

Hi – thank you all for coming tonight to this information meeting for the Concept Study. My name is Marcie Ciota and I have been a parishioner in this parish for the past 8 years. I live in Lewistown with my husband Jeremy and 3 children, David (aged 16), Reina (aged 13), and Jacob (aged 5). I serve on Parish and Finance councils for the church and teach 8th grade CCD this year. My husband Jeremy is on Buildings and Grounds and Church Cemetery committees. My older children are altar servers and Jacob just started Kindergarten at Sacred Heart School. For those of you that attend 7:30 mass – we are the ones in the front with the little boy with the blanket – as big as he is. My family believes in the parish and tries to do what we can to make it succeed and grow. This parish is an important part of our lives.

I was not raised in the Catholic Church, I was baptized Methodist and that was the church my family associated with as I was growing up – although attendance was mostly when we visited my Grandmother. When my son David received his first communion – I started to wonder if I was missing out on something. He just experienced something that I had never done. I started to question if I wanted that to continue – so when we moved to Lewistown – I started RCIA classes, we didn't really know any other Catholics. I wanted to more involved in the faith part of my children's education, but I couldn't do that if I wasn't intimately involved myself. For me that meant I needed to be Catholic. Then I learned I needed a sponsor, but Jeremy had to stay home with the kids – so he wouldn't work out. Then a parishioner that barely knew us stepped forward – Wendy Vogt and helped guide me thru the process. Wendy and Charlie are just 2 of the parishioners that made me (and my family) feel very welcome.

Then we found out our neighbor – Annemarie was the church secretary – so she helped me get involved in Vacation Bible School and youth activities which then led to teaching 4th grade CCD. Being involved has helped me meet new people and do something other than work and be a mom. Doing these things does take time and commitment – but the joy of giving back is awesome and the kids teach me something new each time I interact with them.

My husband Jeremy joined the Knights of Columbus – which of course led to lots of opportunities to get involved as that group does so much for the parish and the community. He likes to be active and outside – so he became involved in Cemetery and Buildings and Grounds Committees.

Last year my son David needed an Eagle Scout project – so Jeremy and I were discussing options of projects that might work – when we learned that the room Father Jay lives in was extremely hot in the summer and cold in the winter – as the windows were old and not energy efficient – so we decided to see if updating those and revamping the living space would be a workable project. It was approved by Father Bill and the Scout Council – so the work started in Fall of 2018. David and Jeremy replaced 9 windows, updated the painting, and built Father Jay a new desk, at a better ergonomic height. The project completed in March of 2019 – and David earned his Eagle Scout Rank this summer.

This year I hope to get more involved with Jacob at his school, Sacred Heart – not sure yet what that means – but looking forward to the journey.

We have tried to teach and show our children – how important it is to be involved in something and particularly the church. Giving money is one thing and it is important – but without the volunteers that do everything else – the parish would not work. I have received and continue to receive many blessings from the Lord – it is my duty and honor to do what I can to give back in both time and talent.