



News and Notes from Faith Formation:

The Season of New Birth Rings Out in the Faith Formation Office.....



Jessie Hubert, Director of Faith Formation for Parish Support, has welcomed, Rosemary Jean Hubert! 8 lbs, 8oz, 21.5”, to their family. Rosemary was born at 8:25 am on 11/18/2020. Delivery was a joyful and beautiful experience, and baby “Rosie” and mama are doing very well.

Thank you for continued prayers for the Hubert family!



Stay tuned for future birth announcements.....

Advent / Christmas Resources



Did you know there are Christmas carol sing-alongs online you can enjoy with friends and family over Zoom? Were you aware of the “Spread the Love” campaign created by the Diocese of Erie’s *Faith* magazine, complete with templates for writing letters to loved ones or to those seeking help at various charitable organizations over the holidays? Are you interested in a listing of all the Masses being offered in parishes and via livestream in the diocese on Christmas Eve and Christmas day? These resources and more are now available at *Simply Celebrating*, a new micro-site launched by the Diocese of Erie to help people fill Advent and Christmas with meaningful and fun activities in a year like no other. Find it at www.eriecd.org/christmas.html. “People are experiencing the impact of the pandemic in different ways,” says Deacon Steve Washek, executive director of the Faith Formation Office for the diocese. “Those who have small children are finding different challenges than those who have parents in nursing homes. But one thing is for sure: Advent and Christmas will not be the same for people this year.”

Parish Resource Coming: Parish Self-Assessment



This Parish Self-Assessment Tool is designed to help parishes evaluate what they currently do and where their gaps are. Parishes that go through this process will be able to determine if people at every stage of life in their parish have opportunities to encounter and deepen their relationship with Jesus.

This printable tool is free, comes in both an expedited and comprehensive version, and can be used by the pastor, with staff, or with the pastoral council or other leadership teams. Training on how to prayerfully discern and implement the data is available upon request before, during, or after the process from the Faith Formation team. Please access the Parish Self-Assessment Tool here: <https://www.eriecd.org/selfassessment.html>

Chosen small group sharing resources is live on website:



The Chosen is a critically acclaimed mini-series about the life of Jesus Christ, told through the eyes and stories of the people He called to follow Him.

The Office of Faith Formation for Parish Support has assembled a packet of resources for parish groups that want to launch an 8-week discussion series on the first 8 episodes of *The Chosen*.

These resources are particularly designed to be used with groups who watch the episode on their own, then meet virtually for discussions via Zoom.

If a small group of adults or young adults at your parish is looking for a meaningful experience of small group faith-sharing during this pandemic season, this series may be an excellent fit for you.

<https://www.eriescd.org/thechosen.html>



Areas of Encounter:

If you think back to September 2018, The Faith Formation Implementation Team announced that Deacon Steve was hired as the Executive Director for Faith Formation. In October, Vicariate meetings were held where the work of the Faith Formation Implementation team was reviewed. At that time the team identified four areas of encounter where the six recommendations that were identified earlier would be lived out in a practical way.

Four key areas of focus:

- 1. Community welcoming and belonging**, providing an environment conducive to growth in discipleship and evangelization.
- 2. Catechesis**, defined as imparting the faith. It must embrace people of all ages.
- 3. Sacramental preparation** as part of a continuum that supports lifelong faith formation.
- 4. Service** as a key way in which we live out all that we have experienced through the sacraments, through catechesis and through our communal life.

We began the encounter of “Welcoming and Belonging” in 2019. Deacon Steve traveled throughout the diocese meeting with Pastors and Faith Formation Leaders. The other members of the Faith Formation Team were hired in the summer of 2019, and we began planning our work. In November we announced our travel schedule which included holding monthly meetings in each of the three vicariates, with a three-pronged focus. We would offer three ways a leader or parishioner could encounter the Faith Formation Team: opportunities for formation, prayer, and a private meeting, if desired.

We followed this schedule through March and then COVID-19 hit and changed the way we could be with people. However, this provided us with opportunities we could not have planned if COVID-19 did not happen. The areas of encounter and the recommendations are still very important, but the timeline and how they will be lived out is and will be different than was first imagined. It is my hope that you have been able to utilize some of the resources the Faith Formation Team has curated during this time.

Our desire is to continue to build relationships and opportunities across our diocese. And when the time is right come and visit you and your parish. In the meantime, if there is something that you need please don't hesitate to reach out to our office and we will do our best to meet your need.

Peace and prayers for a Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas from all of us in the Faith Formation Office.

Peace,

Deacon Steve Washek

Mary Hickin

Jessie Hubert

Kate Wilson

Jillian Zaczyk

Faye Froess

Jen Durney