day."

A St. John Baptist School Alumna

"Thank you for all you do. Please extend our love and greetings to the entire CSJB family."

One of Sister Jane Mankaa's children from the Good Shepherd Home

Thank you for your support,
and let's continue God's work together.

Sister Monica Clare, Superior

and all the CSJB Sisters



Young volunteers in our Garden of Hope



Sister Victoria (R) with fellow volunteers at Homeless Solutions



Easter baptisms at the Good Shepherd Home in Cameroon



The Sisters of CSJB, photographed by the Rev. Cynthia L. Black, DD