

CDP Associate News

SUMMER 2020



Screen-capture showing a few of the many Sisters and Associates who attended the 2020 Assembly via Zoom.



2020 Assembly Goes Virtual

While planning for this year's Assembly had been underway since November of 2019, in March of 2020 the Assembly Committee suddenly faced the challenge of holding this event in the midst of a pandemic. Shifting gears and arranging for the Assembly to take place in a virtual setting using Zoom required a great deal more effort and time.

At the opening ritual on the morning of August 2, Sr. Michele Bisbey set the tone for the three days ahead and also addressed the challenges we face in this time of COVID-19. In her reflection on the Gospel of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, she reminded us that there is still "one essential truth — there is enough — more than enough in what God provides."

Other events included a meaningful PowerPoint commemoration of deceased Sisters and Associates, a virtual celebration honoring the Jubilarians for their years of service and dedication, and the Ketteler Award presentation to Fr. James Martin, S.J. for his outstanding work on behalf of social justice.

In the Pre-Chapter sessions on Day 3, we were given an important

preview of the processes we will use in our 2021 Chapter of Affairs and Election.

While the camaraderie of real-time encounters was absent, the virtual experience afforded us the opportunity to see so many of the Sisters and Associates in their own homes and from locations across the U.S. to the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, and even the mountains of Peru.

The Assembly Committee is to be congratulated for creating a very beautiful and meaningful virtual 2020 Assembly. Videos and documents are available on the Community website for those who were unable to attend virtually.

Not to be overlooked are the Sisters and Associates who worked their way through the virtual world of Zoom, with all of the fadeouts, blurs, lovely views of ceilings and floors, and delightful shout-out greetings to friends.

In the words of Mother Marie, "Visibly do I see in all things the wonderful Providence of God."

We witnessed this first-hand at our 2020 Assembly.

—Sally Shamalla

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Mission Statement

We, as Associates, proclaim to be a part of the international Community of Divine Providence (CDP). Our participation calls us to live in a spirit of unbounded trust in, and openness to, the Providence of God. We challenge ourselves to an ongoing discovery of the richness of the charism entrusted to us by Mother Marie and Bishop Ketteler. We support each other in our diversity of lifestyles while we strive to creatively confront the problems and issues of our time. As prophetic witnesses, we respond in compassion, holding all life sacred.

From the Director

Linda Hoefflin



Greetings, everyone. On August 22, 2020, I made my 33rd commitment to our Community of Divine Providence as an Associate. I came to know the Community from their hospital in Granite City, where I worked for more than 20 years. During my time at the hospital, the influence of the Sisters and the Community was a strong formative whisper. I can tell you that call was not easily ignored. I learned about social justice, the environment, and care for our fellow human beings. The Sisters gifted me with this free knowledge. I cannot thank them enough. So, it is my turn.

Being retired and having free time, I still wanted more; more involvement and again to follow that whisper. I have humbly accepted the position of Director of Associates. I walk in the footsteps of Ellen Lavender, Pat Montgomery, and Erin Middleton. I am strengthened by their encouragement and offers of help. I am strengthened by all the Sisters and Associates who voiced their support and well wishes. My only request is that you pray that the Spirit continues to guide me to the path that we all hope will help make Providence more visible.

These days are very unusual times. Although I sat alone in my kitchen as I made my annual Renewal on Zoom, I experienced community — MY community and YOUR community. I was lucky to see faces from all over the mainland and Puerto Rico. I wanted to reach out and hug each of you. I felt the closeness in mind and spirit as we communally prayed. My hope is that we continue to use technology to bring us together, for prayer, for conversations, for faith sharing, and for planning a new vision for our Community.

Prayerfully,

Linda



Judy Kim, Sr. Janet Schaffran, and Cathy Lenehan

Meet an Associate — Cathy Lenehan

Since 1992, Cathy Lenehan has been a co-member, now an Associate, of our Community. Sr. Alexine Cockerham invited Cathy and a friend to an event in the community room and, Cathy admits, "They had me at 'Hello.' I was attracted by their lifestyle, camaraderie, and compassion." Her mother had planted in her the seeds of a relationship with God and devotion to the Blessed Mother when Cathy was a child.

Cathy admits she was living life with rose-colored glasses back then. "Everything was good!" In 2006 her mother passed away, and she learned the lessons of grief and heartbreak. Her relationship with Community, particularly Srs. Janet Schaffran and Alexine, kept her connected and moving forward in the healing process.

Cathy was born and raised as one of nine siblings in the Northside of Pittsburgh by a mostly single mother. "You can take the girl out of the Northside, but you can't take the Northside out of the girl." Both Cathy and her mom are those "tough cookie" Northside women.

Cathy's mom, Genevieve Fiedor, was nicknamed "Doodle Bug" by friends and family due to her small stature and large round-rimmed glasses. Doodle and her family were familiar faces to many as they walked the neighborhood, because she did not drive. Doodle worked in Housekeeping at Allegheny General Hospital for years and became friendly with Sr. Janet, who served as a hospice chaplain there during that time.

During her childhood years Cathy was ill with serious digestive issues and was hospitalized often. At age 12, she had a foot and a half of her bowel removed. This was the beginning of a new life for her in many ways — finally, she could eat all the foods that were restricted from her diet all those years; and, her venture as a serious softball player began.

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Linda Reynolds leads the Associate Renewal service on August 22, 2020.



Sisters and Associates from all around the Province attended the St. Louis area Associate Renewal on Zoom.

St. Louis Area Associate Renewal

With the beautiful Providence Heights Motherhouse bells ringing in the background, the first St. Louis area Associate Renewal via Zoom began. We were welcomed by Associate Linda Reynolds, followed by a Call to Worship with Associates Linda Hoefflin and Sylvia Resha. Music was provided by Sr. Maria Patterson with her wonderful voice and guitar.

The Scripture Reading of Psalm 119, which begins with “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,” was followed by Linda Reynold’s reflection on “Being with God.” (Linda’s reflection is posted on the CDP website.) At the end of her reflection Linda asked, “How do we share God’s love for all the people of the world and for the world itself in this kind of an environment?” She challenged us to discover what we are most passionate about and how that discovery shapes how we act and what we commit our life to.

After the reflection, Sr. Barbara McMullen lit the Ketteler, Mother Marie, and Providence candles with prayers asking our Provident God to hear us. After this, the following milestones were recognized:

Recognition of Associate Anniversaries:

- Annamarie Sullivan 5 years
- Kathy Rogers 10 years
- Diane Klimo 15 years
- Christine Sadasivan 15 years
- Nancy Diak 20 years
- Ron Payton 25 years
- Rose Vierdag 30 years

Wisdom Associate: Mary O’Grady Rose

Near the end of the ritual, Sr. Barbara led a blessing and prayer for Linda Hoefflin as she begins her new leadership position as Director of Associates. The people on screen extended their hands as the blessing was said. Linda Hoefflin read our Chapter prayer and Linda Reynolds provided a blessing for all. The “all” were from Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico; from our kitchens, living rooms, music rooms, churches, and even from a camper. Provident God, hear our prayer!

— Linda Hoefflin



Meet an Associate

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Once Cathy was well, Doodle enrolled her in the Pony Tail League, and a star was born! Cathy played for several softball leagues, was MVP and team captain, and won "Best Athlete" and sportsmanship awards. She was also inducted into the National Honor Society in her senior year at Allegheny High School — all while doing a paper route from the time she was 12 and working at a pizza shop when she had extra time.

At 26, her expertise led to a part-time career as a certified umpire for many softball leagues. And this fall, Cathy will start her 30th year as a paraprofessional in the Pittsburgh Public Schools; she is certified in Special Education and leads intramurals for students after school. Each summer she spends eight weeks as a camp counselor for kids ages 4-5.

Cathy was a part of the International Associate Trip to Germany in 2018. Her favorite parts of the trip were visiting the graves of our founders and "walking in the footsteps" of Mother Marie and, especially, of Bishop Ketteler. "Seeing his shoes, his birthplace, his place of baptism, all made me feel a deeper connection."

On making God's Providence visible in her own life, Cathy says "It's as simple as daily living and how we connect with others and treat others — at camp, at school, in community, and with family. I love to help people as God provides opportunities to serve."

Cathy is a 4'11" bundle of energy, and always at Providence Heights when it's time to decorate or un-decorate. As a matter of fact, before Covid-19, she used to create a monthly bulletin board for the Sisters in St Joseph Center. I am so grateful she is a part of our Community.

—Erin Middleton



The Caritas small faith-sharing Associate group in Washington, PA: Inquirers Andrea Alderson and Mary Ellen Jutca; Ellie Field (seated), Denise Champe, and Sr. Margareta Nussbaumer. The group gathered on Denise's porch in August to attend the 2020 Assembly on Zoom.

Associate Groups Continue to Meet (Safely) During the Pandemic

Several Pittsburgh area Associate faith-sharing groups are continuing to meet regularly via Zoom. The Caritas group (shown above) has continued to meet regularly either by Zoom or in person outdoors when weather permits. The Providence Peace group, which usually meets at Assumption Convent in Bellevue, is having its regular monthly meetings on Zoom. The Providence Peers group has met by Zoom and will continue to meet virtually. — Julia Lynn

Be a Part of Chapter in 2021!

The Fifth CDP Provincial Chapter, which will take place in 2021, will include the Chapter of Affairs in July and the Chapter of Elections in November of that year. Associates have the opportunity to participate more closely in this Chapter than in any previous Chapter. This is also the first time an Associate has been part of the Pre-Chapter Coordinating Committee — the Associate representative on this committee is Karen Snyder.

Both Sisters and Associates can choose to participate in one of four modes: **Active Participant**, **Consulting Participant**, **Praying Participant**, or **Observer**. (See document accompanying this newsletter for a description of each mode.) In both the *Active* and *Consulting Participant* modes, Associates can take part in table conversations and "leanings." (Only Sisters will be eligible to vote.)

To be an *Active Participant*, an Associate must be part of a Pre-Chapter Conversation Circle, and the deadline for joining a Circle has already passed. If you are not in a Circle, you can still participate in one of the three remaining modes. **You are invited and encouraged to participate. The deadline to sign up is January 29, 2021.**

All Pre-Chapter documents are available on the Community website. For more information, contact Karen Snyder at ksnyder@cdpsisters.org or 412-552-9636.

Getting an Absentee Ballot for the November 2020 Election

If you are comfortable using the internet and are thinking of voting absentee because of Covid-19, you can obtain an Absentee Ballot Application by typing "**Mail-in Voting**" in your search engine. When you get to the site, find the line where it says **Absentee Ballot Application**. You can fill it in, download your completed application, sign it, and send to your local government elections office. For additional information, contact:

Sr. Betty Sundry at 412-635-5426 or bsundry@cdpsisters.org.

Sewing School in Uganda

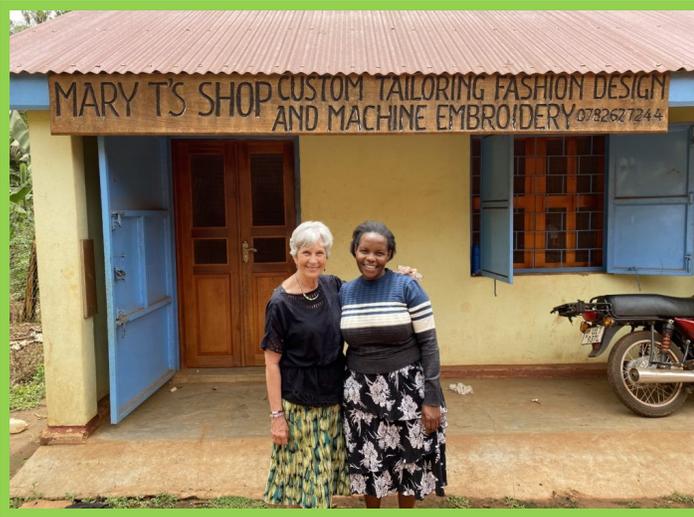
In March 2020, Associate Jane Kerr made her seventh trip to the village of Hoima in Uganda with the mission group Healthy Communities Unlimited. As often reported in these pages, Jane and the mission group have done much good for the people of Hoima during these visits.

Jane has used her talent for and love of sewing to help the local women there. Tom, a member of the March 2020 mission group, wrote in his blog about how Jane and a woman named Mary had “bonded over their mutual interest in sewing. Jane gave Mary a Singer sewing machine called a treadle, which operates by pushing pedals. (Jane’s grandfather was a tailor in East Liberty who used a treadle.) Jane thought a machine not requiring electricity would fit perfectly there. She was right.

“Seventeen years later, that gift has evolved into a thriving sewing enterprise. It’s literally become a cottage industry, occupying its own separate small building on the parish grounds.”

With the help of Jane and a benefactor named Thad Cox, “Mary started a sewing school which has now taught more than 150 local girls and housewives how to sew (and awarded them with diplomas).”

During this March 2020 trip, “Mary surprised Jane when she revealed important news. Mary will soon open a new business, the Mary Tailoring Centre, with “money she had squirreled away, plus funds given to her by Jane and Thad. Jane visited the new facility and was thrilled for her friend.” Jane has truly been making Providence visible in Uganda in so many ways.



Jane and Mary in front of Mary's sewing shop and sewing school. Jane helped Mary get started by buying her a treadle sewing machine.



Jane giving out hygiene kits that were sewn in Pittsburgh. Mary's sewing school aims to teach women and girls in Uganda how to make their own kits.

Awakening, Finally

— by Linda Hoefflin

I have a confession. While I believed that I was open and supportive to and for people of color, I did not realize that I was blind to the hurt caused by historical items. As others say and as I have said, “Well, that is part of our history. We shouldn't tear down reminders of our past.”

Because of recent tragic events of unwarranted killings of Black Americans, I am trying more to educate myself. George Floyd lost his life at the knee of an officer who showed no remorse, no empathy, no recognition that he was squeezing the life out of another human being. I watched in horror as the video played over and over. Would I have been able to say something or do something to stop this unnecessary loss of life?

Some postings and articles have helped to clarify my thoughts. Yes, the bars and stars banner is part of our history. But it is a celebration of slavery, of people being traitors to our country and to the Constitution's ideals that all men are created equal.

As one writer indicated, flying the Confederate flag is no different than flying the Nazi swastika. It is a reminder of man's inhumanity to man. I can no longer condone any further flying of the Confederate flag. This flag is a sword in every Black person's side as it is raised at sporting events, in parks, and over government buildings. We must no longer glorify this flag because it fails to recognize that God is in each of us, no matter our color.

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Kvell & Tell



At a "Drive-by Farewell" event on June 28, many Sisters and Associates walked or drove by Assumption Convent in Bellevue, bringing cards and gifts to wish **Erin Middleton** well before her move to Arizona.

At top left are **Karen Snyder, Sr. Ellen Ruff, Erin, and Peggy Schramm** on the sidewalk in front of the convent.

In the second picture at left **Srs. Clara Kreis and Anne Winschel** drive by to wish Erin farewell.



Third picture shows Erin now at home in Arizona with granddaughter **Hartley** and dog **Diesel**. Erin's daughter and son-in-law, **Hannah and Brian**, invited her to live with them in their new home in Queen Creek, Arizona.

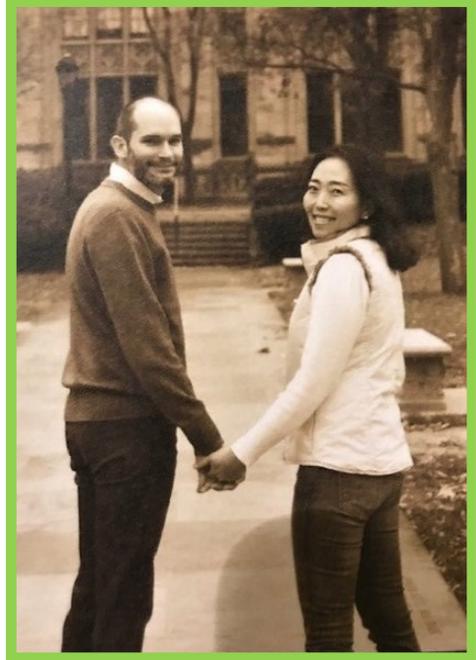
Final picture on bottom left is of Erin's new granddaughter, **Haevyn Joy**, born on August 24! Baby is the daughter of Hannah and Brian, and is Hartley's new little sister.



Please pray for **Colleen Higbee** and her beloved service dog **Piers**. Due to a serious eye condition, Piers had surgeries to remove both eyes. He is now in training to learn how to protect Colleen as a blind service dog.



The grave marker of Associate **Cathy Lenehan's** mother. Note the caption at the bottom of the stone, and see "Meet an Associate" on page 2 for more about Cathy and her mom.



**Congratulations on
your wedding!
~August 7, 2020~**

Wishing Associate Katherine Yoon and her husband, AJ Suravicz, all the happiness and many blessings that our Provident God can give them. We love you!

The Associates and Sisters of
Divine Providence



Anna Mae Perrault's daughter **Cheryl, Sr. Emma Jean Middendorf,** and Anna Mae in Anna Mae's certified Monarch Waystation last summer. Sr. Emma Jean reports that the "butterflies are aflutter" in the garden once again and will fly south when the weather gets colder.

May They Live in Peace



Jo-Anne Bryan Welch passed away on June 22, 2020, at the age of 85. She was an Associate for 16 years and was a member of the Providence Peace faith-sharing group in Pittsburgh.

Jo-Anne had also been a member of the CDP Community for several years, and her devotion to the Sisters of Divine Providence was always important to her.

She suffered much with ill health over the past few years, but up until this past year she always attended

Assembly and many other Community celebrations.

Jo-Anne was a long-time parishioner at St. John Fisher Church. She taught in parish schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and at Providence Heights Alpha for several years.

Jo-Anne was the beloved wife of Terry Welch for 45 years, and the loving mother of Christopher Ruffner and his wife, Krystal, and Catherine Wilson. She was a devoted grandmother to Kendall, Joshua, and Caitlin. She is also survived by a sister, Marybeth Caracciolla, and many nieces and nephews.

May Jo-Anne now enjoy the love and care of our Provident God.

— Sr. Rita Adams



Mary Hassler passed away on August 10, 2020, at the age of 95. She was an Associate for more than 30 years.

Mary was a special friend of Sr. Barbara McMullen, who wrote the following remembrance of her:

I met Mary in 1988 when she came through my RCIA class to come back to the Catholic Church.

As a child she attended

Catholic school until she was nine years old, when the family moved to Granite City and her mother began taking them to the Baptist church close by their home. Mary told me she never quite felt at home there, and eventually she found her way back to the Catholic faith.

Having Mary in the RCIA class was a blessing for both me and Fr. Don Wolford. We knew we could always count on Mary to ask a significant question that others were afraid to ask!

Though there was quite an age difference between Mary and me, we became very close friends. When RCIA was over, I invited her to consider becoming an Associate of Divine Providence. Almost before I could finish the invitation, she responded "Yes." She told me her journey through association brought her so much

deeper into spirituality and knowing a Provident God.

We enjoyed each other's company, took many vacations together, saw many movies, had wonderful talks, and shared our deeper selves. They say that God loves us unconditionally. Mary's love for me was as close to God's unconditional love as one could get.

Mary always had a little twinkle in her blue eyes, and a great sense of humor. That sparkle in her eyes was kindled by a fiery spirit within her too. It's not easy trying to capture in words the deep and abiding love I feel in my heart for my beloved soul friend. I was nurtured by her sharing the wisdom gleaned from her own life's journey through ups and downs.

When Mary had to move from her home in Granite City to St. Clare's Villa and then to Cambridge House, she had to accept the differences of each new place. She knew that her definition of home might have to change, and change it did. Cambridge House became her home, the place where she had a helping hand, where she felt safe. She told me she wanted to die there. So telling her they said she needed to go to a nursing home was the hardest news I've ever had to deliver. The first words out of her mouth were, "No, I'm not going."

I cried, she didn't. She got mad. She got quiet and when I asked how she felt, she said: "I feel like I've

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Awakening, Finally *(continued from page 5)*

I have watched as other countries have torn down statues of dictators and others who have committed inhumane acts. Hitler, Rommel, Goring, Idi Amin, Hussein, al-Gaddafi. I would not think of glorifying this part of world history. And, yet, I have said that we should not tear down statues of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and many others because it is part of our history.

Each of these statues, again, represents a traitor to the United States and to the ideals of our Constitution. These statues, left standing, support the ideals of slavery, of crushing human beings into submission. These statues must be brought down.

Another instance of my blindness is the glorification of these Confederate leaders when naming buildings or our military installations. I have been required to look back at history to see who these people were. They were military leaders of the Confederate army. These men have been memorialized each time a building or fort or park or any other public place carries their name. It would be no different than naming a library after Adolf Hitler. Would we, as Americans, stand for that? I don't think so. I, for one, will no longer stand for it.

I must realize that we are all God's children created in God's image. In each, individual, I must see another human being, just like myself. Our skin colors may be different, but on the inside, we are the same. Therefore, we must be treated with the same rights. May God and people of color forgive my ignorance!

— June 15, 2020

Mary Hassler *(continued from page 7)*

been kicked in the stomach." Then, "I'm glad it was you who delivered this news in the flesh." She pointed to her heart, and said, "This is where I'll always be, Barb, my heart in yours."

In the end, she left this earth on her own terms. She wasn't going to the nursing home. She decided to go to God before that — and I truly believe she told God that was how it was going to be!

So I say to you, Mary, how truly LOVED beyond measure you are, and always will be, by your family, your friends, and me. You brought so much joy and special moments to our lives. The loss of you here on earth is immeasurable, but so is the love left behind. Live your eternal life, Mary. Godspeed, my friend!

Mark Your Calendar

September

12 Town Hall Meeting 10 a.m.—4 p.m. EDT (via Zoom)
Chapter Facilitators Srs. Connie Gilder & Carol Marozzi will answer questions; also, Presentation on Agregees

Sept/Oct/Nov 2020

Pre-Chapter Conversation Circle Meetings

October 2020

10 OPAL Workshop (via Zoom) (See information below)
24 Associate Reception-Pittsburgh (via Zoom)

February 2021

20 Providence Event (live-streamed)
(See information below)

OPAL Workshop: LEGACY, LOVE, LEADERSHIP:

The Unfolding Associate Path

This workshop will be presented by **Kathleen Wade**, who has been designing and directing leadership development programs for religious and their associates since 2010. She will explore with us how our calling as associates — through the shared charism of our communities — is based on how we love one another and live that call in ever-deepening relationships.

We will also be led to look at the legacy of each of our associations as we continue to move from Sister-driven to Associate-driven leadership and sustainability.

Saturday, October 10, 2020

9:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

It will be presented as a free virtual workshop utilizing Zoom software. If you are interested in attending, please send an email with your name, email address, and (associate) community to **stephz18@yahoo.com**. The final day for registration is **October 1, 2020**.

Providence Event 2021

The new date for the Providence Event is **February 20, 2021**. Due to the pandemic, the day's events will be live-streamed. The committee has been working hard to make this first-time virtual event happen. The keynote speaker, **Nancy Sylvester, IHM**, will be addressing "**Providence — Where Justice and Radical Hope Meet.**"

You can sign up on the web at <https://www.wpcweb.org/>. We hope many of you will join us for this single-day event that promises to be challenging and rewarding.

Special Thanks

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Photos: Maryann D'Alessandro, Colleen Higbee, Linda Hoefflin, Cathy Lenehan, Sr. Barbara McMullen, Sr. Emma Jean Middendorf, Erin Middleton.