

Staying Connected

Volume 22 - Issue 10

April 9, 2026

Sisters of St. Francis
of Mary Immaculate

From the Archives

By Elizabeth Piskorski, Archivist

Hello again Sisters!

I am so thankful for the continued discoveries there are to be made in the archives.

One gift of the Joliet Franciscan Archives is that there has been very consistent record keeping over the years. It is fun to connect dots from the same eras and use the records to paint a picture of what life was like for the sisters in the community. I can also get a look into what school life was like, such as through the St. Francis Academy collection, which I am currently processing.

I have found that booklets from early enrollment, photographs, and student and family communications have been saved from 1916 onward. This means that we have quite a comprehensive collection. As an example, we have photographs and playbills from more than one play that was held at St. Francis Academy. These photographs of student plays are from as early as 1924. We know that at the start of the academy, Mother Alfred put a huge emphasis on musical and drama instruction. To know that these things were still so important nearly sixty years later gives us a colorful

look at what the culture of St. Francis Academy would have been like in those early years.

One play, *The Dream of Queen Esther*, was apparently performed at multiple mission schools across Illinois. We have a lot of detailed information about this play including ticket prices (25 cents per ticket), what invitations to the play looked like, the playbill, and the cast list. Most notably, however, is that we have photographs of this play!

Part of my job as an archivist is figuring out “What does this record tell us?” Such detailed record-keeping of the play tells me that this play was a big deal. It was likely a point of pride for both the sisters and the students. In the photograph itself, I see beautiful costumes and precise positioning on stage. It may even be that the play was a way to showcase the talent and abilities of the students at St. Francis Academy and, by extension, their instructors.

I cannot wait to see what discoveries the archives bring next!
Elizabeth

Playbill, reserved seat ticket, and invitation to the *Dream of Queen Esther*, 1924



More pictures on page 6



2026 Earth Day: Our Power, Our Planet

Quick Facts

- First Celebrated: April 22, 1970
- Country of Origin: United States
- Founder Earth Day was started by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson and organized by Denis Hayes.

Earth Day was created to:

- Raise awareness about pollution
- Protect air, water, and land
- Encourage environmental responsibility

The First Earth Day (1970)

- Over 20 million people participated
- Included rallies, cleanups, and teach-ins
- Became one of the largest public movements in U.S. history

Earth Day helped lead to:

- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Earth Day Today

- Celebrated every April 22
- Observed in 190+ countries
- Promotes recycling, conservation, and climate action

How You Can Help

- Reduce waste
- Recycle
- Save energy
- Plant trees
- Protect wildlife
- "Every day is Earth Day when we care for our planet."

Illinois Battery Recycling Law

One-Page Printable Guide (2026)

What Is This Law? Requires battery manufacturers and sellers to fund free recycling programs to reduce fires and pollution.

Who Must Comply? All battery producers and sellers in Illinois must participate in approved stewardship programs.

Batteries Covered: AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, button cells, rechargeable batteries, e-bike and lawn equipment batteries.

Recycling Rules: Do not place batteries in trash or curbside bins. Use approved drop-off locations only. Landfill ban starts in 2028.

Safety Tips: Tape terminals, store in cool dry place, and use special facilities for damaged batteries.

Where to Recycle Retail: Drop-off bins, local government collection sites, and approved recycling programs.

Future Requirements: Approved brands only (2026). New labeling rules begin (2029).

Quick FAQ Trash? No. Free recycling? Yes. Damaged batteries? Authorized sites only.

Prepared for educational use • Updated 2026 • Illinois Environmental Protection



Climate Action

January 30, 2026

Every January people are encouraged to reinvent themselves. We make resolutions to eat better, move more, spend less, and waste less. We promise ourselves to quit plastic, go zero-waste, buy only ethical brands, and shrink our effect on climate change overnight.

But then reality hits.

We forget reusable bags for the grocery store. We can't afford the most "eco-friendly" products, so we buy what we can. We live somewhere without public transportation. The guilt creeps in, and suddenly sustainability feels less like hope and more like failure. It can be so discouraging that sometimes we give up altogether.

But here's the truth the environmental movement needs to say out loud (shout it from a building if you have to): sustainability was never meant to be perfect. Real environmental progress has always come from collective, imperfect action, not individual perfection.

Learn about the climate crisis to clearly explain the issue and support effective solutions. A great and entertaining way to learn is to watch science-based documentaries.

Here are some outstanding climate documentaries to check out.

- **2040** — Learn about, contribute to, advocate for and invest in regenerative solutions to improve our planet. This is an optimistic view of what the year 2040 could look like if we take action now.

- **David Attenborough - A Life on Our Planet** — Sir David Attenborough is a well-known broadcaster and natural historian. Watch this beautifully filmed documentary to learn about the basics of climate change and resultant biodiversity loss. Stick with it until the 55-minute mark to hear the hopeful message!

- **Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet** — The story of the incredible discovery that humanity has pushed Earth beyond the boundaries that have kept it stable for the last 10,000 years. David Attenborough and scientist Johan Rockström examine the unfolding crisis and how we can still avoid the worst of it.

- **The Reluctant Radical** — If a crime is committed in order to prevent a greater crime, is it forgivable? Is it moral? Follows activist Ken Ward as he confronts his fears and puts himself in the direct path of oil and gas companies to combat climate change.

- **There's Something in the Water** — Based on the book by Ingrid R.G. Waldron, the film explores the disproportionate effect of environmental damage on Black Canadian and First Nations communities in Nova Scotia. Although based on examples in Canada, the issues exposed relate to environmental racism around the globe.

For us, every day is Earth Day. Small actions, taken consistently, create real change.

- Make your next meal plant-based
- Reading over streaming
- Plant a pollinator garden
- Switch to clean energy
- Grow an organic garden
- Fight climate change with diet change
- Support organic ingredients
- Host a clothes swap

- Sign a petition for sustainable fashion
- Pick up litter on your daily walk
- Leave no trace on your next outing
- Switch to reusable bags
- Be plastic-free for a day
- Calculate your plastic consumption
- Add reusable eating utensils to your everyday carry
- Switch to plastic-free pet products
- Tell lawmakers to end plastic pollution
- Buy nothing for a day
- Limit the use of AI
- Dispose of your electronics responsibly
- Visit a park
- Sign the Global Plastic Treaty Petition

**A U.S.A. recycling chart is being printed
so that you can keep on your fridge!**

**Designed and researched by
Carol Baranski**

The climate crisis is not going to be solved by a handful of perfectly sustainable individuals. It will be addressed by millions of people taking imperfect, meaningful action together. Sustainability must allow room for learning, mistakes, and growth if it is to be inclusive and effective. Guilt keeps people stuck. Progress moves us forward by lowering barriers to entry for broad participation, building positive momentum through collective engagement.

***“With the new day comes new
strength and new thoughts.”***

Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady

Brought to you by the LSAP Goals 1, 4
Subcommittee

Sister Jane Neinaber,
Carol Baranski,
Pam Leddy and
Janine Hicks



*Please see the insert from
JPIC in today's mailing!*

Creation Care Corner 

“We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.”
-US Conference of Catholic Bishops

Genesis 1:1-31
God made the heavens and the earth and it was good.

Genesis 2:15
Humans are commanded to care for God’s creation.

Leviticus 25:1-7
The land itself must be given a rest and not abused.

Deuteronomy 10:14
All of heaven and earth belong to the Lord.

Psalms 24:1-2
All the earth is the Lord’s.

Daniel 3:56-82
Creation proclaims the glory of God.

Matthew 6:25-34
God loves and cares for all of creation.

Romans 1:20
Creation reveals the nature of God.

1 Corinthians 10:26
Creation and all created things are inherently good because they are of the Lord.

**Consider asking your parish to subscribe
through Catholic Climate Covenant/
Creation Care Bulletin.**

New Immigration Policies

by Theresa Fifer, OSF
JPIC Commission



Immigration has touched all our lives. If we have not immigrated to the U.S. ourselves, our ancestors did. As you know, there have been many changes to U.S. immigration policy and how it is being enforced. The following information is from Welcome U.S.

The Trump administration has set the total amount of refugees that can enter the U.S. at 7,500 down from 125,000 under the Biden administration. Most of the 7,500 refugees now allowed are white South Africans sometimes referred to as Afrikaners who are descended from the 17th and 18th century European settlers in South Africa. The State Department has suspended visas for 75 countries; most of these countries have populations that are mostly brown or black. The official reason for the suspension is that the people from these 75 countries will most likely require public assistance.

April

The roofs are shining from the rain.
The sparrows tritter as they fly,
And with a windy April grace
The little clouds go by.

Yet the back-yards are bare and brown
With only one unchanging tree--
I could not be so sure of Spring
Save that it sings in me.

Sara Teasdale

“This visa suspension closes safe and legal pathways for families who have already navigated a lengthy, and complex immigration process. This includes Afghan Special Immigrant (SIV) applicants who risked their lives to serve alongside U.S. forces.” (Welcome U.S.).

“By halting visas, even after approval, the policy leaves families in limbo, separates loved ones indefinitely, and undermines confidence in the fairness and reliability of America’s legal immigration system.” (Welcome U.S.).

This information was gleaned from Welcome U.S. which was established by the Biden administration to recruit civic minded associations to help with immigration resettlement.

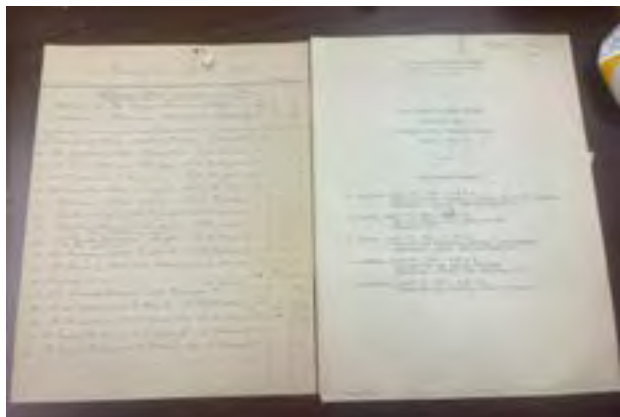
The language school that I volunteer with, Water for Ishmael, was the first association in Ohio to be delegated as a Welcoming Organization by the federal government. The Trump Administration has discontinued Welcome U.S. as a federal agency.

Please pray for our refugees to be treated humanely and fairly and for those who are waiting to come to the U.S., many of whom want to reunite with their families. You could also contact your government representatives regarding your thoughts on our new immigration policies.

Thank you.



Archives *continued*



A list of locations where the play was performed, complete with a list of students and sisters involved in each performance.



A photograph of "The Dream of Queen Esther," play in motion, 1924



Character and cast list in "The Dream of Queen Esther" 1924

Sr. Sandra Sudkamp Addresses Her Parish

Submitted by Sheila Greuel, Associate

Sr. Sandra Sudkamp gave a short presentation to a group during her parish, St. Francis of Assisi Lenten study group on March 9, 2026 in Teutopolis, Illinois. The group spent four weeks studying the book *Perfect Joy: 30 Days with Francis of Assisi* as part of the parish remembrance of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' death and the Jubilee Year Proclaimed in His honor by Pope Leo.

During her presentation, Sr. Sandra explained the crest of the Joliet Franciscans and shared about the Sisters living in Brazil and throughout the United States and described the ministries they have served past and present. The highlight of her presentation was sharing some of the different mediums of art work Sr. Kay Francis Berger created under the inspiration of St. Francis and the Holy Spirit. Sr. Sandra showed them the beautifully created set of Canticle cards made by Sr. Kay Francis.



Participants were so moved by them they asked to purchase sets if possible. The participants were given a card depicting Sr. Kay Francis' art work on the front and the prayer of St. Francis on the back with the Joliet Franciscan's shield.

The participants expressed their gratitude for the ministry of Sr. Sandra's in the parish and service of the many Joliet Franciscans who have given service to this area.



NATIONAL TITANIC

REMEMBRANCE DAY - April 15

On April 15th, National Titanic Remembrance Day remembers the lives lost when the Titanic sank into the North Atlantic's icy waters in 1912. We remember the more than 1,500 people who died that day.

#TitanicRemembranceDay

Known as the "the unsinkable ship," the Titanic hit an iceberg at 11:40 pm on April 14, 1912, on her maiden voyage from England to New York City. Later, in the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean, on April 15, the Titanic sank. Those who perished did so mainly due to an insufficient number of lifeboats onboard the ship.

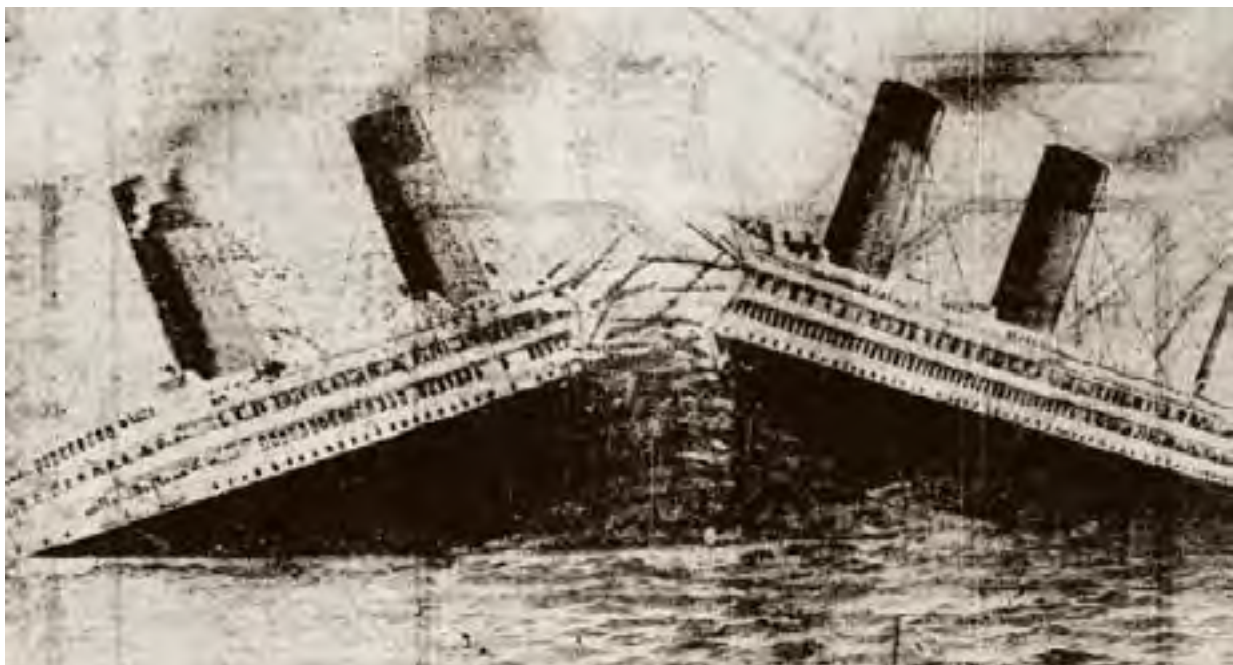
Since that time, journalists, engineers, ocean explorers, historians, survivors, and descendants of those lost have been trying to piece together the events leading up to that night. Countless hours of documentation, salvage expeditions, and interviews all record the perspectives of those involved. Every angle and myth has been considered from the investors to the designers, the builders, and the sailors, right down to the communications and those left behind. And to this day, it still is a heartbreaking and mesmerizing story no matter where you begin.

HOW TO OBSERVE TITANIC REMEMBRANCE DAY

- As you sail through the history of Titanic, learn more about its secrets, people, and myths, too.
- Read about the building of the Titanic and follow its timeline.
- Discover the survivors' stories.
- Watch a documentary, movie or take a virtual tour of the ship. *A Night to Remember* by Walter Lord, *Voyagers of the Titanic:*

Passengers, Sailors, Shipbuilders, Aristocrats, and the Worlds They Came From by Richard Davenport-Hines, *Titanic* directed by James Cameron starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo

DeCaprio, *Waking the Titanic* (2012) directed by Francis Delany, *Secrets of the Titanic* (1986) by National Geographic



Recipe Corner:

Peach Cobbler

Ingredients:

5 peaches, peeled, cored and sliced (about 4 cups) (or 600-700 g)
3/4 cup granulated sugar, (150 g)
1/4 teaspoon salt

For the batter:

6 Tablespoons butter, (85 g)
1 cup all-purpose flour, (120 g)
1 cup granulated sugar, (200 g)
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk, (180 ml)
ground cinnamon



Directions

Add the sliced peaches, sugar and salt to a saucepan and stir to combine.

*(If using canned peaches, skip steps 1 & 2 and follow the directions starting at step 3)

Cook on medium heat for just a few minutes, until the sugar is dissolved and helps to bring out juices from the peaches. Remove from heat and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Slice butter into pieces and add to a 9x13 inch baking dish. Place the pan in the oven while it preheats, to allow the butter to melt. Once melted, remove the pan from the oven.

In a large bowl mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Stir in the milk, just until combined. Pour the mixture into the pan, over the melted butter and smooth it into an even layer.

Spoon the peaches and juice (or canned peaches, if using) over the batter. Sprinkle cinnamon generously over the top.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 38-40 minutes. Serve warm, with a scoop of ice cream, if desired.

FACEBOOK PRAYER AUTHORS

March	Sr. Karen Berry
April	LSAP Sub-committee Goals 1,4
May	Sr. Rosemary Huzl

Volunteers needed for the rest of 2026 to be Facebook Prayer Authors!

Contact Karen Garifo if you are willing to volunteer. Thank you!

kgarifo@jolietfranciscans.org

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If you would like to submit an item for *Staying Connected*, or if something you have requested to be published is inadvertently omitted, please e-mail

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