

FIDDLESTICKS

Issue 119

Post Chapter 2016



CHAPTER 2016!

Well, another wonderful Chapter/Convocation has come and gone. A great deal was accomplished, and our Order continues to change and grow. The minutes of our Chapter meetings follow, as submitted by Scribe, John Michael Longworth, OEF.

OEF Chapter 2016 - Session 1 - 9:00 AM on Friday

Sister Lorraine opened the session with prayer.

Juniper offered a brief guideline on the OEF prayerful discernment process and invited the siblings to engage the process, both in silence and in spoken sharing. Community discussion followed to prepare the community for conversation and sought help with listening, recording and shepherding the conversation.

Juniper as facilitator was asked by the community to guide the conversation initially. He offered a brief history of the process.

The Chapter entered consideration; Affirmation of the new Statutes:

- Clarifying question about non-profit status, and corporate entity (understanding statutes, corporation documents and norms)
- Page 12, Line 9 Director of Formation changed to Formation Coordinator
- Clarifying question on page 6, 36-39
- Clarifying questions on the book of norms
- Br. Romero invited silence
- Discussion on changing Article 8
- Page 14, Line 37 strike "both the Listener and" leaving "discerned by the gathered body".
- Statutes affirmed by a consensus of the Chapter

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CHAPTER 2016!... CONTINUED

The Chapter entered consideration: election of Kathleen Klein for profession

Lorraine offered witness to Katie's arrival in OEF and her ongoing formation. She shared the history of their building of a new fellowship in Florida

Katie offered her personal statement of request

The gathered community unanimously admitted Kathleen Klein to profession.

The Chapter re-gathered at 10:30am

Markie offered announcements about service projects

The Chapter entered consideration: Conflict Transformation Norms

- John Michael offered an introduction
- Son of Syvert offered a brief bible study
- Discussion
- Steve J. Requested prayer
- Gathering wisdom and restating from Nancy M.
- Gathering discerned that the proposed document be presented to the council for further discernment and implementation.

OEF Chapter 2016 - Session 2 - Friday at 1:00 pm

The Community began the selection process for the council. A period of 3 hours for discernment was observed, with silence in the center, except for an optional conversation facilitated by Br. Juniper from **1:30 to 3:30 pm**.

After a careful review of the first set of ballots, The Gatherers reported the first list of candidates.

The community continued the selection process, submitting their second set of lists at 7:00 pm

The Gatherers reported to the community that two men and two women had been conclusively selected and that two other females were tied.

The gathered community entered into discernment; Concluding the Selection :

During the conversation many options were discussed. The community gathered discerned that the council should have five members at the conclusion of the selection. However, those gathered had selected the two women with an equal show of support and recognition for gifts they would bring to the work of the Council.

Supporting this movement of the Spirit, the community affirmed the biblical precedent of the replacement for Judas, who was selected by drawing lots between two well qualified choices, Justus and Matthias. The community further came to unity around the idea that the resolution should be as simple as possible. With that understanding, we prayed that God's will would be done, and then flipped the coin. Taking note of the results, the Gatherers reported to the community the membership of the Servant Council, as selected by the Holy Spirit and the Chapter:

Louis Canter
Shoshanah Kay
Elijah LeFevre
Nancy Menning
Markie Oliver

(Continued on page 3)



David D. with new friends Yoseph & Fred

CHAPTER 2016!... CONTINUED**OEF Chapter 2016 - Session 3 -
Saturday at 6:45pm**

Sr. Carol Stiver opened the session with prayer.

The Chapter entered discernment; Creating A Book of Norms:

The idea was tested to create a Book of Norms, or ask the Council to create a committee to pursue this aim. The latter was affirmed by a consensus of the community.

The treasurer issued a report including a balance sheet for accounts, and an income/expense report.

The Scribe shared a proposed budget.

The Chapter entered discernment; Membership Giving:

- Chapter participants will review personal giving
- Quarterly treasurer's reports will be sent to members and published in "Fiddlesticks."
- Ron Nuss-Warren will offer an article for "Fiddlesticks" on giving as a discipline.
- Treasurer will provide quarterly giving reports to members.

The Chapter entered discernment; Gifts from Home Congregations and ad Judicatories:

It was discerned that this was a matter of personal conscience (whether or not to request donations from one's home congregation).

The chapter entered discernment; Budget Proposal:

Proposal was presented, highlighting resources for Conflict Transformation training, a common purse, and JPIC seed money.

Clarifying questions were asked about the fiscal year and membership giving.

Mark Whitten called for prayer.

The gathering discerned that the budget should be adopted and sent to the Council.

The session was brought to a close, concluding the prayerful discernment work of Chapter 2016.



Brotherjohn Gaudreau & Michael Vosler



Sleeping innocence



The Party



We always have a party. Saturday night.
 After receiving our most newly professed.
 And novices. And postulants.
 After renewing our vows.
 After laying our rules upon the altar.
 After saying "yes" -- one more time.
 After entering into communion --
 holy communion.
 After all this serious, profound, challenging,
 tough tender stuff,
 We always have a party.

The party is not always the same.
 But we always mean to celebrate.
 And we want to celebrate together.
 Which can be a little tricky.
 Because we have different ways of
 celebrating.

Some of us are rather quiet; some of us are
 rather rowdy.
 Some of us drink; some of us do not.
 Some of us joke and laugh and mingle well.
 Some of us would rather not, thank you.

As I was thinking of the party,
 I got to thinking of all the sweet little gifts
 over all the sweet little years
 that I have come home from Chapter with.

I/we have been given: bookmarks, rosary
 beads, prayer cards, etc.
 One year we were given clay "stones", each
 with a name upon it.
 We promised to pray for the one named (each
 a member of the Order).

One year I came home with a nut and a bolt.
 I no longer remember the specifics, but what I
 held onto is the recognition that we are
 building something. Together.
 Like maybe the Kingdom of God.
 Or the "Kin-dom" as some say.
 Or a good and peaceful world.

One year we were greeted with a village of
 tiny clay monks.
 We each adopted one. And took it home. To
 give it love and care.

Last year we received t-shirts: "Let us see what
 Love can do".

This year we have prayer beads and prayer
 stones.
 My beads are a light turquoise blue
 with the single silver word "hope".
 My prayer stone says "kindness".

This year I want to see what hope and kindness
 can do.

I think of all the sharings that happen here and
 there
 -- sometimes in "Fiddlesticks," sometimes on
 the website, or Facebook;
 sometimes in worship or around the table;
 sometimes with fuzzy wolf puppies;
 sometimes at regional gatherings, or on the
 phone, or in the mailbox;
 sometimes simply among two or more gathered
 in His name; sometimes at the party -- every
 year at Chapter -- on Saturday night.

I think of all the little sharings that maybe want
 to be shared,
 but aren't quite sure how best to be shared.
 And I hope maybe some will find a way tonight.
 A song, a story, a prayer, a thank you, a hope, a
 suggestion, a challenge, a remembrance, a
 toast, a dance. Could be silence.
 Or a punny pun. Or a warm fuzzy wolf puppy --
 or make that two.
 Could be simply the gift of your presence and
 your warm beating heart.

Share as you
 wish.
 Treasure
 each other.
 At this party
 this year on
 this Saturday
 night.

~ shoshanah,
 party night,
 chapter 2016



Brer Bruce with Fiddle



The Juniper Cup



Puns were the order of the day this year. There were not many entries but Brothers Bruce James and John Michael took home the honors.

From the Lost volume:

Wee Watering Cans, Tiny Trees and Petite Plantings of St. Francis



A satirical meditation by Brother John Michael, OEF

I was meditating on creation the other day it occurred to me that in their hit song "Turn, Turn, Turn" it was actually the Byrds who did the preaching.



As a Franciscan mission Church, we're adding a drive through to serve Communion. It seems like the best way to connect with the mystery of In-car-nation.

I took a leather-working class so I could make my own sandals. I'm so excited and I want to give thanks to my God and my awl.

Being a Brother has encouraged me to couch surf as a spiritual discipline, and to return the favor whenever I can.



Cooking was tricky at first, after mastering the art of making dinner for vegetarians I'm really hoping that I don't have any humanitarians coming over.

My eye doctor says I have a stigmata in my eye. It has something to do with a change in death perception, but to be perfectly honest I'm not exactly Clare.

I was arrested at a concert the other day. All I did was greet one of my brothers across the room, but apparently it isn't legal to shout "friar" in a crowded theater.



I want to apologize to all of the siblings making rites of passage this year; we don't have any crosses or cords ready. Apparently it takes 40 days to make a new habit and we only submitted the order a month ago.



Brother Michael V's story

One upon a time there was a Friary and in that Friary was a farmer friar who diligently tended the friary crops and animals and produced food for the friars to eat. One of the brothers became very ill and suffered a lot. The infirmary friar became very concerned about this brother's health and went to the Father Superior and requested a special dispensation for the farmer friar to grow marijuana so that it could be used to ease the suffering of the sick friar.

All went well until one day the farmer friar went to see the Father Superior in great agitation. The friary dairy cows had got into the marijuana field and were creating havoc. It seems that it was a case of the pot calling the cattle back.



Brother Rat's Pun

By Sister Kiwi



Brother Rat was preparing for his journey back to the USA and was hunting for his suitcase. In great frustration he turned to me and asked, "Where is my ratbag?"

Brer Bruce's Winning Entry

Unfortunately, this one wouldn't copy and paste from the original pdf. It was the OEF "Book of Norms," filled with pictures to identify such as: Norman Rockwell, Norman Schwarzkopf, Norman Bates, the Normans from Old English Lore, etc. The last picture was a stone icon of St. Mary surrounded by several smaller figures. The caption read, "Any other suggestions? Any other concerns, please see anyone on the statues review committee." There was an arrow pointing to the smaller figures around Mary's statue.

Well done, Bruce James! Can't wait to see what you come up with for next year's contest!



A Message From Our Council



Siblings and Friends,

The OEF Council (myself plus Markie, Shoshanah, Elijah, and Louis) is interested in providing ongoing formation opportunities for the Professed. We are brainstorming possibilities and are happy to hear your suggestions at any time (send them to nancy.menning@gmail.com).

One opportunity we'd like to offer as a way to get started is to invite all members of OEF (professed and novice) to read and reflect on the OEF Principles (from our Statutes) using a 30-day reflection guide prepared some time ago by Br. David Delacroix.

You could merely read along with us and keep the community in your prayers as the 30 days go by. Or, for those who desire more ongoing communication and sharing with other members of the OEF, you can join the discussion. [Due to problems with the OEF website, information will be forthcoming as to how the discussion will be conducted. Be sure to contact Nancy Menning at the above e-mail address if you are interested.]

We'd like to get started on this 30-day reflection soon, and we're interested in hearing about your level of interest and how quickly you'd like to get started. **Therefore, if you are a novice or professed member of OEF, please (go to) the following (website) and fill out the very short questionnaire:**

<http://goo.gl/forms/MjbdEGK4z7YlgmZ72>

Note: Some folks have suggested that it would be good to re-visit these Principles and see if any of them need to be revised and/or updated. Your participation in this

ongoing formation opportunity will help us discern whether to move forward with any revisions. Therefore, I encourage your full participation for the benefits of ongoing formation, for community development, and to support our collective discernment.

Peace and All Good,

Nancy Menning, OEF

Formation News

We would also like to announce the following appointments: Helen "Kiwi" Bathurst, John Michael Longworth and Cyndi "Anjelika" Morse, have agreed to serve as the Formation Coordinators for the order. They will be contacting and meeting with the formation counselors in the coming weeks. Please pray for these new servants as they work together to welcome newcomers and support the ongoing walk of siblings in formation.

The initial breakdown of responsibilities is as follows:

Anjelika - receiving inquiries, care for postulants
 Kiwi - Novices, International Candidates, Candidates who are geographically isolated.
 John Michael - Novices, developing resources for formation counselors

The formation team will partner together for the matching of candidates with counselors and the support/training of formation counselors.

Peace and All Good,

Elijah, Markie, Shoshanah, Nancy, Louis



Brother Rat's Rule Reports



March 2016

Living in a vegetarian household is really getting me down. No meat for months, I almost forgot what it tasted like! So late one night I quietly tip toed outside and trapped a hedgehog. I put it in a pot of water and cooked it up.



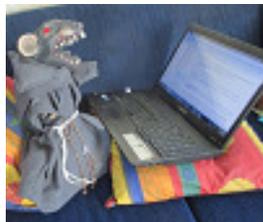
Helen caught me at it. "Well," she said. "If you are going to eat meat a hedgehog is as good as anything. They are a pest animal in New Zealand. By the way the proper way to cook it is encase it in clay and bake it in the embers of a fire."

She talked some more about pest animals and I discovered much to my dismay that rats are considered pest animals and many people set traps to kill us. Whatever next? I should never have stowed away in Helen's bag. Just as well Chapter is not too far away. I don't think bribing the judges will be enough. Maybe I'll kidnap them and hold them to ransom - I just have to have a nice, dry, warm, dark American closet for next year in which to recover from living with Helen.

April 2016

I let Helen share my rule and rule reports with her good friend from the TSSF and I got my very own email in reply. Oh such excitement!

*Dear Brother Rat,
I should be shocked at your Rule, but have to admit that I see some rather startling similarities to the true state of my own heart. However I manage the subterfuge really well, so no one guesses.
I wish you a wonderful trip overseas. Keep an eye on Helen.
With a loud squeak
M.....*



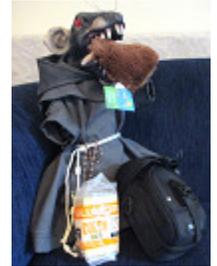
This subterfuge thing sounds really good. Maybe I could try it and get myself noviced or even professed. But what is subterfuge? What does it mean? How does it work? Does bribing or kidnapping judges count as subterfuge? I asked Helen and she said, "Just go and look it up in the dictionary." But what is a dictionary?

Never mind, next month I will be finding an American closet to hibernate in. It needs to be warm, dark, dry, quiet and full of subterfuge.

May 2016

In six days, we set off for Convocation, so I thought I had better start packing a bag. Well, I found one I thought might do and I was sitting on the couch with the bag busy deciding whether to pack a tasty Kiwi or some cheese or both when Helen found me.

"What are you doing?" She said.
"Packing my bag of course," I replied.
"But you're travelling baggage class and don't get a luggage allowance."



What! No luggage allowance? How can airlines be so mean, especially when baggage class also means no meals? I have to have some food with me or I shall starve on the Auckland – Los Angeles flight. How will I get food on the aircraft? Smuggle it under my habit and hope all those airport sniffer dogs don't detect it?

Next year, or rather, later this month I am definitely going home with someone who can provide me with a quiet, warm, dry, dark closet which is full of subterfuge and I am going to stay in it all year. Maybe longer if I can prevent you from taking me to Convocation 2017. Any offers? Or will I have to kidnap the judges and decide the second place winner in the Juniper Cup myself???



OCF Great Lakes Region invites you to join us
for our annual Francistide Retreat!

Assisi Heights Spirituality Center,
1001 14th St NW, Rochester, MN 55901



5:00pm Thursday, Sept. 29 – 1:00pm Saturday Oct. 1, 2016

Registration form and costs for the retreat on next page

OEF GREAT LAKES REGIONAL GATHERING 2016 REGISTRATION

Thursday, Sept. 29, 5:00pm through Saturday, Oct. 1, 1:00pm.
Assisi Heights Spirituality Center, 1001 14th St NW Rochester MN 55901 PHONE: 1-507-280-2195
<https://www.rochesterfranciscan.org/assisi-heights-spirituality-center-ahsc.html>

WEEKEND REFLECTION & FELLOWSHIP: A Potpourri of Discussions and Meditations

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Send Registration Form(s) by Monday, September 19th to Sr. Chris.
- Book Riverboat Tour Reservation online by Thursday, September 29th, Cost \$17
<https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/pearlofthelake/items/14983/availability/12012752/book/>
- Payment of \$155 due no later than beginning of retreat.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

Please print and provide one registration form (2 pages) for each person attending in your party.
We look forward to have you participate in our gathering!

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(H) PHONE: _____ (W) PHONE: _____ (C) PHONE: _____

ANY SUGGESTIONS AND/OR GIFTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP FOR THE WEEKEND (i.e., Music, Prayers, Meditation, Downtime Activities, etc.):

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUEST(S) (i.e., Diabetic, Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten Free, Food Allergies):

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION(S) REQUEST (i.e., Handicap Shower, Bathroom, Wheelchair Accessibility, Parking):

HOW TO GET THERE:

By Plane: Fly into Rochester, MN (RST), Minneapolis/St. Paul International Terminal 1 in MN (MSP) or La Crosse, WI (LSE). *GO Rochester Direct Shuttle* is available from all MN locations to drop you off and pick up directly to and from Assisi Heights. For La Crosse, WI guests, *Go Carefree Shuttle*, (sister company of *Go Rochester Direct*) is available. To book a shuttle ride for both Shuttle companies, call 1-800-280-9270.

BEFORE YOU BOOK YOUR SHUTTLE RIDE, LOOK FOR AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SR. CHRIS FOR A SPECIAL RATE FOR THIS EVENT. WE ARE WORKING WITH MANAGEMENT TO PROVIDE RETREATANTS A DISCOUNT FOR USING THEIR SERVICES.

By Train: Rail Service is available through Amtrak along The Empire Builder Line to La Crosse, WI (LSE) and Winona, MN (WIN). *GO Carefree Shuttle* (sister company of *Go Rochester Direct*) services transportation to and from these stations with a transfer at The Kahler Grand Hotel to a *Go Rochester Direct Shuttle* or cab to and from Assisi Heights.

By Automobile: To be good stewards of the earth, we strongly encourage Retreatants to carpool whenever possible. Use your favorite online map tool to and from the address for Assisi Heights listed above.

Local directions: <https://www.rochesterfranciscan.org/contact-us1/key-contacts-email-address.html>. If you find you need to use any of the above modes of transportation and are in Rochester with the need for a ride to and from Assisi Heights, two options are available 1) Call one of your OEF siblings or contacts to arrange a complimentary ride; or 2) call *Med City Cab Co.* at 1-800-282-TAXI (8294) or book online at <http://www.medcitytaxi.com>.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION ~ *Information will be kept confidential; will be used for emergency purposes only; and is completely voluntarily optional. You may choose what information you wish to share for emergency purposes. By no means is sharing your personal medical information mandatory to participate in this event. It is with good intentions for event participants that this information is requested in the event of a medical emergency or situation that would require medical attention.*

NAME(S): _____ RELATIONSHIP(S): _____

(H) PHONE: _____ (W) PHONE: _____ (C) PHONE: _____

KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITION(S): Add additional information by attaching another sheet of paper.

KNOWN ALLERGY(IES): Add additional information by attaching another sheet of paper.

MEDICATION(S): Add additional information by attaching another sheet of paper.

In the event of a medical emergency, do you give representatives sponsoring this event or the facility the authority to share the above emergency information to emergency medical personnel, if needed and/or you are unable to do so?

Please check: Yes No

Above Registrant or Representative Please Sign: _____

Name of Representative & Relationship if different from Registrant: _____

Date: _____

Any questions, please contact Sr. Christine Petersen, OEF at capoef@solarus.biz.

Cost for accommodations, meals and snacks: \$155.00 to be paid to Sr. Christine Petersen; \$17 paid separately to Pearl of The Lake online.

Please mail form(s) and make checks payable to:

Sr. Christine Petersen, OEF; OEF Great Lakes Gathering Registrar; 853 Norwich Court; Nekoosa, WI 54457-9120 by Mon. September 19. Payment can also be made day of retreat.



ABOUT GENEROSITY

BY RON NUSS-WARREN, OEF



2 Corinthians 6:13-15 *I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written,*

'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.'

The topic of “extravagant generosity” surfaced at the recent Chapter meeting as we were discussing the financial issues of OEF. Clearly the Order could simply assess a “membership fee” or pose a suggested donation to the “members” (those who claim some attachment in whatever way). That would be the easiest way. As I think about it, though, that way does not call forth from anyone a struggle with the Spirit that is the heart of the spiritual growth we seek or the spirit of St. Francis.

Francis had a very radical sense of stewardship. From my reading of both his own writings and reports about him from Thomas Celano, Francis had no sense of property in the sense of ownership. The quote from Paul above covered his basic lifestyle in regard to property and money. Everything belongs to God. God provides all that is needed. If in a moment one encounters another in need and the first has something (temporarily) that will meet the other's need, then not to give the thing is the same spiritually as theft. God is the owner of all and all is here to meet needs, not to assuage fear or anxiety. Thus Francis was always an example of “extravagant generosity.” He was always literally “giving away his mantel,” as Jesus prescribed (see Celano, Second Life, chapters LI to LIX).

With that in mind, the Order had in its beginning the idea that all gifts would be honored—time, talents, and treasure. One could be able to donate to the Order in many ways—prayers for the Order, mailing (news)letters, being a servant to the Order—all these as well as monetary donations. The idea was to commit to the teaching of Paul so that when there was a need that

those who had much would help those with less. We wanted to make sure especially that those who couldn't afford to go to Chapter/Convocation would be able to go when the call of the Holy Spirit was hearkening to attend.

So the issue now is how do we make sure that the actual bills are paid? The first answer is that we, who are financially able, make sure that the Order does not incur expenses on our behalf. In other words we pay for ourselves. We, when able, pay for our costs at Chapter/Convocation and for the servant team as they work to maintain the Order on our behalf. We must think of the Order not as “my church,” for each of us is to be an active, tithing member in a local congregation. So a tithe (10%) to the Order would not be expected.

The Order, in some ways, is like the many nonprofits that send us requests for donations. If we get a tug at the heart for the work of the organization, we send a check. For these, there are all kinds of ways to get us to part with our money. I would like to think that we are different in this: we have no paid staff, we are all family, and our purpose is specifically to help each other grow in faith. There is some similarity with our pledge to public broadcasting. That is a donation to help with the aesthetics of our communities. A donation to the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans is joining in with others who seek spiritual growth in our community and in the world as a whole. I would like to think that the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans is an organization worthy of our prayers, talents, and means, hopefully to us more so than many other nonprofits.

So while we do not ask for 10%, or even a substantial (like thousands) gift, gifts are a part of our hope for the Realm of God in our life and our world. Any and all gifts to the Order are a sign of hope and faith and especially love.

Brother Ron, OEF



CHAPTER 2016 -- ONE BROTHER'S REFLECTION

BY BR. JUNIPER ROBERTSON, OEF

I am so grateful that I was able to attend Chapter 2016. It was an amazing time. I am willing to drive twenty-four hours with members of our little Order, twelve hours there and twelve hours back. I helped pay for and arrange the meeting. All because when we are together, my life changes and I am closer to all that I am.

Traveling for hours with Helen (Kiwi), John Michael and Romero, there was time for reflection, laughter, prayer and joy. As the beauty of the Pennsylvania mountains turned into the spectacle of the endless corn fields, an intimacy deepened in our Franciscan walk together. We arrived at Just Plain John's in Richmond IN at about 2:30 AM and John shuffled us off to bed. We all awoke to the howl of the wolf pack and to a vision of what Franciscan life is in Richmond. After a substantial breakfast, it was off to Indianapolis to help pick-up sisters and brothers arriving for Chapter.

Our trip back was missing Kiwi (*sigh*). Undaunted, John Michael, Romero and I went to Muncie, IN to help with the community Sunday lunch, with Markie and crew – great fun. Then we were off to NYC, but we couldn't pass up a chance to drive through Mike Vosler's hometown of Piqua, OH. We continued through the corn fields, back through the mountains, arriving at David Delacroix's in Altoona at about 1:30 AM and to be put to bed by David and Yoseph. In the morning, we shared a rich breakfast and deepening connections and then got back in the van to return to New York

I always get a little nervous when a group is forming, and as we collected and gathered on Wednesday and Thursday, the tension was there. But the joy of seeing first one, and then another, and then another for a couple of days overcomes the nerves. OEF people are not mostly friends in the traditional sense, neither family, but rather you are the people of my hope and of my vision of the future. When I gather with you, I enter another dimension of

my life and faith.

The highlight of the weekend for me was when Br. Robert, Anne and Masud came to me in the middle of a pun that would not stop, part of the Juniper Cup competition (and I mean competition) -- to say that the selection of the new Council has resulted in a tie, two sisters had the exact same number of mentions.

What to do? Do we have a run off? Do we redo the selection? Do we increase the number of Council members? How to proceed?

Time was not our friend as we had planned a Council Institution celebration that was supposed to happen in an hour. The gathered community discussed, disagreed, sat in shocked silence and worked to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Let me say that again: **worked to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst!** In retrospect it seems to me that the Spirit was asking the gathered OEFers if we are serious about discerning the Spirit or do we really intend to fall back on human, political processes.

OEF gathered at this Chapter gave Br. Robert, Anne and Masud a quarter, instructed them to flip it as we all prayed for the will of the Spirit. The Spirit provided us with our Council!!

It will probably never happen again and certainly not in quite this way. It was a moment in my life, and [I] guess, in the lives of all who were gathered. I am very grateful.

Chapter had a wonderful profession, lots of laughter and discussion about money and giving, times of service, plenty of walk and chats, and lot of hugs.

I am so glad I was there.

Juniper



Greeting and Address Update

May 27, 2016

Dear Siblings,

Grace and peace. I sit here at the Bismarck UCC with all of you at Chapter in my heart. It is good to miss you and yearn to be with you. God is good!

Today we closed on our Steele, ND property and a new owner took possession. We continue to unpack boxes at our new home in Bismarck. The new place and purpose feels good. Today I went to the UCC Bible study at 6:30am -- a lively, deep and humorous group. I am committed!



Here is our new address:

1827 N. 5th Street
Bismarck, ND 58501

New landline no.: (701)751-7114

Peace & joy,

Dale Carmen, OEF



A Note from the Editor

Attention, professed and novice members of OEF:

I will begin working on the updated address book in September or October. If you have moved, changed your phone number or changed your e-mail address, please send me the updates! We tend to be a vagabond bunch, and I often lose track of some of you, so please keep me informed!

Also, I am considering adding third round of devotionals to our book, so I need lots and lots of contributions! Inspirational poems, reflections, Bible meditations and prayers are all welcome! The more variety we have, the more inspirational and meaningful our book will be. If I receive enough submissions, the new section will go out with the address book updates this Fall.

So, summon up your creative juices and start scribbling!

Peace,
Sister Chris



Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Submissions for the Francistide 2016 issue of "Fiddlesticks" are being accepted immediately.

Deadline for submissions is September 15, 2016.

Send submissions to Sister Chris at
capoef@solarus.biz

or snail-mail to:

Christine Petersen, OEF
853 Norwich Ct.
Nekoosa, WI 54457

Thank you!





Regional News



The North East OEF Fellowship met again at St. Francis House in New London CT.

<http://stfrancishousewp1.whewitt.org>). St Francis House is an intentional Christian community with an ecumenical witness that focuses on:

- peace in the shadow of the US Navy Submarine base and Electric Boat the submarine manufacturer
- locally accessing food and other goods with a city-wide community gardening project and a cooperative grocery,
- homeless folk through the homeless hospitality network
- community education reform through an action project called CURE.

They have several empty rooms/apartment spaces and are interested in people who might want to come and share their daily prayer, common meals and witness and ministry in southeastern Connecticut.

The Great Lakes Lighthouse Fellowship has planned our annual Francistide retreat at Assisi Heights in Rochester, MN. Invitation and registration forms are included in this issue of "Fiddlesticks."

In 2017, we will meet at The Hermitage Community in Three Rivers, MI. This is closer to Brothers Ysidro and Brendan.

We look forward to traveling our vast region, visiting each others' stomping grounds!

FRANCISCAN FOREST FRIDAY

A portion of the Piedmont Fellowship gathered in a forest wildlife preserve for Good Friday prayers.

The Site: Central Congregational United Church of Christ has preserved a couple of acres of woodland (mostly pine and beech wood) around the church which now sits smack dab in the middle of Metro Atlanta's urban sprawl. Diligent efforts at preservation and renewal have brought about designation of this woodland by the National Wildlife Federation as a certified Wildlife Sanctuary.

The gathering. Our small group chose to gather for Good Friday afternoon prayers on a couple of benches on the edge of the woods. The service was essentially the office for Good Friday found in the New Zealand Prayer Book with some very minor alterations for further inclusivity. * The prayers for the Proclamation of the Cross (we held up a San Damiano cross) and for dispersing were taken from the NZPB's daily prayers for Friday and Saturday. The "Sermons" consisted of reflections upon the day and setting by the four of us in attendance: Brothers David Rensberger and Dave Miller, Sister Sara Turpin TSSF associate and me.

As we sat in "relative" silence against the background of Atlanta's 2 pm traffic, clear and strong bird song from more than one species lifted up our prayers on their wings. We could not but note the resilience of God's creatures when given a small space in which to take shelter and thrive. When we prayed the Lord's Prayer, the printed alternative from the NZPB ("Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-Bearer, Life-giver...") was read; however, upon invitation others prayed the words with which the prayer came to and spoke to them.

*In light of the particular political climate and the fear and hatred expressed toward Islamic cultures, I took responsibility for adding to "Let us pray for those who do not believe the Gospel of Christ" the words "be they Christian or not..."

James Schwarzlose, OEF



The Kiwi fellowship is alive and well. Reg Weeks n/OEF and I met with the Wellington Area TSSF on Saturday 23rd April (see photo). After a Eucharistic Service taken by the TSSF Minister Provincial, Rev. Maggie Smith, we heard about TSSF in the Solomon Islands from Jimmy

Regional News... continued

who is a TSSF member there. Life and fellowship is very different for them as members live on different islands and may be three days by boat away from each other. Finding money for boat fares can also be difficult, however they do manage to make occasional contact by cell phone.

Following a shared lunch, we had a discussion on simplicity and found yet again that simplicity is not a simple concept to discuss or live out in our lives.

The Kiwi Fellowship was able to meet again at Convocation in Indianapolis.

Helen Bathurst, OEF



Kiwis Helen and Reg



Br. Elijah - Wolf sitter extraordinaire!



Anjelika with a new friend

Finger Labyrinths

By Helen Bathurst



Many of us have walked full size labyrinths in various places and a number of us have been blessed by Sister Markie facilitating this for us at Convocation.

But have you ever thought of “walking” a finger labyrinth? This can be helpful for those who cannot or who do not wish to walk a full size one. You “walk” it by running your finger along the line from the beginning to the center and back out again.

Finger labyrinths can be made in a variety of ways and to a variety of designs; some are a labyrinth outline on paper. Others are three dimensional, meaning you don’t have to see to “walk” the labyrinth. I made the one shown here by sewing cord and beads onto fabric but finger labyrinths can be carved from wood, made with papier-mâché, molded from clay etc. or even bought.

Finger labyrinths can be “walked” with your eyes open or closed. I recommend that you try “walking” a 3D finger labyrinth with closed eyes. I found it made the experience entirely different.

Why not make a finger labyrinth, or buy one and try it for yourself?

Fiddlesticks
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WAILING AGAINST WALLS

BR. COYOTE NABHAN, OEF



We pray that we never become accustomed to
 seeing the fallen bodies
 of our sisters and brothers and lovers
 on anyone's killing floor.

We pray that we get over the feeling that our
 entire nation
 has moved backward a half century or more
 when some still thought they could take a life
 because they thought it expendable
 before their own ideology.

We pray that people of another strong faith are
 not scapegoated
 or disparaged with the same sweeping
 categories
 that are ignorant of the likes of the very
 lives of those we have so regrettably lost
 for we cannot bear to see more suffering.

Now we must get down on our wounded knees and
 weep, ululate a sorrow
 that words can never capture: why must we
 have to go through this
 again and again, seeing bright lives snuffed out
 like candles set to glow in a sanctuary that
 are then suddenly ravaged by a hurricane?

Creator, please wrench out of me any remaining
 molecule that does not
 fully embrace the dignity of every life
 different than my own, with whom

I share your blood-spattered scarred & sacred
 ground with all here on earth.

