

# The Community of St. John Baptist



Reaching Out  
to God's People



It has recently been said in popular culture that instead of returning back to “normal,” we are now reconstructing our lives into a “new normal.” The Community of St. John Baptist, along with the church and the wider world, is finding a “new normal” after the devastating changes of the pandemic, and we would not have survived this global crisis without your help.

This year we are Reaching Out to you for help in continuing God's work. Our Community was founded in 1852 in England, then in 1874 in the United States. This means that next year, 2024, will mark 150 years of CSJB ministry in America. We have a Sesquicentennial Commemoration Day planned for June 15, 2024, and we look forward to celebrating an exciting and promising new future together with all our supporters.

The recent loss of government grants to religious organizations eliminated the majority of our funds for repair and restoration of our historic buildings, and in the depths of the pandemic we were faced with the possibility of ending our ministry of hospitality due to the impending failure of our septic system and the prohibitive costs of reopening. Because of generous people like you, miracles happened. Not only did our sacred ministry of hospitality survive, but it also came back stronger than ever. We can never adequately express our gratitude for your help in maintaining our sacred space where each year, over 2,000 people from all faiths and all walks of life find spiritual nourishment, transformation, and growth.

Our Garden of Hope has become one of our primary ministries as it provides fresh produce to the rising number of individuals and families facing food insecurity. The Garden produces between 800 and 1000 pounds of food each year, and it provides a valuable opportunity for ministry to the wide variety of volunteers. The local Boy Scouts have become involved in the Garden, and the Sisters chartered the brand-new Troop 130 which meets at the Convent and performs service projects for the wider community. Seeing young teenagers and small children on our campus has brought new life and hope into our midst. Our Sisters also regularly serve in food pantries and homeless shelters to do as our Mother Foundress told us and “meet the needs of the day.”

Our Community is both active and contemplative, and some people wonder how we get so much ministry and work done when we are in chapel six times a day. We pray five Divine Offices per day, every day except Mondays, and we also receive Communion six days a week. This means we are in chapel praying and worshipping six times a day for nearly three hours per day.

Our mission and ministry is always active, but prayer is our primary responsibility. None of the many and varied ministries of our order could be accomplished without our life of prayer. Our Sisters also lead retreats and programs, preach and teach in parishes, lead pilgrimages to Ireland and the UK, and keep busy with many individual spiritual direction clients. Helping others grow closer to God is one of our greatest joys. The pandemic has even brought ways of gathering online to pray with those who are too far away to make it to the Convent.

Our African family at the Good Shepherd Home in Cameroon is extremely grateful for the support of the donors who contribute towards the nutrition, education, and shelter of the 100+ orphans who live there. The first children ever received at the Home are now adults and are helping others through medical care for the poor and teaching technology to orphans, among other ministries. The spirit of their Mother Foundress Jane Mankaa lives on in the kind, loving children she raised. For all who have helped sustain this vital mission, we give thanks.

## Words of appreciation from friends of CSJB:

“Thank you for giving me a prayerful time and space to discern the next step in my ministry.”

*A member of the clergy who came for an individual retreat*

“We always appreciate the beauty and hospitality of the retreat house. It is truly a special place.”

*A group that has held annual retreats at St. Marguerite’s for over 30 years*

“We appreciate your love and support of the Good Shepherd Home. Thank you for caring for these precious babies.”

*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



Aben Cistus, who grew up at the Good Shepherd Home, teaching computer skills to orphans.



Trinity Church, Manasquan at St. Marguerite’s



CSJB Sisters in the Chapel



Eagle Scout from Troop 130



Young volunteers in the Garden of Hope