On August 10 and 11, the Wheaton Franciscan community gathered through technology for the St. Clare Feast Gathering Days 2020. On Monday, August 10, the vowed members met by Zoom to discern and affirm recommendations for the future of the Community. It was a prayerful and fruitful day. Little did we know that the winds would literally blow through the Wheaton area and bring the Zoom meeting to a rather abrupt end. The good news is that everyone was safe! There were some power outages and tree damage but everyone was able to Zoom again on Tuesday, August 11, for the second day of the Community gathering. Below are photos of the tree damage from the Motherhouse campus.
Feast of St. Clare of Assisi

On Tuesday, August 11, 2020, the Wheaton Franciscan community gathered to celebrate the Feast of St. Clare. This year, the Feast also marked a significant milestone in the life of the Community. The Wheaton Franciscan Sisters took the next step on the journey ... moving from being the province of St. Clare to becoming the St. Clare regional community. This journey began in March 2019 when Sr. Melanie Paradis convoked the Provincial Chapter 2020. The Chapter theme of “Dreaming, Daring, Deepening,” guided pre-chapter gatherings designed to explore the future of the community. In the midst of this work, the global pandemic hit impacting every aspect of life. The planning and gathering shifted, and technology became our ally and lifeline. Through contemplative dialogue and deep trust in the goodness and timing of God, the Sisters moved together to take the first “next step” into the future.

On August, 11, 2020, we became the St. Clare Regional Community of the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The formal transition took place during the St. Clare Feast Day liturgy. Through our computer screens, sisters, covenant companions, province associates, friends, and family joined in joyful celebration. We sang, and clapped, and waved along with our sisters in the chapel. A community of heart … physically separated for this time … yet bound together in spirit and love that the winds of a derecho could not shatter. The journey continues with St. Clare and Mother Clara as our light.