

Sister Mary David Walgenbach, osb



Sister Mary David Walgenbach joined the Sisters of Saint Benedict following a call to religious life that grew steadily after high school graduation. Early on she took an active part in the community life and ecumenical ministries. She co-founded the Community of Benedict and the monastery's oblate community, setting a path toward the dream of an ecumenical Sisters' community that became reality in 2006. Sister Mary David has a lifetime involvement in interreligious gatherings, including the Bossey Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland and the World Council of Churches "Ecumenical Decade of the Churches' Solidarity with Women" in Harare, Zimbabwe. She is currently prioress, guided daily by the desire to make the monastery an inclusive place for people of all faith traditions.

Sister Joanne Kollasch, osb



Fifty years ago, Sister Joanne Kollasch put down roots for a community of Benedictine Sisters in a beautiful place overlooking Lake Mendota and the city of Madison. A strong call to spiritual life led her to join an order as a young woman and work with other Sisters to form Saint Benedict Center (now Holy Wisdom Monastery). Her life-giving relationship with the community continued to evolve as she served for over a decade as prioress. A lifelong goal to provide a home for spiritual seekers of all kinds led Sister Joanne to co-found the ecumenical communities Benedictine Women of Madison and the Community of Benedict. She now serves as a retreat leader and spiritual guide for guests who visit the monastery. Joanne helps to maintain a home that welcomes people from around the world for spiritual and personal growth, promotes caring for the land and preserves space for people to reflect on God's presence in their lives.

Sister Lynne Smith, osb



Sister Lynne Smith was called to spiritual life as a young girl, telling her mother that she wanted to become a nun when she grew up. While her mother told her that only Catholic women could become nuns, Sister Lynne continued to feel a call to give her life in service to God and others. Lynne became a Presbyterian pastor and led parishes in Kansas and Iowa for over 15 years before discovering Benedictine Women of Madison. She visited Holy Wisdom Monastery and soon began to attend retreats with the Sisters and explore the different resources for spiritual development at the monastery. Sister Lynne felt that she had found her heart's home in the Sisters' community and decided to start the journey of becoming a community member. In 2000, she made her profession to the community as the first Protestant member. She is active at the monastery and at events around the country. She currently works as director of membership, playing a vital role in helping women recognize and explore their own vocational callings.