*The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have recently welcomed three new candidates to our congregation! Sally Koch, Tracy Watson and Chizuru Yamada were all able to meet each other and join a huge delegation of our sisters, associates and partners in ministry at the Sisters of St. Joseph Federation Event in Orlando, Florida in July. The three of them come to us from different corners of the world—New York, Nebraska and Japan—but they are united in a draw to our charism of “love of God and love of dear neighbor without distinction.” We are excited to share each of their stories with you.*

Tracy Watson was just accepted as a candidate for our congregation in June. Born in Boston, she grew up just south of Albany in Athens, New York. Setting her apart from most candidates for religious life, she is a mother, stepmother and grandmother. Her twin daughters just graduated from college and her 30-year-old stepson has two children.

Having taught high school social studies for the past 17 years, Tracy loves both teaching and learning. She is currently pursuing a Master’s in Pastoral Studies at St. Bernard’s School of Theology and Ministry in Albany, which she will finish in 2017. “My degree program has been wonderful already, and continues to deepen the various ministries I have become involved with these past two years, such as prison ministry and serving as a Eucharistic minister,” she said.

Her studies also helped her discover a call to religious life. Sisters Kitty Hanley, CSJ and Chris Partisano, CSJ taught her at St. Bernard’s, and it was the first time Tracy had been around Catholic sisters. She experienced “an instant attraction in ways I didn’t understand.”

Tracy felt pulled to the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, especially the focus on the dear neighbor. “The dear neighbor is really everyone we meet. We are called to step out in faith, to be uncomfortable in order to meet them where they are. The world is in need of that,” she said.

“It felt like God had invited me to consider this opportunity,” Tracy said. “I’ve come to appreciate that our God of surprises is also a God of details. All I have to do is trust and have faith enough to keep taking that next step.”

She will be moving into community this month. “I am so appreciative of all the love, prayers and support,” she says. “Please continue them!”

And, yes, her kids are very supportive.