

# MONTHLY REPORT

Faith Formation Administrative Team  
December 2019

## Adult Faith Formation

Dave Cushing: [dbqwcaf@dbqarch.org](mailto:dbqwcaf@dbqarch.org)

### A. Initiation

1. **RCIA/RCRA.** An information meeting for people interested in joining the Catholic Church is scheduled for January 5. The winter RCRA series begins January 12 and meets on Sunday mornings at Sacred Heart. In the meantime, I am meeting on Saturday afternoons with an individual from Des Moines who is engaged to be married at Queen of Peace next summer.

> Learn more: <http://waterloocatholics.org/rcia-rcra>

2. **Baptism Preparation.** 03 families attended the November baptism preparation program at Queen of Peace; in addition I met separately with another family who could not attend one of the scheduled classes. The next class is December 9 at St. Edward.

> Learn more: <http://waterloocatholics.org/baptizing-infants-and-children>

> Read cumulative evaluations from Baptism preparation here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-JKRWWJSY/>

### B. Evangelization

1. **Alpha for Catholics.** An Alpha follow-up to the fall series is scheduled for December 9; at the follow-up we will discuss what continuing opportunities are available for people coming out of the Alpha program. The next Alpha series at Blessed Sacrament will begin in February. Plans are pending for the series at Queen of Peace/Sacred Heart to begin in February as well.

> Learn more: <https://waterloocatholics.org/alpha>

> See cumulative Alpha evaluation results at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-PJWHZYCC7/>

2. **Listening Sessions.** The next listening session for spiritual seekers is Dec. 18. The next listening session for inactive Catholics is January 15. A listening session for families of LGBTQ Catholics is scheduled for January 29.

> Learn more: <https://waterloocatholics.org/listening-sessions>

4. **Waterloo Catholics on Facebook.** Total daily reach for the Waterloo Catholics Facebook page for November was 3,253 (daily average: 112; daily range: 177/77).

> Read cumulative evaluations of Waterloo Catholics on Facebook here: <https://bit.ly/2TSw211>

5. **Waterloo Catholics/Faith Formation Website.** Here are recent additions to the Waterloo Catholics website:

--Catholics Living With Depression: <https://waterloocatholics.org/catholics-with-depression>

-- Advent Resources: <https://waterloocatholics.org/advent-resources>

-- Advent Family Guide: <https://waterloocatholics.org/advent-family-guide>

-- Advent Devotions and Customs: <https://waterloocatholics.org/advent-devotions>

### C. Adult Formation and Enrichment

1. **Community Forum.** A Community Forum on holiday grief is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 4, at COR; the presenter will be Stacy Baranowski, a grief counselor with Cedar Valley Hospice. A Community Forum for families of LGBTQ persons is scheduled for January 29; the presenter will be Jennifer Christiason from the Unity Point LGBTQ clinic.

> Learn More: <https://waterloocatholics.org/community-forum>

2. **Busy Catholic's Guide to Catholic Living.** The Busy Catholic's Guide to Reconciliation is scheduled for Dec. 7 at COR.

> Learn More: <https://waterloocatholics.org/busy-catholics-guide-to-catholic-life>

3. **Book Discussion 1.** The discussion groups for parishioners who have read and want to discuss Bishop Barron's book "Letter To A Suffering Church" have been postponed to January.

> Read a review of the book here: <http://bit.do/suffering-church-review>

4. **Book Discussion 2.** I will be working with the St. Edward staff to create a discussion guide and organize discussions of Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et Exsultate," which is the book being distributed to parishioners at Christmas.

5. **Know Your Faith.** The next Know Your Faith session is Dec. 16 at COR; the topic is "Prayer--Our Relationship With God."

> Learn More: <https://waterloocatholics.org/know-your-faith>

6. **Winter Forum.** I am working on the schedule for the Winter Forum series in January and February. Two presenters have been confirmed: Dr. Charlotte Wells will discuss the spiritual and cultural importance of Notre Dame Cathedral in Parish, which was severely damaged by fire this past year; Dr. Martha Reineke from UNI will discuss the scapegoat principle in social theory and how it is being applied in contemporary social and political affairs.

#### D. Spiritual Growth

1. **Catholic Witness Hour.** 30 people attended the Catholic Witness Hour Nov. 25 at Sacred Heart Parish; the next Witness Hour is January 27 at St. Edward.

> Learn more: <https://waterloocatholics.org/catholic-witness-hour>

2. **Online Advent Retreat.** Our Online Advent Retreat is scheduled for Dec. 8-14. The theme of the retreat is "Let the Light Enter;" the retreat will feature a daily reflection from the booklet "Joyfully We Wait—An Advent Examination of Conscience."

> Learn More: <https://waterloocatholics.org/online-advent-retreat>

3. **Winter Mini-Retreat.** John Waldmeier will be the facilitator for our winter Mini-Retreat January 26 at COR. John will provide an overview of the Gospel of Matthew, from which the Sunday readings are taken during ordinary time this year.

> Learn more: <https://waterloocatholics.org/winter-mini-retreats>

4. **Faithful Companions.** Ellen and I are working on this new opportunity for adults and young adults who want to participate in a small group spiritual discernment and growth process. Small groups of four or five individuals will meet monthly with a spiritual guide to pray and discern how God is working in their lives. We hope to form Faithful Companions groups after the first of the year.

> Learn more: <https://waterloocatholics.org/faithful-companions>

See a complete calendar of opportunities for adults at:

<https://waterloocatholics.org/bulletin-board>

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## K-8 Religious Education

Paul Lee

### Children's Liturgy of the Word

- Program throughout the parishes are going well, with new leaders signing up regularly for Blessed Sacrament. Will be doing a round of bulletin advertisements in January seeking more leaders. Will be discussing with parishes if there are more Masses that should be covered

### Wednesday RE/ Saturday RE

- Wednesday RE fall session ended right before Thanksgiving, will resume in early January.
- Saturday RE is still going strong with kids returning regularly
- Family RE night is scheduled for December 11 in O'Hagan Hall of Sacred Heart

### Summertime RE/ Enrichment

- We agreed to sign up for Totus Tuus for the summer of 2020. We requested 1 team, and will evaluate its continuation after this summer's program. Requested a late July week
- Summer RE is already scheduled for late June

## Early Childhood Formation

- Beginning to explore ways to reach out to families of kids aged birth through 5 to provide some religious education
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## Gr. 2-12 Sacraments

Julie Niemeyer

### First Sacraments

- 95 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from the four parishes are preparing for First Sacraments.
- 39 2<sup>nd</sup> graders attended the optional Reconciliation Retreat Saturday, Nov. 16. All had one or more parents with them, some had siblings as well. This optional event followed a “coaching” format with the child and parent moving through stations. 15 Burmese children with parents attended their retreat on Nov. 17 with a Burmese translator assisting.
- First Reconciliation celebrations will be Wed., Dec. 4 at St. Edward Church (6:30 pm) and Sat., Dec. 7 at Blessed Sacrament Church (10 am).
- With the First Reconciliation certificates families will receive an invitation to the First Communion Parent meeting that will be held in mid-January.

### PREP (Penance/Reconciliation & Eucharist Preparation for gr. 3-8) & Children’s Initiation

- 25 students in grades 3-8 participated in immediate preparation classes for First Reconciliation on Wednesday evenings during November. The children/youth will attend the First Reconciliation celebration of their choice (Dec. 4 or Dec. 7).
- I worked with three children (a kindergartner and two 2<sup>nd</sup> graders) who haven’t been baptized yet. Two were baptized in mid-November, the other Baptism is being planned.

### Other -

- Attended a Family Catechesis workshop in Dubuque on Nov. 12.
  - Met with Fr. Stecher and Fr. Pierre to share info about metro Advent planning
  - My position became half-time (20 hrs/week) in November.
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## COR & Young Adult Ministry

Ellen Kuchera

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### COR AT 220 EAST:

- Coordinator of Evangelization Report
  - Met with Emily Forssberg, Director of the First United Methodist Church Bell Choir on November 13th. Scheduled a performance for Saturday, November 30 th from 3:30 – 4:30 PM at COR. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served.
  - Took Khadga Tamang’s painting exhibit down on Saturday, Nov. 16 th . Khadga also met with Jason Everett (<https://jason-everett.format.com/hope-mural-project>) at COR that morning to discuss a possible HOPE mural painting collaboration in the near future.
  - Installed the Fortepan Iowa photographs on November 19 th with the Official Opening with wine and cheese reception for “SYNC,” photographs from the Fortepan Iowa collection curated by Anastasia Parsons and Noah Doely on Thursday, November 21 st from 5:30 – 7:00 PM. Great turnout. This exhibit will be up until Feb. 7 th . A painting exhibit by artist Tatiana Jackson will officially open on Friday, February 14 th .
  - Attended Main Street Waterloo training session on November 20 th at 8:30 AM. Received a little more information about keeping up the website and making sure we are represented in an online search.
  - Advertised the Fortepan Iowa Opening and the First United Methodist Bell Choir performance on KWWL, Waterloo Community Television, WCF Courier and Cedar Valley 365. Also hung posters for the events in local stores, restaurant facilities and other locations.

- Placed an ad in The Witness for COR. The ad will appear in the December 1 st edition.
- Decorating COR for Christmas on December 2nd.
- November's Know Your Faith discussion night was adjusted to accommodate RCIA. We discussed "Who is God?" on November 18. December's discussion night will be "Happy New Year - Exploring the Church Calendar" on December 16.
- November's movie night was "Good Will Hunting" on November 15. December's movie night will be "Dead Poet's Society" at 7 pm on December 20.
- We had three private events at COR in November and have three scheduled in December. "Preserve Cedar Valley Trails" will also meet at COR on December 19 for their quarterly business meeting.
- Adult Faith Formation has been holding several community forums and guides for Busy Catholics at COR during November and December. The Fall Bible Timeline Series is also wrapping up on December 2.

#### YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY:

- Open tea/Scripture reflection continued on November 11 & 25. We will change it up for Advent by meeting every Tuesday, December 3, 10, and 17 from 5:15 - 6:30 pm at St. Ed's. We will meet for check-ins, participate with the parish in Advent Prayer (Liturgy of the Hours) and will conclude with reflecting on the Advent Sunday Gospel readings and themes over tea after prayer.
- Witness to Love Marriage Formation
  - Met with the first Queen of Peace Witness to Love engaged couple on November 23. The marriage formation process was well received by the couple.
  - I am now trained and can administer the Prepare/Enrich marriage inventory. The training was offered through the Archdiocese on November 7. Queen of Peace will utilize Prepare/Enrich at this point in time.

#### ADULT FAITH FORMATION:

- Alpha
  - The St. Ed's Alpha Retreat was held on Saturday, November 2 at COR. It was an excellent retreat experience for the Alpha participants. The Fall Alpha series concluded on November 25 and there will be an After-Alpha gathering on December 9.
  - Blessed Sacrament will be starting Alpha on Wednesday evenings beginning February 5 from 6-7:30 pm.
- Faithful Companions - working with Dave to plan and run small spiritual direction groups beginning the first of the year.
- RCIA - we have three catechumens for RCIA who started meeting formally on Monday, November 4. The Rite of Acceptance will likely happen in December at St. Edward and after the first of the year at Blessed Sacrament. The catechumens will meet on December 2nd and 16th.

HS/MS Youth Ministry  
Annie Zeets

#### NCYC 2019:

- Trip was a great success! Heard great keynote talks from Imaculee Ibigiza, St. Bethany Madonna and Mark Hart. Fabulous opening night concert by For King and Country.
- Thanks to our adult chaperones: Bev Carda, Carrie Evans, Kathryn Fain, Katie Friedly, Kris Frush, Kari Gardner, Jessica Girres, Vanessa Gomez, Julie Graff, Maria Gutierrez, Omar Gutierrez, Aly Hagness, Brenda Harrison, Jennifer Hartz, Brian Holthaus, Darla Holthaus, Jodi Klein, Deacon Brad Kneeland, Jennifer Kneeland Amy Larsen, James Larsen, Deacon Ray Larsen, Francie Luke, Francie Luke, Cary Meier, Becky Mudd, Julie Novotney, Dr. Robert Pranger, Kathy Rath, Carrie Schott, Susie Sigwarth, Sarah Smith, Rebecca Swanson, Pat Wiss, Brian Zeets, Danny Zeets

- The teens were so well behaved! On time, polite and engaged throughout the weekend.
- Follow-up: teens will speak at masses at Blessed Sacrament on Dec. 21/22. At 4pm mass at Sacred Heart on Dec, 14th. Will make plans with Queen of Peace and St. Eds for January.
- Will be doing monthly NCYC “meet-ups” beginning in January.

#### **Confirmation:**

- Class #1 was held at Queen of Peace on November 3 & 6. The class focus was the Creed. Students spent time in small groups with adult leaders and writing their own “I believe” statements (which were quite profound for a first class!)
- All but 2 students attended the first class and I met with them individually the week of Nov. 11
- Class #2 is set for Jan. 5 & 8 at Sacred Heart
- Team members include: Deacon Ray Larsen, Deacon Chris & Carrie Evans, Maureen Beckman, Vanessa Gomez, Deacon Brad Kneeland.
- College team includes: Sarah Davis, Louren Kilburg, Lucas Kahler, Courtney Cummings and Adriane Cole
- Confirmation celebration date: Sunday, March 29th at 2:30pm at Columbus High School. Mark your calendars and plan to attend this beautiful metro sacramental celebration.

#### **Testify**

**Mission Statement:** Testify is an inter-parish youth coalition that invites people of all ages to engage their faith with enthusiasm and energy, praising His name through music, liturgy and ministry.

- Anastasia Nicklaus attended our Nov. 13 meeting to do some catechesis about liturgy, especially in regards to Advent. Was a good conversation and we all learned a lot about why we sing the music we sing each week and the connection to the readings.
- Testify did music for the 5:15pm mass at St. Eds on Nov. 30th.
- Next meeting/rehearsal is Dec. 11th
- Testify will be doing music at Sacred Heart on December 14th at 4:00pm mass
- The group will be going Christmas caroling downtown CF on Dec. 20th.
- In the process of scheduling a meeting with Lora Heit at Queen of Peace. (shooting for Thursday the 5th)

#### **High School RE**

- We will be offering at high school religious education class second semester. This is to “fill the void” of what was YDisciple. We did a summer high school class that was well attended and are hoping for the same response. Mailing are going out the week of Dec. 2. Registration deadline is Jan. 3. Class will be held at Sacred Heart during K-8 RE class time/schedule. UNI student Sarah Davis will be teaching the class.

#### **High School**

- Will be starting 2 book club groups that came out of some awesome speakers at NCYC. One will be reading Emily Wilson’s book “Go Bravely”. The other Sarah Swafford’s book “Emotional Virtue for a Drama Free Life”. Will get started after the holidays.
- Dec. 29: High School Christmas social

#### **Middle School**

- Nov. 8: Gen took a group of about 18 students bowling at Cadillac Lanes. The kids had a great time!
- Nov. 19: Advent prayer/wreath making at Sacred Heart. Snacks and wreath decorating - another great time.
- Gen and I continue to meet on Fridays to make plans and focus on how she is growing in her ministry.
- Dec. 22 Middle school Christmas social.
- Working on plans for a girls night with guest speaker, Amanda Goodman, that focuses on inner beauty and strength.

**Other:**

- Facilitator for MAC group
- Appointed member of Archdiocesan Pastoral Council as youth ministry representative
- TEC - Teen Encounter Christ - will be happening in Waterloo March 14-16 at Blessed Maria. I have been asked to be the director of the retreat that is for juniors and seniors from all over the archdiocese. I am working on building a team from other youth ministers in the area. The music team will be a group of college students under the direction of Daniel Novotney. I am also on the archdiocesan TEC council which meets monthly.

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Becky McElroy  
Business Manager

**Meetings:**

Preparing agenda's, updating information, and sending out meeting agenda's and minutes from the FFAT meetings.

**Staff/Office**

- Support staff with ongoing needs.
- Daily office duties.
- Put in survey monkey surveys for Dave.
- Preparing financial reports.
- Accounts payable.