



Winter 2026

News from the Abbey...



Deacon Paul Treinen, Board President
"In the Stillness, God Speaks"



Psalm 46: 10 "Be still and know that I am God. "

I like this time after Christmas and New Year's. Life seems to slow down, at least a little bit, and the days begin slowly to get longer. But it's not just external, it seems my soul internally is more open to being still. It seems that in this new part of the year, my soul has a desire to 'begin again' toward wanting to be still and know God more deeply.

"We need silence to be able to touch souls. In the silence God speaks."—St. Teresa of Calcutta

People who visit the Abbey of the Hills often comment on the beautiful scenery that is here, the lakes, the trails, the beautiful church. But more often than not, they describe the silence that they experience here at the Abbey as being the most profound and impactful part of their visit. I believe what they're really telling me has more to do with how God spoke to their soul as they took the time to silence the outside world.

My prayer for all of us in 2026 is to be purposefully still and to know; to trust that God cares deeply for all his beloved sons & daughters.

Day of Recollection

2nd Tuesday of the month

Feb 10 – Elizabeth Guilian
 "Clearing the Clutter: making Room for Christ in Lent!"

March 10 –Fr. Michael Griffin
 "Joy on the Journey"

April 14 – Fr. Michael Peterson
 "The Spirit of Reverence in the Rule of Saint Benedict."

May 12– Fr. Andrew Thuringer
 "An Open Heart, The Prereqs for Prayer"

Retreats

February 14
 NET Confirmation Retreat

February 20-22
 Men's 12-Step Spiritual Retreat

February 27- March 1
 Women's Lenten Retreat

March 13-15
 Men's Lenten Retreat

April 10-12
 Mixed 12-Step Retreat

April 17-19
 Women's Weekend of Silence

May 1-3
 Women's 12-Step Retreat

May 15-17
 Men's Silent Ignatian Retreat

Abbey Events

Renee Marzahn & Beth Motschenbacher



2026 began with many guests taking time to start the new year right—enjoying personal retreats and meaningful time with family. As the weather warms up, we're excited to share several special events coming up soon at Abbey of the Hills:

- **February 13 – Vespers & Valentines**
 A beautiful day to celebrate with the love of your life. Extend the experience with an overnight stay in one of our comfortable guest rooms!
- **February 20 – Annual Lenten Fish Fry**
 Sponsored by the Milbank Knights of Columbus often called the best fish in town!
- **March 5 – St. Benedict & St. John's Choral Concert**
 The Abbey welcomes students from St. Benedict College and St. John's University for a special choral performance. Don't miss it!
- **March 17 - St. Patrick's Day Celebration**
 Join the leprechauns at the Abbey for a night of delicious delicacies from the Isles of Ireland! Gather your family and friends, wear your green, and come celebrate with us at the Abbey!

For full details on these and other events, please call or visit our website. We hope you'll come and spend some time here - at your Abbey.

Follow us:



For more information about our events visit our website at www.abbeyofthehills.org, call 605-398-9200 or email events@abbeyofthehills.org



Margaret Artz, Chief Development Officer
“In the Stillness, God Speaks”



Winter settles quietly over the Abbey of the Hills. The Whetstone Valley rests beneath frost and snow, prayer continues in its steady rhythm, and the Abbey becomes, perhaps more than any other season, a place of deep stillness and refuge. It is also a season when the generosity of our community is most keenly felt.

When the staff & board members of the Abbey reflect on 2025, we do so with deep gratitude. The Abbey’s prayer, hospitality, and care for this sacred place were sustained because of you. Guests found rest, retreatants found renewal, and the Abbey continued its quiet work of welcome and prayer.

While many experience the Abbey through a single retreat, life here continues every day. Prayer is offered daily, the grounds and buildings are cared for, and hospitality is extended to those seeking rest and renewal. Your generosity sustains these efforts and supports our commitment to hospitality that is attentive to the varied needs of those we serve. Gifts also preserve the spirit of prayer and welcome that defines the Abbey.

Looking ahead, we will invite friends to help strengthen and preserve the Abbey through a thoughtful stewardship effort. We are especially grateful for those who support the Abbey through monthly giving and legacy gifts, including wills, trusts, endowment, and gifts of land, ensuring this sacred place continues for generations. As winter deepens, we hold our benefactors close in prayer, grateful for the ways you make this work possible now and into the future. My God continue to bless us all abundantly!

Shelley Knippling - Office Manager

As part of our commitment to good stewardship, we invite you to help us keep our records up to date. When you next reach out, please consider sharing your current phone number, mailing and email address. Staying connected ensures that important updates reach you promptly and helps the Abbey use its resources wisely. Every updated connection strengthens our ability to carry forward the Abbey’s mission of peace, prayer, and hospitality.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to connecting with many of you soon.

Guest Testimonials

“As the Spirit leads, it leads from here.”



“Love coming here. Thank you so much for each of you for what you do in being the hands of feet of Christ. What a blessing!”



“This is my 3rd stay at the Abbey and I’m so grateful to God for this place. Thank you for giving me ‘free reign’ and letting me explore and find a quiet space to be with the Lord. I am refreshed. My soul needed this. Thank you for peace! I will be back!”

Abbey Team

- Interim Executive Director: Deacon Paul Treinen
- Chief Development Officer: Margaret Artz
- Office Manager: Shelley Knippling
- Events Coordinator: Renee Marzahn and Beth Motschenbacher
- HR/Bookkeeper: Kim Remily
- Maintenance: Bryan Anderson
- Kitchen: Amanda Aadland and Matthew Allen
- Housekeeping: Yara Figueroa & Sean Melendez-Ortiz
- Caretaker: Dennis Justison & Yara Figueroa

Gifts of Peace - Honorariums & Memorials

Honorariums: Abbey staff, & volunteers, Jill Adelman, Margaret Artz, Mary Ann Bartell, Brian & Sammy Baxter & Family, Ed & Paula Baxter, Kim & Dave Billings, Fr. Dave Brue, Dale & Jeanne Ennen, Levi & Vanessa Hoff & Family, Mary Virginia Kampmeier, Koinonia Catholic Retreat. Joe & Kim Ludwig, Joanne & Dale Marihart, Ed Meidl, Jeanne & Check Meidl, Fr. Jack Nordick, Abbot Denis Quinkert, Herman & Jane Rausch, Brittany Schwebach, Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Schwebach & Family, Mr. & Mrs. Eric Schwebach & Family, Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Schwebach & Family, Renee Schwebach, Mr. & Mrs. Tom Schwebach, St. John Choir- Ortonville, David Stach, Glen & Meagan Stach, Shirley Stach, Dave & Avis Swenson, Darlene Synsteliën, Daniel Tritz, David & Kristin Tritz & Family, Lynn Tritz, Cindi Tramonte, Julie & Troy VanDover, Don & Deb Wanner.

Memorials: Irvin & Fronie Adelman, Charles “Chuck” Bigwood, Steven Christofferson, Leroy “Butch” Doll, Kent Gabriel, Janet Gauger, Nancy Gausam, Loreen Hartman, Deb Hicks, Bob Iverson, Les & Peg Iverson, Mark Iverson, Carol Johnson, Kimberly Kraus, Don & Joanna Kvasnica, Jim Materjohn, Dean & Donna Mehlhaff, Pam Schneck, Kathi Tharaldson, Gina Thorne, Helen Tritz

A Gift That Lasts

Legacy gifts to the Abbey of the Hills help sustain prayer, hospitality, and the care of this sacred place for generations to come. Gifts made through wills, trusts, endowments, or land ensure the Abbey remains a place of peace and renewal. Even a simple designation can make a lasting difference. To learn more about planned giving, we would be honored to speak with you in confidence.

The Abbey of the Hills is a nonprofit organization sustained by the generosity of those who support its mission and help foster the rediscovery of peace.

