

# together

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2024



**INTERCONGREGATIONAL ■ INTERCULTURAL ■ INTERNATIONAL**



# TOGETHER

## AN INTENTION TO INVITE

After having a house full in last year's *Together* House, this year seemed like it was going to be quieter and slower. We had six participants last academic year, and this year we had three in the fall and two in the spring semester. Both of the women in the house this semester are preparing for graduation.

One of the things that strikes me as I think about this year, however, is not that it was quieter and slower with fewer women (which in some ways it was and in others not at all!) but that it gave time for the women to connect with each other at a different depth. In the past there would have been multiple people to chat with at any moment walking into the living room. This year allowed for women to try to seek each other out to build community. A quiet knock on a bedroom door, or a late-night run for ice cream took on new meaning when there was an intention to invite.

Gabie was our newest member this year. She is from Senegal and is a Sister of The Immaculate Heart of Mary. She started at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) last year, but since the *Together* House was full, she was not able to live there.

This year, she happily joined the community. A comment she said during one of the fall community nights really spoke to the heart of what we try to build in this inter-

congregational community:

**"Last year I had a roommate, this year I have a community!"**

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The women had a lot of great experiences together this year. We had community nights that built awareness of tools for team building, theological reflection, and spiritual practice. They also shared in community nights with the wider CTU community like the Common Formation Night focused on the Synod and other CTU lectures and liturgies. They also found their shared love of board games, so that has become the most common stress relief in the house. Which now that we are nearing finals week and graduation – stress relief is critical.

As we look to next year there are some changes on the horizon. Everyone who is in the current house will graduate, so next year's group will be entirely new. This will allow them to build the *Together* Community in *new* ways. We are also moving out of the large apartment. It had character as an over 100 year old apartment and although we loved the large rooms and nooks and crannies for personal prayer, etc. we won't miss the low water pressure and leaks from the upstairs bathroom! The joys of communal life, right?

The new space we are moving to allows for us to have some flexibility

each year. We have the opportunity to utilize multiple different apartments depending on the number of participants. This will also cost considerably less for our participants. The ability to utilize multiple apartments also gives us the opportunity to open it up to men as well. We can have an apartment of women religious and an apartment of men religious, should the need arise (and we hope it does!).



**There are exciting new possibilities on the horizon!**

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We invite congregations to consider how their women and men might benefit from a CTU education *and* a shared living space that fosters continued vocational growth.

If you have thoughts or questions, or would like more information about the *Together* Program, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at [czaker@ctu.edu](mailto:czaker@ctu.edu).

*I'd love to share more about our plans for the future!*

Easter blessings,

**Christina Zaker, D.Min.**

Program Liaison

Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry

"You will know your vocation by the joy  
that it brings you"

Dorothy Day

# SPRINGTIME AT TOGETHER



*Above: The community enjoys Korean BBQ for Sr. Ji's Birthday.*

*Left: Sr. Ji and Sr. Gabie spend time in the parks around Chicago.*



**VISIT THE *TOGETHER* WEBSITE  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
THE PROGRAM!**

**[WWW.TOGETHER-FORMATION.COM](http://WWW.TOGETHER-FORMATION.COM)**



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