Blog



Dana Nessel, Michigan's attorney general, is shown on Nov. 4, 2022, in Detroit. She and state Rep. Samantha Steckloff were the targets of antisemitic threats. (CNS/Reuters/Rebecca Cook)



by Dan Stockman

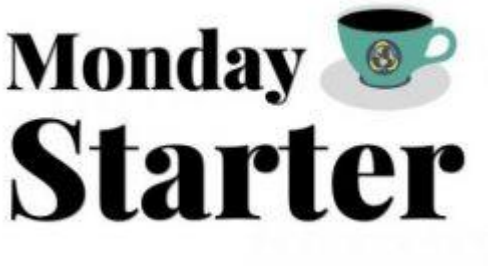
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***Editor's note**: Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*



Five Michigan congregations of women religious came together to support state Attorney General Dana Nessel and State Rep. Samantha Steckloff after the FBI said an armed man threatened them because they are Jewish.

Jack Eugene Carpenter III is accused of making the threats while in Texas on Feb. 18. The FBI arrested him there the same day, CNN reported March 3, noting that he had three handguns.

Though the threats did not mention anyone by name — the tweet said he was going to "carry out the punishment of death to anyone that is Jewish in the Michigan govt," CNN reported — the FBI contacted both Nessel and Steckloff to tell them of the threats, CNN said.

The Adrian Dominicans, the Grand Rapids Dominicans, the Marist Sisters, the Servants of Jesus and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary issued their open letter on March 3, praying "that all Michiganders will join us in decrying antisemitism and in upholding the fundamental values of civil discourse in our democracy, respect for each other's faith traditions, and love of neighbor."

The statement noted that sisters serve the people of Michigan regardless of their faith background and that the incident carries echoes of the 2020 plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

"As Catholic Sisters steeped in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and as elected leaders of congregations of women religious who have served people of all faith traditions in Michigan for nearly two centuries, we write to express our support and prayers for

you and your families —and for all our Jewish sisters and brothers facing such hate-filled violence," it said.

"No elected leader in a democracy should ever face the threat of armed assault as you and Governor Gretchen Whitmer have encountered."

UISG commission gets new co-executive secretary

Sr. Maamalifar M. Poreku is the new co-executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission.

Poreku, a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa, takes the position held for more than seven years by Sr. Sheila Kinsey, a member of the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the coordinator of Sowing Hope for the Planet, a project to mobilize Catholic sisters to combat climate change.



Sr. Sheila Kinsey at a May 2021 news conference (CNS/Paul Haring)

Poreku has been a member of working groups for the integrity of creation and anti-trafficking and is a Laudato Si' animator and a participant in Faith for Earth and Stakeholder Forum for Sustainable Future.

"Taking this new role is an opportunity to collaborate with my sisters and brothers of different religious institutes to journey together to let God's Kingdom come on earth through our ministries of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation," Poreku said in the announcement. "This means an attentive listening to the cry of the poor and the cry

of the earth as a motivating factor to co-create with God, a reconciled humanity and a reconciled creation."

St. Joseph Sister to receive honor for anti-trafficking work

Sr. Margaret Nacke of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas, is one the individuals and organizations that The SOAP Project will honor with Liberator Awards on March 25 for their anti-trafficking work.



St. Joseph Sr. Margaret Nacke (Courtesy of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking)

Nacke will receive the group's 2023 Radical Abolitionist Award for her work over the past 11 years. Nacke chairs the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking's Survivor Services Working Group, and her Liberator Awards blurb notes that she

"has been instrumental in creating programs that advance education about trafficking."

SOAP — Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution — was founded by U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking's program director, Theresa Flores, who is an author, advocate and survivor of human trafficking. The group has distributed more than 2 million bars of soap with the national human trafficking hotline number to thousands of hotels around the country.



Photojournalist Paul Jeffrey took this photo of children praying and singing during an Oct. 21, 2021, prayer vigil for peace in Nakubase, a small village near Kuron in South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state. (CNS/Paul Jeffrey)

Photography webinar to focus on South Sudan work

Friends in Solidarity, the U.S.-based arm of the cooperative ministry Solidarity with South Sudan, will present a webinar at 3 p.m. Eastern time on March 28 on the work

of writer and photographer Paul Jeffrey, who has long chronicled its work.

The webinar, "Behind the Lens: South Sudan from a Photojournalist's Perspective," will also include Sr. Mumbi Kigutha, a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and Friends in Solidarity's new president who just returned from a month in South Sudan.

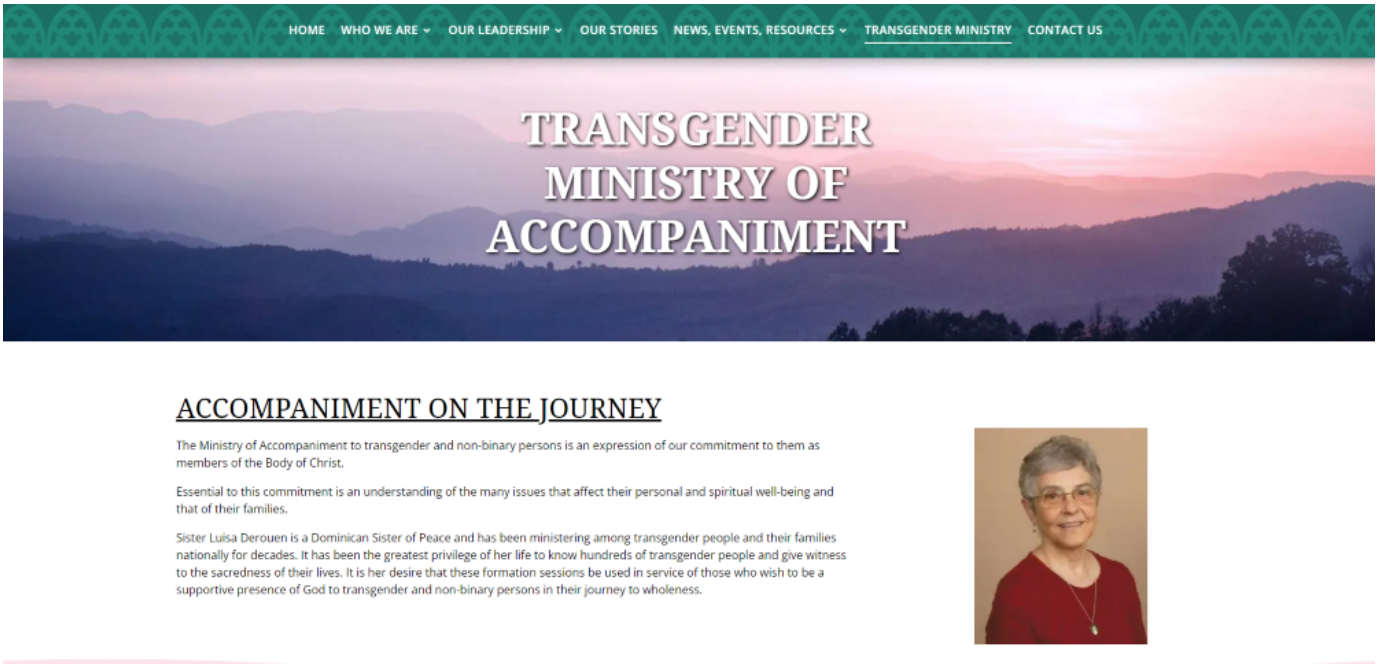
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Jeffrey is a writer and photographer who describes his work as "social documentary photography with an attitude." He has traveled around the globe, reporting from more than 90 countries, including Sudan and South Sudan.

Those interested can register now for the March 28 online event.

Solidarity with South Sudan is a collaborative 15-year-old ministry formed and run by female and male religious of different congregations.

Jeffrey has co-authored three books on humanitarian themes — Darfur, Haiti and world hunger — with Global Sisters Report international correspondent Chris Herlinger, published by Church Publishing.



Sr. Luisa Derouen's formation program is available on Fortunate Families' website (GSR screenshot)

Sister'S program provides guidance for ministry to trans, nonbinary people

Sr. Luisa Derouen of the Dominican Sisters of Peace has ministered to transgender people for 24 years. In 2021, she created a 15-week formation program for people wanting to be a spiritual companion to transgender or nonbinary people. She later gave that program to Fortunate Families, a Catholic ministry for members of the LGBTQ community and their family and friends. The group reformatted the videos to train others interested in the ministry and to use as an educational tool for organizations.

Topics include medical realities for trans people, spiritual companioning and direction, workplace inclusion, family dynamics, and parenting a transgender child.

Derouen said in an email announcing the series' release that she prays "that it can raise up the lives of God's precious people who are trans and gender expansive so they are respected and not vilified."

Find more information or apply to use the series here.

[Chris Herlinger, Global Sisters Report's international correspondent, contributed to this Monday Starter.]