



March 2026 Newsletter

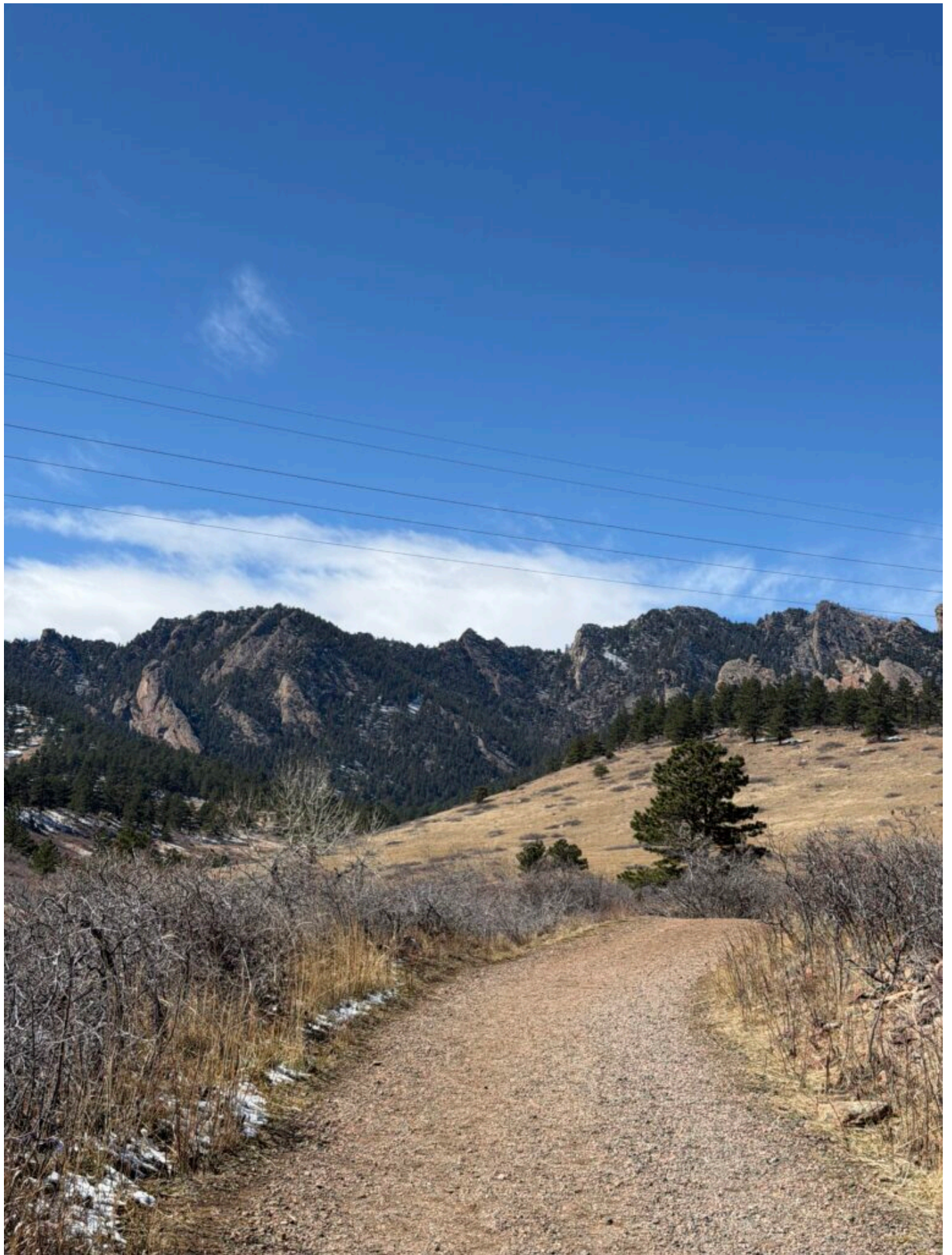
by Brady Young / March 19, 2026

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Friends and Members,

Some days it feels like our December *Damiano* released a year ago, and other days it feels like it was just an hour back. Wherever you find yourself as we move through this Lenten season, we hope you're finding moments of peace, rest, and steadiness in the midst of a busy and sometimes unsettling time.

This edition is full of rich reflections and meaningful ways to stay connected with the Federation community. As I have been preparing it, I have been thinking about the simple practices that help us stay grounded in a world that often feels frayed.



One of those practices for me is a morning walk. I go without headphones or distractions, simply noticing the air, the birds singing, the trees, and the rhythm of the ground rising to meet my feet as my feet fall to meet the earth. There is something humbling about remembering that I am held by the earth itself. This small act of noticing has become a practice of peace for me, and I choose to believe it makes a difference in the world, even if the difference is subtle and unseen.

That feels especially important now, when so much around us feels strained and out of our realm of control. Yet even in this climate, small acts of attention and courage ripple outward. They become forms of resistance that help hold the world together.

I was moved by the story of [**nineteen monks walking across the country**](#) through winter cold, carrying a simple message that peace begins in each of us. Their pilgrimage echoes the stories we hold dear, Francis crossing battle lines to meet the Sultan, and Francis crossing the boundary of fear to meet the wolf of Gubbio. Peace has always traveled on foot. Each step can carry intention if we pay attention to it.

Sometimes peace appears in the smallest places: a dog crunching an apple, letting someone go ahead of you in the checkout line, or appreciating the humanity of someone who rubs you the wrong way. These small acts matter. They remind us that goodness is still alive in the world and in us.

May we continue to notice it.

May we nourish it.

And may we place our steps on this earth with care.

Peace and all good,

Brady Young

Manager of Member Engagement & Communications



Carrying the Franciscan Charism into This Jubilee Year

Debi Haug, AFCU

In the Franciscan world, we are especially grateful to Pope Leo for recognizing this year as a Jubilee Year for Franciscans. Over the past several years, we have been commemorating the 800th anniversaries of pivotal moments in the life of St. Francis: the approval of the Rule of St. Francis (2023), the reception of the Stigmata (2024), the composition of the Canticle of the Creatures (2025), and, finally, the death of St. Francis in 2026.



In marking this Jubilee, Pope Leo invites us into prayer:

*Saint Francis, our brother,
you who eight hundred years ago
went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.*

*You recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano;
teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation that breaks down every wall.*

*You who, unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding,
give us the courage to build bridges where the world raises boundaries.*

*In this time afflicted by conflict and division, intercede for us so that we may become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses of the peace that comes from Christ.*

Amen.

As Franciscans, we are focused on the charism that has been modeled by Francis and Clare and carried forward by countless women and men in the Franciscan family. Central to this charism are care for the poor, reverence for creation, and a commitment to being a sign of peace in a fractured world.

This prayer, given to us by Pope Leo, seems very appropriate for us to reflect on. With all that is going on in our country and in the larger world, we can be reminded of the importance of building bridges, being peacemakers, and remembering that peace does indeed come from Christ.

With Pope Leo's recognition of this Jubilee Year, we are invited to renewed spiritual engagement: to visit Franciscan places of worship, to participate in spiritual conferences, and to cultivate a deeper, more mature faith. This year, find something a little extra to do, and find a way to make it meaningful. Maybe dig deeper into the life of Clare, find a daily devotion to focus on for the next few months, do some research on a lay Franciscan who has done much to make our world a better place, plant some flowers and take joy in their beauty!

As we continue to celebrate this Jubilee Year, may these small ways to live out the Franciscan charism inspire us to carry the spirit of St. Francis back into our communities. Being rooted in prayer, having a commitment to peace, and ensuring an attentiveness to the cries of the poor and the earth, may we live this holy year as true witnesses to all things Franciscan!

Franciscan Central Archive: *Call to Action!*

Holly Fiedler, FCA



The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) has eleven confirmed partners! Three additional congregations are under discernment. Any remaining Franciscan entities considering joining the FCA are strongly encouraged to **contact us** ASAP! Plans for common spaces and storage capacity will be finalized in June. The archival center will open by or before 2030.

Our work has been possible through partner matching grants from the **Academy of American Franciscan History (AAFH)**, contracts, and volunteer expertise provided by our partners and advisors. The board has expanded from four to eight members.

Six committees further our work: Council of Partners; Archive; Education, Outreach, and Publications (rich newsletters and a soon to be launched new website); Advancement (seeking a one-year contract **Advancement Director**); Business Plan; and Building.

Legal support has expanded:

- **Tiffany Gorman Thompson, of KGG LLC** provides counsel related to real estate, land use and development, construction, municipal law, and business matters.
- **Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA**, offers us canonical counsel and is reviewing the possibility of the FCA joining or creating a public juridic person (PJP).
- **Sister Amy Hereford, CSJ**, consults on archival agreements.
- **Peter Jaszi and Brandon Butler of Jaszi Butler** agreed to work on archives and intellectual property rights issues.

Progress continues related to our future home in Frankfort, Illinois, on the grounds of the [**Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart**](#). Together with JLK Architects, we held an initial meeting with the village concerning various legalities. The FCA has assembled the design and construction team:

- Owner's representative: [**RLE Project Management**](#)
- Construction Management: [**Bulley & Andrews**](#)
- Civil Engineer: [**V3**](#)
- Structural Engineering: [**TYLin**](#)

We are working with [**Bradford Systems**](#) for compact storage needs and Daniel Michaels, Ph.D., of [**Keypoppy**](#) for Digital Infrastructure and Collections. Concept design has begun and will conclude by mid-summer.

The FCA is pleased to be growing in relationship with the [**Franciscan Federation**](#), the [**Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual-Spiritual Tradition \(CFIT\)**](#), and the Academy of American Franciscan History (AAFH).

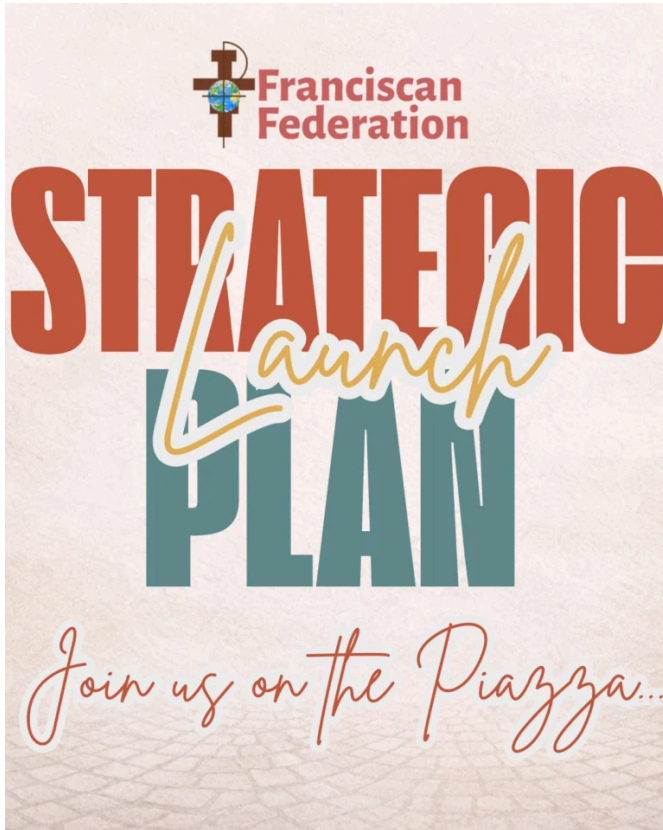
In closing, we wish to share two points from the February 13th, Global Sisters Report article, "[**Franciscan Central Archive to gather archives from 11 communities from across US**](#)" by Dan Stockman:

Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler, general community minister of the [**Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart**](#), "This initiative strengthens our commitment to carry on the Franciscan charism for years to come... What has been planted in faith on this campus will now be nurtured with renewed vision and hope for future generations."

Sr. Mary Serbacki, FCA board member and 40-year archivist for the [**Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in Stella Niagara, New York**](#), spoke of her archive, "It's a life story of both individuals and of communities... But it's also the story of the people who were served, and that makes it even more important. It's not just our legacy, it's the legacy of the people who went to our schools, who were cared for in their last moments, or were made whole and sent home."

Upcoming Events

Strategic Plan Launch



Our new Strategic Plan has officially been approved, and we're excited to begin putting it into action. You are invited to two Zoom listening sessions we are hosting to share what the plan entails, how we'll bring it to life, and how you can stay engaged with the Federation in the months ahead.

We hope you can join us for one of these two sessions:

April 21 at 7pm ET / 4pm PT
April 22 at 11am ET / 8am PT

[Click Here to RSVP](#)

a Lectio Lent

Join us this Sunday for the final gathering of our Lectio Lent series. Each week, we've prayed with the Sunday Gospel reading through Lectio Divina — listening to the Word, resting in shared silence, and noticing what stirs in us as we reflect and share as a group.

Our last session will take place:

Sunday, March 22

7pm ET | 4pm PT

Online via Zoom

All are welcome, whether you've joined us throughout Lent or are coming for the first time.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Franciscan Connection Circles

Join us on **Monday, April 13th at 7:00pm EST / 6:00pm CST / 5:00pm MST / 4:00pm PST** for our next Franciscan Connection Circle.

In the spirit of Earth Month and in preparation for Earth Day, this gathering will invite us to reflect on our relationship with creation through prayer, meditation, and a reading that will guide our conversation.

Connection Circles offer a simple, welcoming space to be with fellow Franciscans — to listen, share, and root ourselves again in the values that ground us. All are welcome.



[Register for Connection Circles](#)

An Extraordinary Encounter: Peaceful Dialogue in the Midst of War

Tuesday, April 15

7-9pm ET



\$10 | Online via Zoom

We are partnering with the [Shalom Spirituality Center](#) for the next session of a four-part virtual series commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Easter of St. Francis.

Future sessions will continue in [July](#) and [October](#) with additional guest speakers.

On April 15, Sr. Kathleen Warren, OSF will lead us into the story of St. Francis and Sultan Malek al-Kamil, inviting reflection on what their encounter teaches us about dialogue and peace today.

[Learn More and Register](#)

Other Announcements

Volunteer Needed: Database Support

We are looking for a temporary volunteer to help update and maintain our member management system during our database migration. Experience with administrative tasks is helpful, and familiarity with Wild Apricot or other CRM platforms is a plus.

If you are interested, please reach out to brady@franfed.org

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