

Bridges

September 18, 2026



Momentum on Campus



A summer of renovation and an engaged Parent Guild open Thevenet's 55th year — and set the stage for two landmark undertakings.

The 2026–2027 school year opened at Thevenet Montessori School with more than the usual first-week energy. Across campus, families returned to visibly transformed spaces — the product of a busy summer of renovation — and to a Parent Guild that spent those same weeks rolling up its sleeves. As the school marks its 55th anniversary, the season's work has become a study in its guiding idea: building for the future while honoring the past. **The most visible changes are underfoot. Welch Hall now features a warm, wood-look luxury vinyl plank floor — durable, welcoming, and finished in time for the community's return — while the school offices are slated to receive matching flooring over an upcoming long weekend to keep the school day undisturbed.**

Nearby, the new Lower Elementary classroom is entering its final stretch: painting is complete, and lighting, fixtures, and built-in cabinetry are being installed, with work continuing on a pull-out stage, bathrooms, and built-in window seats. Until the room is ready, Lower Elementary students have made a temporary home in the Maker Space — a move that has quietly set up the next chapter for that room, which will be reimagined as a dedicated Art and Maker Space once the classroom transition is complete.



None of it has happened in isolation. Thevenet's Parent Guild has been a steady presence through the transition — helping classrooms settle into their rhythms, supporting the many small tasks that turn construction into community, and reminding the school that its strength has always come from the participation and talents of its families. That spirit of involvement is exactly what the year ahead will ask for, because two of the most ambitious projects in recent memory are now getting underway.

Two projects, now underway

The first is the 55th Anniversary Gala, set for April 17, 2027. Conceived as both celebration and investment, the evening will honor the generations of children, families, teachers, and supporters who have shaped Thevenet over more than half a century — while raising support for its future. A Gala Committee is forming now to guide planning, sponsorships, auction items, and every detail in between, with room for volunteers at every level of commitment.

The second is the Adventure Garden Playground, an outdoor environment designed to invite movement, imagination, exploration, and a genuine connection with nature. The project carries a \$100,000 fundraising goal and a newly forming Adventure Garden Playground Committee, where parents can help shape everything from design and sponsorships to community outreach and events.

Both initiatives are large enough to deserve more than a paragraph — and they will get it. The next edition of Bridges will take a closer look at each: the vision behind the Adventure Garden Playground and how the community can help build it, and the plans taking shape for a milestone gala 55 years in the making. For now, the message from campus is a simple one. The new spaces, the enrichment programs, and the projects on the horizon are, at heart, about the same thing — creating meaningful experiences for today's students while preparing Thevenet for the generations still to come.

**Jake Mooney, Director of Development for
TMS and Bethany Center Hudson Valley**



Washington School for Girls



The Washington School for Girls is back at school with 131 students this year, the first full year in our new building that opened in January of 2026. From the moment students set foot on campus for our first day Gold Carpet Rollout to our Opening Mass, students have been building the foundations for a strong sisterhood and a year of academic growth and excellence. Students recently met their Big and Little sisters, launched their campaigns for Student Council, and have completed their first quarter of academic work.

The school community is also preparing to celebrate its 30th anniversary at its Pearl Anniversary Gala on April 17, 2027.



Updates from Bethany Center Hudson Valley

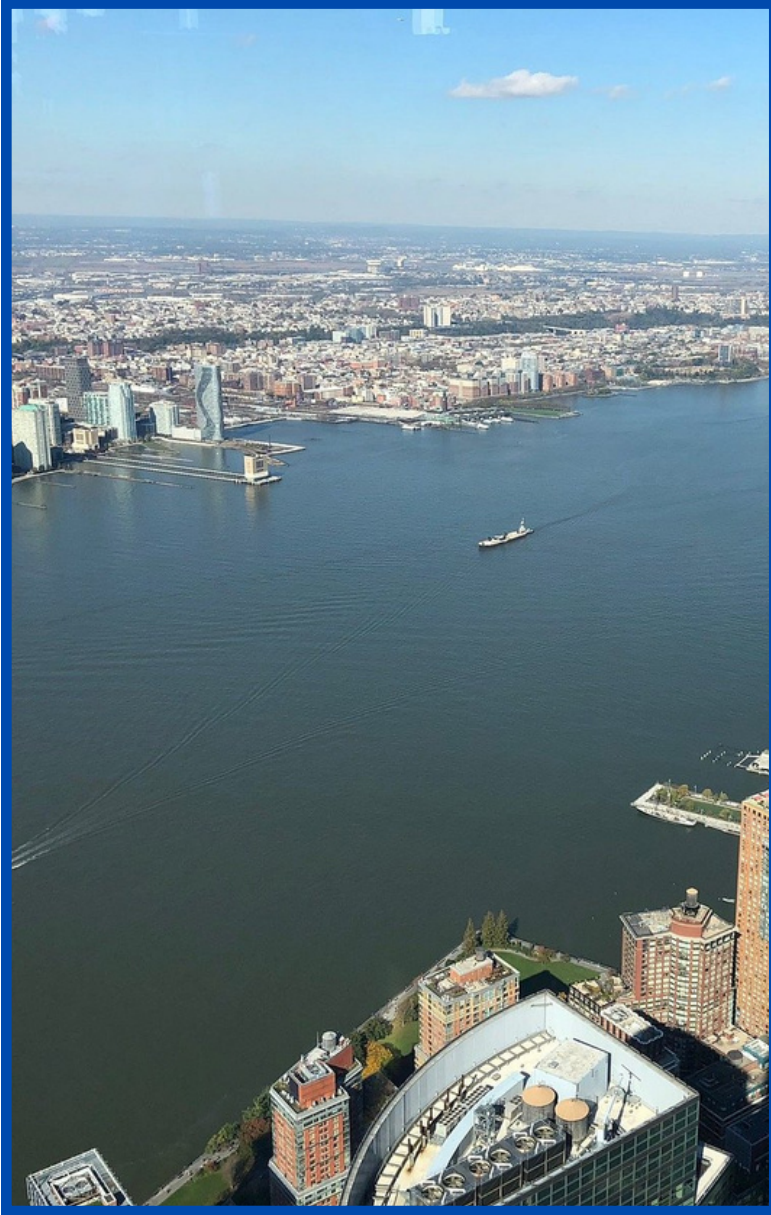


Image Courtesy of Tripadvisor

This past month, Bethany Center Hudson Valley has continued to care for God's creation by growing our involvement in environmental advocacy, with a focus on issues close to home here in the Hudson Valley. Just the other day, the Bethany Center added their signature to a letter asking Governor Hochul to strengthen protections for our waterways, including the Hudson River that gives us our name. In particular, we're concerned about leachate, sometimes called "garbage juice," the toxic liquid created when rainwater moves through landfills, picking up heavy metals, pesticides, and other chemicals. According to New York River Watch, landfills send more than half a billion gallons of leachate each year to municipal sewage plants that aren't equipped to treat it, and nearly a third of that, about 167 million gallons, ends up in rivers and lakes used as drinking water sources, including the Hudson.

We're still finding our footing in advocacy work, and we want to grow into it thoughtfully, alongside others who have been in this space for longer. Beyond the leachate issue, we're hoping to spend more time learning and advocating for an extension of the NY moratorium on new data center construction, as well as the protection of open space and forests here in the Hudson Valley.

We'd love your guidance in shaping where we focus next. If there are any environmental advocacy initiatives that you believe we should consider taking a stance on, please email me, our Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator, at sicile@bethanycenterhudsonvalley.org.

Best wishes,
Sicile Naddeo-Gjergji



Yesterday was a fun day at Bethany as we welcomed our new full-time director of development and advancement, Jake Mooney, who will also be serving Thevenet Montessori School in a shared capacity.

Photo of Jake, Sicile, and Erin's dog Obi

Jake is a parent of three girls, two already at the school, and one too little to join! There's a photo of Jake, Sicile, and our faithful companion, my dog Obi, attached. We had a nice coffee with Sherrie and Anne in the afternoon to kick off the expanded team. Speaking of expanding, in coming months, a question for Bethany Center Hudson Valley is how to deepen our interfaith engagements. All of your input is very welcome. Tonight is the Season of Creation Mass for the New York Chapter, which I'll be attending on behalf of Bethany. For our Jewish friends, as we know, these are the times of their High Holy Days.

Last week, I had the opportunity to moderate an interfaith panel on our moral obligation to care for our common home, hosted by the Parliament of the World Religions. I was especially thrilled to listen to Bishop John Stowe, OFM, who has been an extraordinary leader in Catholic creation care. Under his direction, he has encouraged every parish in his diocese to begin a Laudato Si action plan, which is a sustainability plan created by the Vatican. This is really unprecedented, and it was wonderful to see such active leadership and hear him talk about it. We can be so proud of the great steps our faith community is taking around the world, and I hope that Bethany can be of service in modeling sustainability as well.

Erin Lothes, Executive Director of Bethany Center Hudson Valley



Join Bethany Center Hudson Valley at 2pm on Saturday, September 19th for an afternoon of nature, poetry, music, and community as we celebrate St. Hildegard's vision of viriditas, or the divine greening power alive throughout creation. Following an optional forest walk, at 3pm noted mezzo-soprano Sarah Nordin will perform eight of Hildegard's viriditas-themed chant compositions, interwoven with background reflections and poetic readings.

The performance will be followed by a wine and cheese reception. Please RSVP here, as space is limited: [RSVP Here](#)

Should you wish to attend, we would love to welcome you at Bethany for the day. And for those unable to join us in person, the event will be recorded, and we'll be sure to send the recording along afterward.

With warm blessings,

Sicile Naddeo-Gjergji

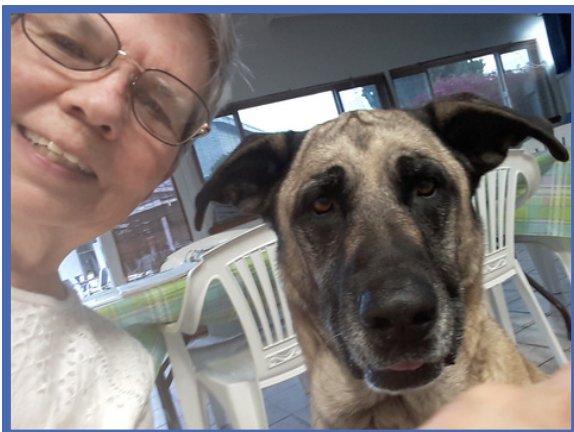
Care for Creation



Nat watering the garden,
flowers and plants



Sr. Rosie with Cora, community
dog-sitting while Sean recuperates



Sr. Rosie and others in the RJM community taking care of creation during this month of the *Season of Creation* (Sept. 1- Oct. 4). Watering cactus and taking care of community animals, they have been nurturing the nature all around them.

Retreat at Maryland Women's Prison Was a Piece of **CAKE**!

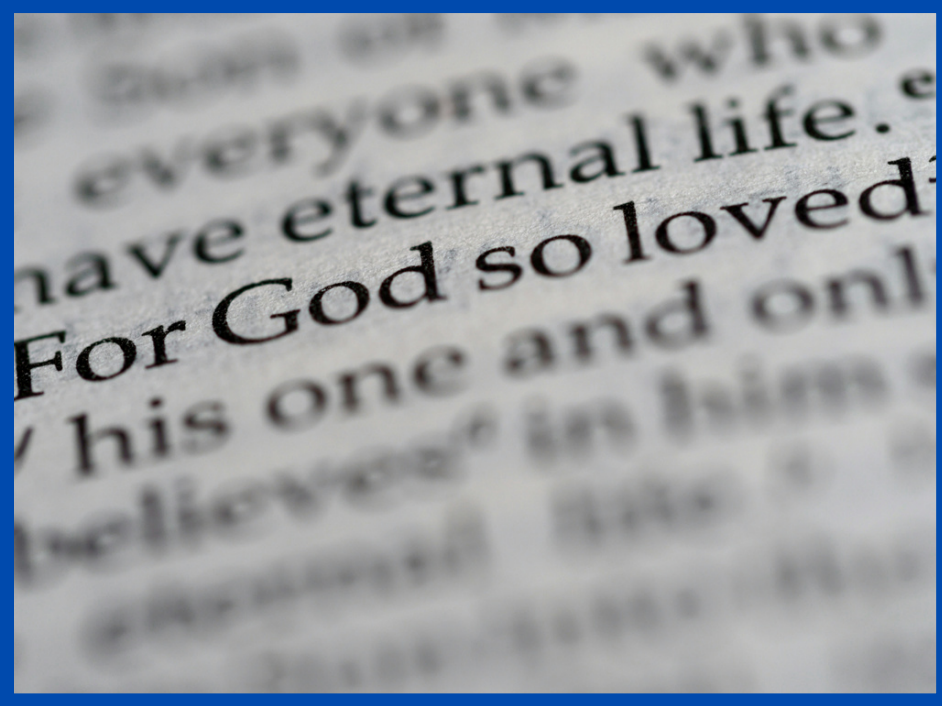


Image Courtesy of Unsplash

On Saturday, August 29, a team of 18 diverse Christian women hosted a retreat at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in Jessup, MD. Almost 70 guests attended, and 18 team members. Kathy Schmitt, who works with the Provincial Team in the DC office, participated as a team member. The retreat was sponsored by the Maryland chapter of Kairos Prison Ministry International.

The theme of the retreat was **CAKE**.

God **C**ares
God is **A**ble
God **K**nows us
Be **E**ncouraged.

The guests were hungry for meaningful conversation, and settled right into table discussions. We enjoyed lots of cookies, for which Kairos is known. Kairos uses cookies as a concrete example of God's love, and so we brought in cases of cookies. Every participant took home a bag of 10 more cookies.

We started at 9:30 AM, enjoyed lunch in the prison cafeteria, and then ended the day at 3:30 PM with snow cones. Our hope is that the Christian community behind bars was strengthened and encouraged, and was reminded that the Church outside the prison has not forgotten them. Please pray for the continued ministry of Kairos in Maryland, in the US, and in 8 other countries.

Kathy Schmitt, Executive Coordinator

AFJM Leadership Changes



Left to Right seated: Kathleen Scanlon RJM,
Anna Smith, Pat Dillon RJM, Julia Haas

Left to Right standing: Eileen McCarthy,
Lourdes Foley, Noreen Mastrangelo, Ann
McCormack, Teresa Krauss, Barbara Linen SHCJ
Kathleen Alonzo, Valerie Andrusco, Cathy Hogan

The AFJM group from the Bronx, New York, held their Fall kick-off meeting on Saturday, September 12th, 2026. It was very well attended.

A major leadership change was announced. Kathleen Alonzo who has been Co-Chairing the group with Teresa Krauss since Sr Kathleen Scanlon, RJM stepped down after 25 years of service, is now stepping down to devote 100% of her time to coordinate the Alpha program at St John's Church. She will continue as an AFJM member.

Sr Barbara Linen, SHCJ has been appointed as her replacement and will be Co-Chairing with Teresa Krauss. The rest of the Leadership Team consists of: Cathy Hogan - Treasurer and Valerie Andrusco - Secretary.

Many exciting activities are being planned for the upcoming year starting with a retreat in October at Bethany located in Highland Mills, NY and another retreat during Lent at Maryknoll. Then in December we plan to partner with a Family Shelter in the neighborhood and distribute Christmas gifts to the children there. We are also considering ideas to raise money for Haiti.

Valerie M. Andrusco, Secretary

2026 RJM Jean Rabel Summer Camp

Over 350 were involved in the 2026 RJM Jean Rabel Summer Camp, 29th June - 10th July. It took place in 3 schools: Acadien, Cotton and Colette. There were several meetings prior to the actual summer camp. 10 monitors were chosen from each school community. Participants registered with a minimal subscription 50 - 150 gourdes , less than a dollar. There were some who were unable to pay, but participated regardless . All money recieved went into the school fund. A generous donator provided T-shirts for the team and Monitors. There were workshops on how to make washing liquid and Mistoline, a scented household cleaner.

Others learned how to make plantain chips and buns....a winner! Bracelets, headgear, envelopes and decorations also featured. Sport took in Musical chairs, racing, ball games and a new game called Hot Sponge! This involved passing a wet sponge from one to the other without getting wet! Food was provided each day...breakfast of bread and peanut , lunch of rice and beans or spaghetti and sardine sauce, all bought and cooked locally. The children were so happy to participate in new activities outside the school program, which they continued to do after the camp finished. 4,000 US dollars covered the cost of this camp. Thank you to all who helped to make it possible.



Participants of the 2026 RJM Jean Rabel Summer Camp.



Celebrating Sr. Antoinette Jacques' 99th Birthday

When the group arrived at St. Antoine's Community Residence in North Smithfield, RI, Msgr. Gerry Sabourin, Sr. Antoinette's longtime friend and co-minister, was setting up for what he called "a short Mass", offered in celebration for Antoinette's 99th birthday – the beginning of her 100 years of life.

Attending the celebration were: Sisters from St. Timothy's in Warwick: Sisters Diane Dube, Doris Bissonnette, Alice Ouimette, Janet Stolba and Jackie Picard, as well as Sandy, one of our Health Agents.



Four faithful parishioners from Kateri Tekakwitha Parish in Exeter came, as well as six Sisters from Marillac Residence in Wellesley Hills, MA: Sisters Pauline Ayotte, Bernie Oliva, and Priscilla Lemire, along with their driver, Monique Tedino. A second car from Marillac brought Sisters Fatima Viramontes, Dina Garcia, and Vivian Patenaude. An added passenger, Sr. Marie Teresa del Rios, a Franciscan Sister in the Marillac Community, came along to visit some of her Franciscan Sisters at St. Antoine's Community.

Following our "short Mass", we enjoyed a short biography of Antoinette's life, provided by Sr. Mary Bourdon and shared by Msgr. Gerry Sabourin. It didn't take long after our Eucharistic Celebration to strategically organize how we would share the delicious cake from "La Favorite" Bakery/Restaurant in Warwick. St. Timothy's Community provided all the Party Accessories. Each one joined in line to wish Antoinette birthday blessings and wishes. It was a memorable celebration – one deeply etched in the book of our mind/ heart-memories!

Heartfelt thanks, Antoinette, for your many years of service both in education and as part of a living community of our Creator-God's most beloved developmentally challenged ones.

Vivian Patenaude, RJM

Mass of the Holy Spirit in Gros Morne



Mass of the Holy Spirit for the opening of the school year in Gros Morne in Notre Dame de la Chandeleur Church—students from Jesus-Mary Parish School, St. Gabriel's School and St. Jean 23rd Institute—Monday, September 14, 2026. May our God grant them a safe year!

Photo by Mèt Leny Laguerre

Updates from the Province

Sr. Mary will be visiting the New York RJM's, arriving in Yonkers on September 22nd and leaving from Highland Mills on October 1st.

Sr. Rosa Mejia will return to San Diego from Mexico on October 7th to continue serving in border ministry.

Feasts of the Holy Name of Mary and Holy Cross



Above is the chapel display for the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary. Image is from Doris Bissonnette.

In September, we celebrated two beautiful feasts that invite us to reflect on Mary and the Cross of Christ. The Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, celebrated on September 12, honors the name of Mary and her loving example of faith, humility, and devotion to God. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, celebrated on September 14, calls us to remember the Cross as a sign of Christ's great love and the hope of our salvation. Through prayer, flowers, candles, and these special devotional displays, St. Timothy's Chapel honored these important feasts.



Above is the chapel display for the Feast of the Holy Cross. Image is from Doris Bissonnette.

Prayers For:



Image Courtesy of Unsplash

- Debbie Tretter, sister of Sr. Rosemary Mangan's sister-in-law, who is having cardiac surgery today
- Regina Manning, Sr. Mary Bourdon's aunt, who recently passed away
- Adeline Rose, whose grandfather is a parishioner at St. Joseph's, is experiencing serious medical complications

Continuing Prayers For:

- Patti Stolba, the sister-in-law of Janet Stolba
- Mike Reskey during this difficult time. He is a friend of Mary Ann Berdoe, a former RJM.
- Brenda Mejia, who will soon begin treatment for thyroid cancer. Brenda is a member of a refugee family in Maryland, and recently gave birth to a baby boy.
- Sr. Teresita Morse's niece, Jennifer Morse Meisenkothen
- A friend of Mary Ann (Augello) Berdoe, Dr. Dee Tomeo
- Edward Stolba, brother of Sr. Janet Stolba
- For Colleen Pusateri, who is the daughter of Lorrie Kenney, niece of Sr. Eugenia Castonguay

Praised forever be Jesus and Mary