



Richard Meier, professor of English, was a featured presenter at Harbor Springs (Michigan) Festival of the Book in September. He read from the new book he co-wrote, “A Duration,” and participated in a panel discussion about “The Use of Language in Short Works.”

Thomas Powers, professor of political science, delivered remarks on the topic “Is American Democracy in Crisis?” in October as part of a series hosted by the University of Missouri.

Nancy Reese, director of nursing, took part in a presentation at the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders conference in September that focused on academic and clinical partnerships as one key to the future of nursing.



Richard Sjoerdsma, professor emeritus of music, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, the organization named its boardroom in his honor and established a Richard Sjoerdsma Excellence in Writing award for outstanding research. Prof. Sjoerdsma was the editor of the Journal of Singing for 22 years.

Lance Thompson, assistant director of student involvement for campus activities, completed Student Affairs Educator Certification (core and specialty) through a national consortium.

RETIREMENTS

18 YEARS

Lori Piela, Gift Processor

17 YEARS

Dan Faraca, Database Application Coordinator

How students build community

As the College continues its search for a new campus pastor, we invited a member of the center’s student staff to share reflections and updates.

My name is Amber Janke. I am a junior who transferred to Carthage in spring 2022. I began working in the Center for Faith and Spirituality that fall as a community builder on our service team.

My roles soon expanded to include supporting the office staff, Tuesday worship, and co-leading a Bible study. CFS became the place that I love to call home at Carthage. The family that has been built here is welcoming, engaging, and supportive, which was especially important after the tragic loss of Pastor Kara Baylor to cancer last May.

The energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of our student and professional staff led us into the new school year, as we welcomed Interim Pastor Tom Gaulke. He moved us through the fall term with guidance, support, and a willingness to try new things. Our programming is going strong, with some new student teams!

The faith and justice team is one of those additions. Its goals are to lift up social justice issues on campus and in our communities, and to create opportunities for students to get involved in justice-based work.

We hosted a kickoff event in December where students talked about what justice means to them. In February, we’re bringing the Black String Triage Ensemble to campus to discuss its use of music to respond to community trauma.

For our Protestant students, Pastor Tom leads a Tuesday worship that includes a soup and bread lunch. On Reformation Day, we started a six-week series called For All The Saints, where students, faculty, and staff could share reflections on people who have impacted their lives.

Our Catholic team coordinates a weekly

Mass with priests, student musicians, and readers while also supporting the student organization Catholics at Carthage. In addition, the team leads field trips to sites like Holy Hill.

Interfaith Lunch features weekly speakers — the more diversity in belief, the better! Guests have opened up about their journeys as part of various faith (and non-faith) traditions and indigenous cultures. Hearing from a female rabbi in a Reform Jewish congregation and a lesbian couple who are practicing Christians shows that, even within a major world religion, believers can have very different experiences.

This invites students into healthy conversations about BIG questions: Why are we here? Why do we believe what we believe? What happens when we die? By having speakers share their stories in a welcoming, celebratory environment, we can encourage students to boldly pursue their own spiritual paths.

The service team plans events for the good of students and the surrounding community. We host biannual blood drives with the Red Cross; the one held this past fall honored Pastor Kara. The new Empty Bowls event, part of a week of service activities to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will raise money for people experiencing homelessness in Racine. Random acts of kindness, such as handing out treat bags, are also planned by this team.

Every semester, we run a program called On Purpose. Students receive a daily email with reflection prompts, and we hold weekly small group meetings to discuss them. The friendships formed in those groups keep students connected long after the meetings end.

Through these and other programs, the Center for Faith and Spirituality provides a space for students to discover who they are, ask hard questions, and explore what faith can mean to them. We thank those who continue to support our ministries!