Well of Mercy

Annual Report
2024-2025

with 2023-2024 comparisons

Well of Mercy

A Spiritual Retreat Ministry

Hamptonville, North Carolina

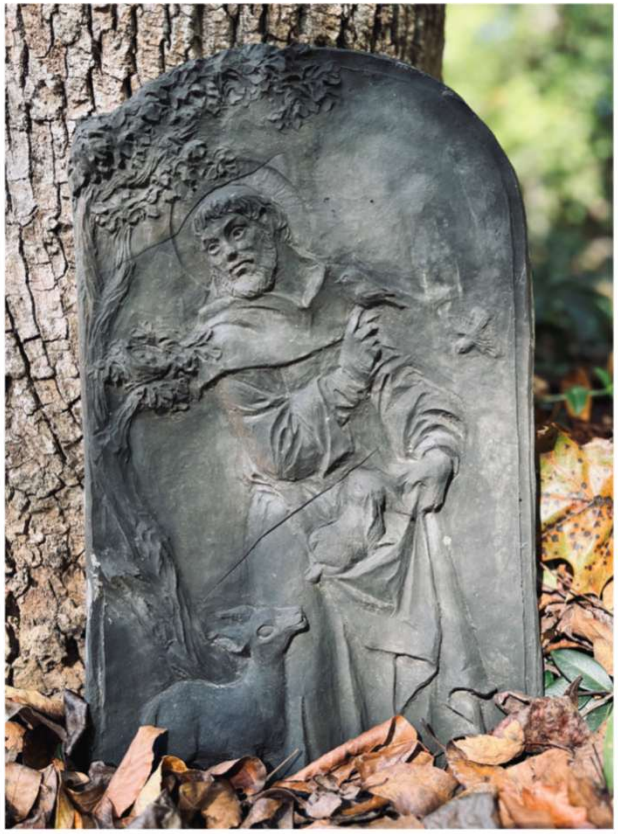
Well of Mercy

Mission Statement

Well of Mercy, a retreat ministry sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, grounded in the spirit of hospitality, provides quiet sanctuary and time in nature for reflection, rest and renewal for those choosing sacred time apart, enriching their spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

Vision Statement

Well of Mercy is a sanctuarial space where faith, peace and healing intersect.



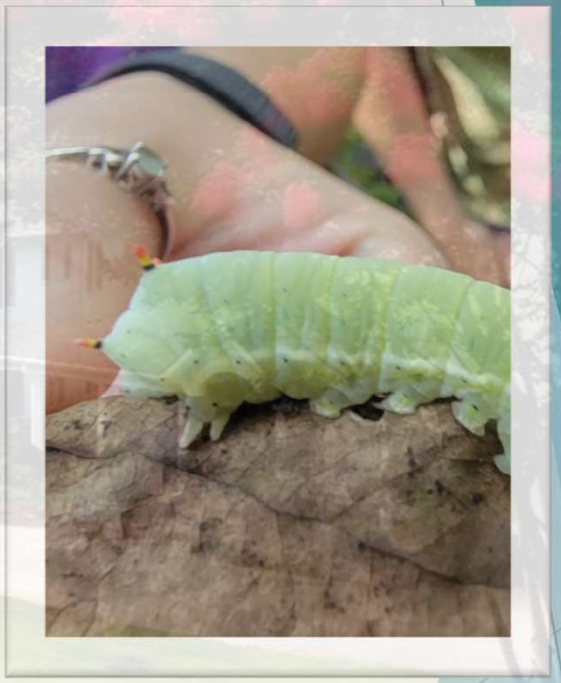
Four Core Values

Hospitality - We believe in unconditionally welcoming the stranger among us and offering all who come to us a safe, quiet and supportive space to pray, heal and experience the loving and merciful presence of God.

Deep Peace & Quiet - We believe solitude and quiet are special features of Well of Mercy that allow individuals to discover personal stillness and moments to be in communion with the Divine.

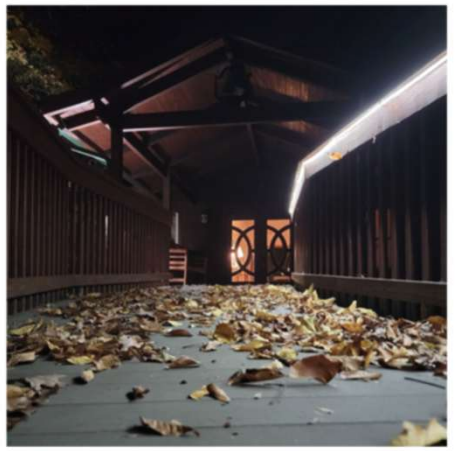
Four Core Values

Inclusiveness - We believe that by honoring the dignity, the fullness of humanity and the inherent worth of all, we are transformed in bringing about a more peace-filled and just world.



Reverence of Earth- We believe that we are stewards of the common home we all share and commit to care of Earth. Well of Mercy is sacred ground that God entrusts to us and we desire to be in right relationship with Earth.

Welcome to the Quiet…



Well of Mercy offers:

- *Personal Retreats*
- *Hosted Groups*
- *Sponsored Programs*

through overnight stays, day visits & virtual experiences.

Catherine McAuley

Sisters of Mercy Foundress

1778–1841

And so, whenever and wherever we engage in the works of mercy, let us do so in a warmhearted and most generous way!

- Catherine McAuley

Sisters of Mercy
Critical Concerns

- Immigration
- Racism
- Women
- Nonviolence
- Earth

Why Well of Mercy?

"Silence of the heart is necessary so you can hear God everywhere — in the closing of the door, in the person who needs you, in the birds that sing, in the flowers, in the animals."

*— Mother Teresa as quoted in **No Greater Love** edited by Becky Benenate and Joseph Durepos*

The Year in Review

- Hired new Executive Director
- Made Property Enhancements
- Upgraded Wi-Fi throughout property
- Expanded Group Programming including virtual retreats and opportunities for guests with mobility challenges
- Staff training included mental health and first aid
- Completed activity room remodel
- Mental Health Task Force successfully completed their work

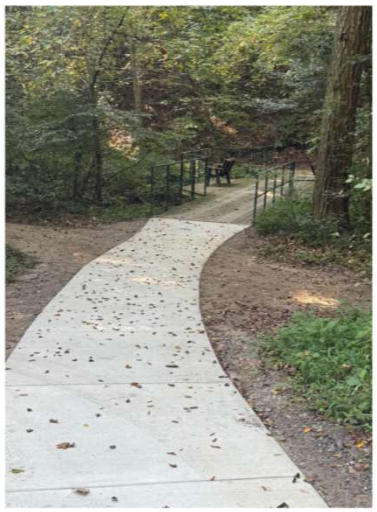
Hiring a New Executive Director

In January, 2025 we bid farewell to our Executive Director, Sandra O'Brien, and welcomed Lea Slaton.

“For all that has been, Thank you.
For all that is to come, Yes!”
-Dag Hammarskjold

Butterfly bench in honor of Sandra O’Brien

Property Enhancements
Outside



Paved driveways and walkway to bridge

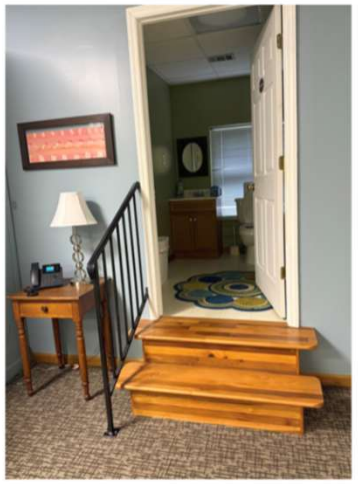
Upgraded prayer stations

Added caution lines and handrails at multiple locations to enhance safety

Property Enhancements

Inside

- Replaced Dishwasher/Sanitizer in Kitchen
- Upgraded Wi-Fi System
- Upgraded Sound System in Chapel
- Remodeled Art Room
- Completed Activity Room - AV equipment, ice maker
- Added railings around the property to enhance guest safety



Program Enhancements

- Launched the "Embrace Your Wings" self-paced retreat guide
- Created self-guided vespers services available for use at any time

Added the following:

- "Praying the Psalms" Day Retreat
- "Well Wednesdays" - weekly on-line devotions during the Easter Season
- "Nurturing Abilities" for mobility challenged guests, Day Retreat
- "Soul of Aging" Retreat series (three, 3-night retreats)

Group Programs

Retreats are offered throughout the year by staff and other facilitators.

Sponsored Retreats are offered by Well of Mercy Staff or their designees. Examples include interactive retreats as well as retreats that are more reflective and quiet.

Hosted Retreats are offered by independent groups whose purpose aligns with our mission. Examples include church retreats, writing and art workshops, and other spiritual group gatherings.

Group Programs

2023-2024 Total Groups 61

HOSTED
- Overnight Groups: 24
- Day Groups: 3

SPONSORED
- Overnight Groups: 18
- Day Groups: 12

VIRTUAL
- Online Groups: 4

TOTALS
Group Guests: 546
Group Bednights: 1,056

2024-2025 Total Groups 69

HOSTED
- Overnight Groups: 23
- Day Groups: 0

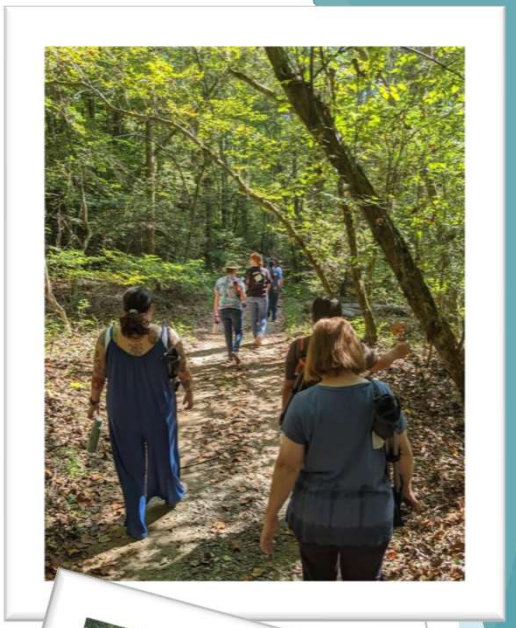
SPONSORED
- Overnight Groups: 19
- Day Groups: 23

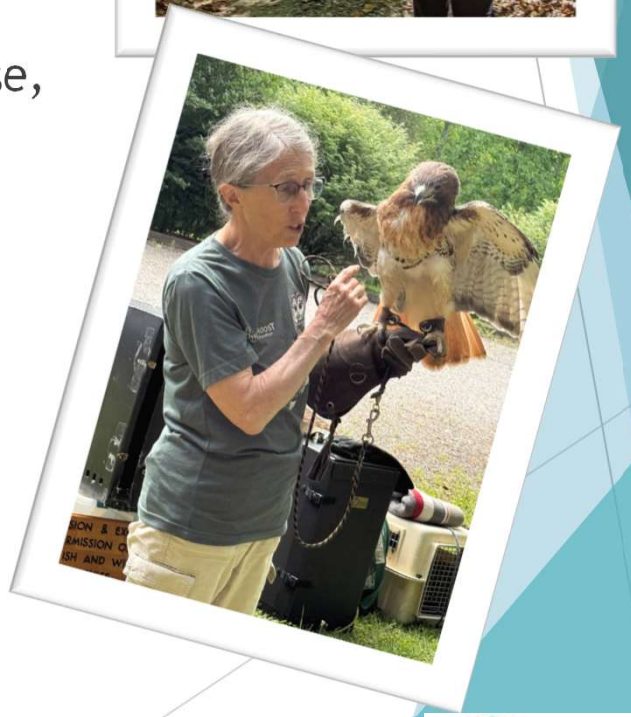
VIRTUAL
- Online Groups: 4

TOTALS
Group Guests: 340
Group Bednights: 708

Critical Concerns

- In May Well of Mercy was awarded a $17,599 grant by the Mercy Fund for Ministry Grant. This grant will fund retreats for marginalized populations and the non-profits that serve them - in particular those which work with **immigrants**, survivors of domestic abuse, and low-income **women**.
- Throughout the year, Well of Mercy highlights care of our **environment** through retreats that celebrate God's creation of "the earth and all its inhabitants."

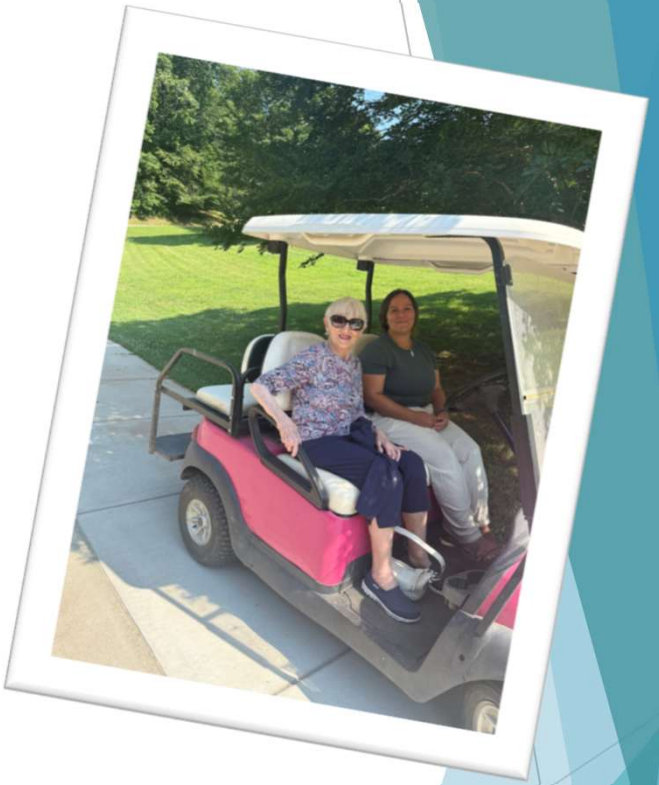




Well of Mercy

Critical Concerns (continued)

- In June we hosted a retreat for individuals with mobility challenges.
- To promote **non-violence**, Well of Mercy offered multiple retreats on mindfulness, contemplation and faithfully resisting today's contentious culture.
- Staff continue to identify ways we can be welcoming to all and not fall prey to the **racism** that pervades society. Further staff training in this area will take place in 2026.



Community Outreach

When Hurricane Helene hit Western NC on Sept. 27, 2024 we opened our doors, offering refuge to seven evacuees for 45 nights, with donors generously covering their stay.

Four of our guests, all therapists, provided 55 remote therapy sessions, processed payroll for their staff, and kept vital connections alive with their community—all because they had a safe place with wifi to rest and recharge.

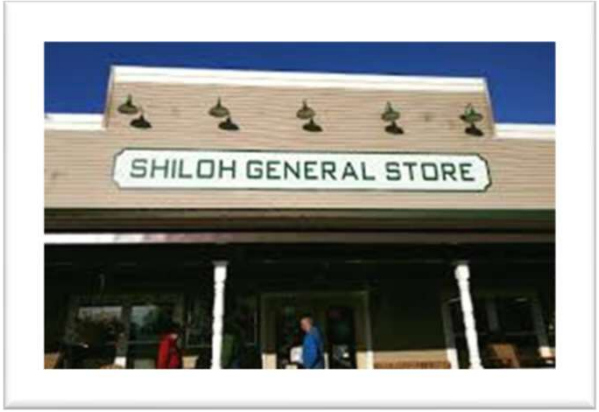
In addition, between Sept. 27 and Dec. 31, 2024,30% of our gift shop proceeds went to hurricane relief efforts through Beloved Asheville, Together in Christ and Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Local Community Connections

DONATING ITEMS, CONTRIBUTING FUNDS, PATRONIZING BUSINESSES

Well of Mercy is committed to being a valuable member of local communities:
Harmony, Hamptonville, Union Grove, Statesville & beyond.

- Harmony Fire Department
- Owl's Roost
- Ruritan Club
- Shady Holly Greenhouse
- Shiloh General Store
- Beloved Asheville
- Together in Christ
- Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Three Rivers Land Trust
- Starmount High School



Well of Mercy

Guest Snapshot

Census 2023-2024

- 1,017 Guests Served
  - 796 overnights
  - 160 day visits
  - 61 virtual
- 2,028 Bednights
  - 972 individuals
  - 1,056 group participants

Census 2024-2025

- 848 Guests Served
  - 649 overnights
  - 199 day visits
  - 73 virtual
- 1,767 Bednights
  - 1,023 individuals
  - 708 group participants

Staff Development

- Weekly Program Planning and Staff Meeting
- Retreat Day
- Transitions workshop
- CPR & First Aid Course
- Suicide prevention training
- Mental Health Preparedness
- Executive director attended NC Center for Nonprofits Conference as well as the Mercy Spirituality Network Meeting in Auburn, CA
- Executive Director Manual implemented

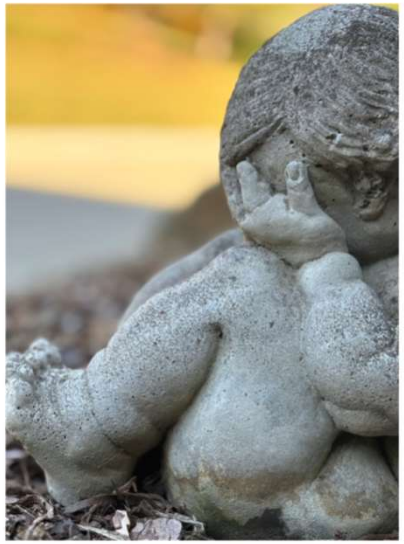
Social Media Presence

- Over 3,000 followers on Facebook and over 600 followers on Instagram
- At least two social media posts per week (and often more)
- Weekly devotions posted to Facebook for the Easter Season
- Monthly newsletters delivered electronically to over 5,000 subscribers

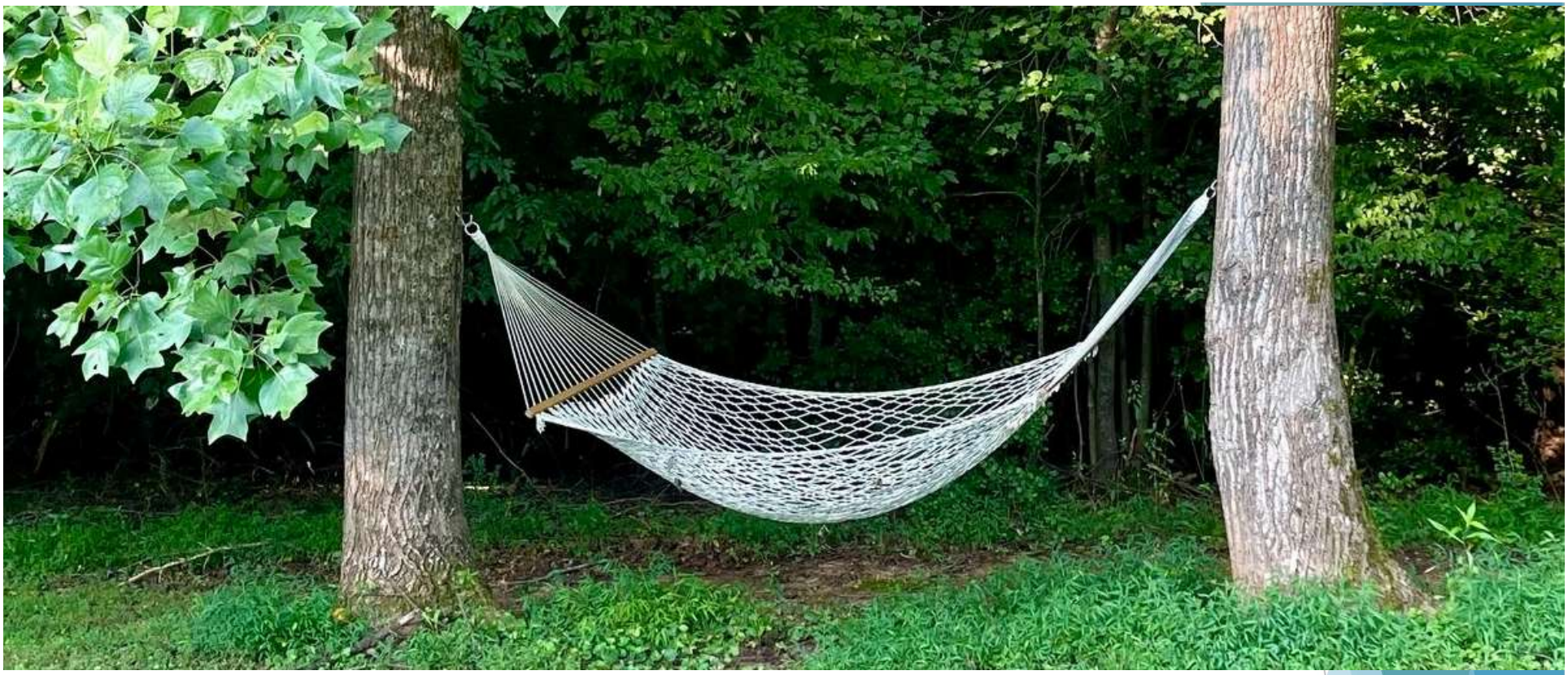
Well of Mercy

Mental Health Task Force

- 5 Task Force Members
- 23 Meetings from October, 2022 through October, 2024
- Instituted clear messaging about what Well is and what Well is not on website
- Created and Implemented a "Well of Mercy Welcome Message and Guest Agreement"
- Identified Partners LME/MCO to conduct trainings in person and virtually for staff and volunteers on various mental health topics
- Created a survey to evaluate the trainings



Going forward, we will use a consulting firm to implement Mental Health Training for staff.



"This is my 3rd or 4th time coming to Well of Mercy. I come when I burn out from life. Well of Mercy is a perfect sanctuary that feeds my soul and rests my weary heart."

Well of Mercy

Financial Overview

- **Fiscal Year 2024**
  - This was our most successful year since opening in 1997 with highest number of bednights, donations, and group programs.
  - A significant estate gift was received.
  - Our expenses were within budget while hosting our 25th Celebration, launching Community Room group space, guest room upgrades and various property enhancements as well as filling the new Program Assistant position.
- **Fiscal Year 2025**
  - This has been a year of transition and unexpected weather events that created revenue challenges. Disciplined expense management and investment earnings helped to offset operating losses.
  - Bednights, number of guests, and number of groups had slight drop, but our retreat offerings have increased.
  - Expenses were well-managed and below budget.

Income Summary

Income: 2023-2024

- Guest Revenue (32%)
  $ 274,192
- Donations (27%)
  $ 236,137
- Sisters of Mercy (15%)
  $ 133,980
- Estate Gifts (23%)
  $ 200,000
- Miscellaneous (3%)
  $ 24,842

Total Income
$ 869,151

Income: 2024-2025

- Guest Revenue (40%)
  $ 246,230
- Donations (35%)
  $ 212,589
- Sisters of Mercy (22%)
  $ 133,980
- Miscellaneous (3%)
  $ 17,869

Total Income
$ 610,668

Well of Mercy

Expense Summary

Expenses 2023-2024

Personnel Expenses	$ 405,761
Capital	$ 77,517
All Other Operating Costs	$ 276,030
2023-2024 Total Expenses	**$759,308**

Expenses 2024-2025

Personnel Expenses	$ 458,578
Capital	$ 27,006
All Other Operating Costs	$ 292,069
2024-2025 Total Expenses	**$777,653**

Donor Summary 2025

Level	Donors	Total
up to 999	323	$ 43,334
$ 1000-2499	20	$ 25,945
$ 2,500-4,999	3	$ 9,500
$ 5,000-9,999	2	$ 10,085
$10,000+	3	$ 123,725
Sisters of Mercy		**$ 133,980**
TOTAL DONATIONS	**351**	**$ 346,569**

"Giving is not just about making a donation, it's about making a difference."

- Kathy Calvin - former president of the United Nations Foundation

Our donors make a difference

Well of Mercy

Goals for 2025-2026

- Maintain 50/50 Balance: Individual vs Group Retreat Weeks
- Create and implement development plan in coordination with our fundraising consultant
- Install new phone system property-wide
- Outreach to area churches
- Continue to enhance our virtual retreats and social media presence
- Convert Chapel Kitchen to Library
- Continue to review guest evaluations to identify guest needs and interests
- Continue Staff Planning Retreats
- Be present for local community events for networking and support

Well of Mercy

Well of Mercy

Meet the Board of Directors

Well of Mercy

Board Structure

- **Board Officers 2024-2025**
  - Sister Lillian Jordan, RSM, chair
  - Sister Carolyn McWatters, RSM, vice-chair
  - Dennis Williams, secretary
  - Rick Cartner, treasurer
- **Committee Chairs**
  - Marketing & Development, Dennis Williams
  - Facilities & Land, Ingrid Howard
  - Finance & Donor Relations, Rick Cartner
  - Crisis Plan – Mental Health, Susan Hill
  - Missions, part of Executive Committee
- **Executive Committee**
  - Board Officers, Past Chair, & Executive Director

Board of Directors

Sister Lillian Jordan, RSM

Chair

Sister Carolyn McWatters, RSM

Vice Chair

Dennis Williams

Secretary

Rick Cartner

Finance

Susan Hill

Ingrid Howard

Sarah Wetenhall

Jennifer Szescula

Well of Mercy

Board Service

Seeking dedicated individuals who contribute to the strength and well being of the ministry.

Board Composed Of:

- Minimum of 5 & Maximum of 19 members
- 3-year Term; Maximum 3 Consecutive Terms

Board Members:

- Set Organizational Direction
- Provide Oversight
- Ensure Necessary Resources are Available
- Attend Board Meetings
- Participate in Committee Work

Meet the Staff

Lea Slaton
Executive Director

Brenda Wallace
Operations Director

Connie Hoffner
Programming Director & Healing Touch Provider

Ellie Childress
Hospitality Coordinator

"We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well."
— Catherine McAuley

Tiffany Compton
Program Assistant

Brianna Sipes
Kitchen Manager

Jennifer Worsham
Kitchen & Hospitality Assistant

Jordan Marvin
Landscape Coordinator

Mike Holcomb
Facilities Director

Randy Simmerson
Facilities Director

Jane Motsinger
Spiritual Director

Carmen San Juan
Spiritual Director

"Let charity then be our badge of honor…so that it may truly be said, there is in us but one heart and one soul in God."

-Catherine McAuley as quoted in **The Little Book of Catherine of Dublin** compiled by Don Mullan

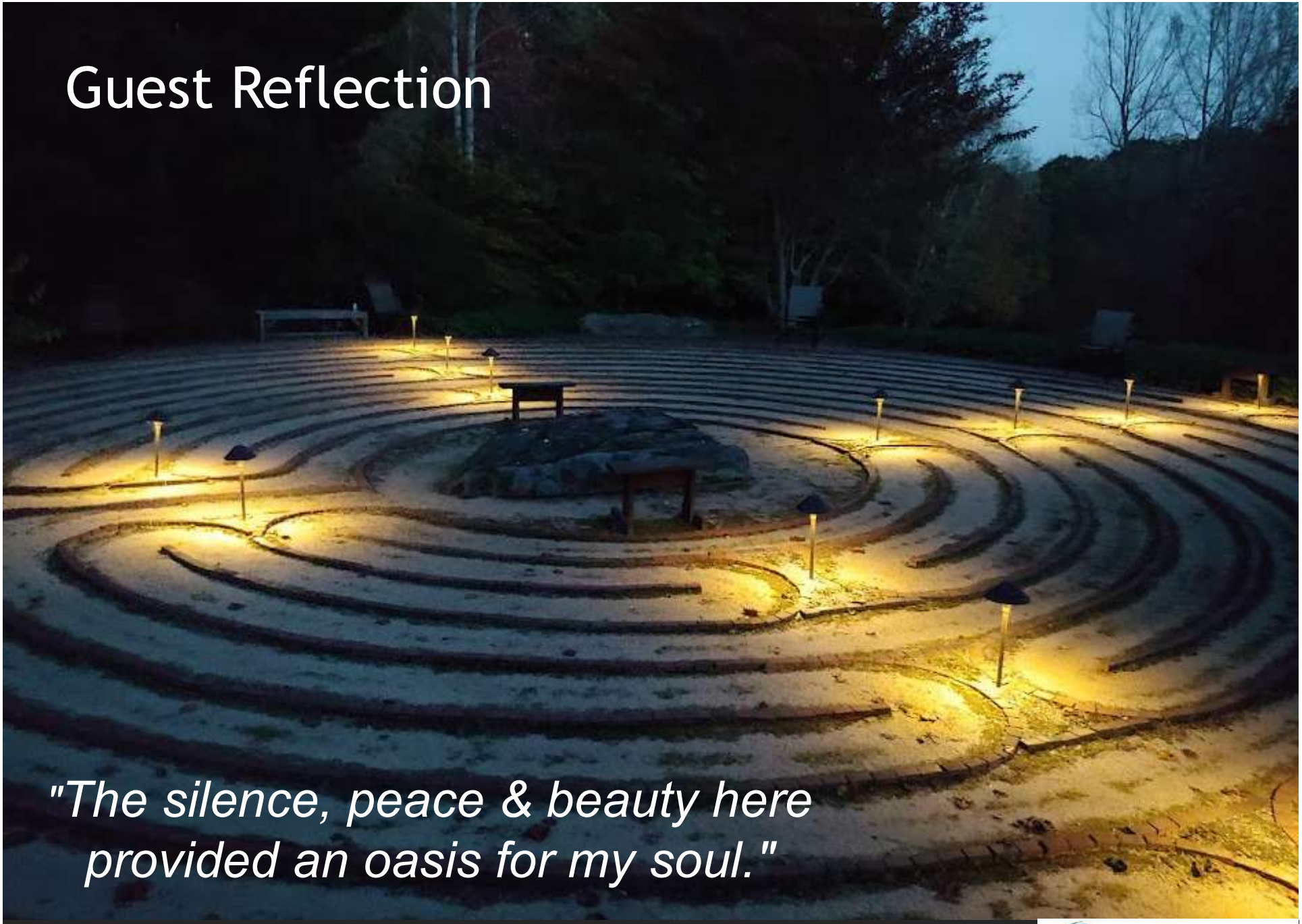
Amazing Volunteers

We can't do it without you!

- 11 Volunteers
- Serving over 1,500 Hours
- Throughout the Ministry
  - Kitchen Assistance
  - Flowers
  - Hospitality
  - Overnight Coverage
  - Events
  - Grounds Maintenance
  - Technology Installation

Well of Mercy

Guest Reflection



"The silence, peace & beauty here provided an oasis for my soul."

Well of Mercy

With Gratitude to…

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Board of Directors

Wonderful Donors

Terrific Volunteers &

Amazing Staff,

for making

Well of Mercy

an Oasis for the Soul

Well of Mercy