



Bruce Bot

Age: 55
Spouse: Juanita
Children: Amanda, Charles (wife-Mariah), Emily, Lee, and Joshua
Home Parish: St. Edward, Minneota
Occupation: Farmer
Hobbies: Hunting, playing cards, and reading

Past and present Church and/or parish involvement:
 Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator, parish finance council, lector, extraordinary minister of Communion, Communion to homebound, choir member, RCIA, religious education teacher, various committees.

Bruce and Juanita Bot

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon.

I first thought about becoming a deacon candidate when the first group started up around 2006 or so, but decided against it because of how busy we were with the kids and their activities. When the second group was going to start up, a couple people asked me if I had ever considered it. After praying and thinking about it for a while, I brought it up to my wife Juanita, and even though she had some valid concerns and reservations, she didn't say no. One of the biggest concerns was with crops and livestock (farrow to finish hog operation), how were we going to be able to take off one weekend every month for five years, especially during planting and harvest. One other concern I had was that I was not 'holy' enough to be a deacon. After praying and reflecting (trying to talk myself out of it) I still felt that God was asking me to do this, so Juanita and I decided that we would try it and if it was God's will it would work out. Looking back on almost five years of class, I still feel that God is calling me to the diaconate. Not once in those five years did God fail to provide someone to cover for me when I had to be gone for the weekend. There were times when it was hectic and stressful but somehow it worked. I don't know exactly what God has in store for me in the future, but I now realize that God takes us as we are in all our imperfections and sins, and if we trust him, will show us how we can best serve him and his Church.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

The diaconate formation has been a wonderful learning experience for Juanita and me and through all the classes and discussion, we have grown to appreciate the beauty and wisdom of our God and his Church. All the candidates agree that even if something happened and we were not ordained we would still feel the last five years were well spent.



Travis Welsh

Age: 39
Spouse: Jessica
Children: Teagan, Tyler, baby due April 21
Home Parish: St. Eloi, Ghent
Occupation: Wastewater treatment operator
Hobbies: Camping, watching hockey, football, and baseball, woodworking, motorcycling, hunting

Past and present Church and/or parish involvement:

Lector, extraordinary minister of Communion in the parish and to the homebound, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, Confirmation teacher, marriage preparation, RCIA, Teen Talk.

Travis and Jessica Welsh

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon:

I was on an Emmaus Retreat and felt God calling me to do something more for him. I told God I gave him my life to use for whatever he needed, but he would have to show me because I had no idea what he wanted from me. After that, God showed me through a number of ways that he wanted me to become a deacon for him.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

Growing in knowledge of my faith that I would not have had the opportunity to do if it was not in formation. My personal relationship with God has blossomed in a way I never thought was possible.

Called to serve

Six men to be ordained deacons

NEW ULM – Six years have passed since Bishop John M. LeVoir ordained the first class of permanent deacons in the Diocese of New Ulm. On Saturday, April 21, six more men will be ordained to the Order of Deacons at the Church of St. Mary in Sleepy Eye.

Who are deacons?

While all members of the church are called to minister to others by virtue of their baptism, some Catholics are also ordained to specific forms of ministry to serve the rest of the Church. A Catholic deacon is a member of the clergy. In the Catholic Church, "the clergy" consists of three groups of ordained ministers: bishops, priests, and deacons.

Deacons are neither laymen nor priests. Nor are they a lesser version of the priesthood. The diaconate is a unique vocation unto itself. In the United States,



The word deacon comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning servant or helper.

deacons in the Catholic Church are required to be at least thirty-five years old.

A vocation of service

A Catholic deacon lives a life of service that integrates family life, the workplace, the community, and ministry. His life of service is generally rooted within his parish and extends in outreach to the community and those on the margins. His

EVENT: Deacon ordination

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

DATE: Saturday, April 21

PLACE: Church of St. Mary, Sleepy Eye

Six men will be ordained permanent deacons for the Diocese of New Ulm. Deacons are ordained to be a sacramental sign of Christ's service to the Church and to the world. They are given the responsibility of proclaiming the Word, serving at the altar, and ministering works of charity.

threefold ministry includes: service of the Word, service of Liturgy, and service of Charity. As ministers of the Word, deacons may proclaim the gospel, preach, and teach in the name of the Church. As ministers of the Liturgy, deacons may baptize, lead prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wakes or funerals. Finally, as ministers of Charity, deacons lead in identifying the needs of others and using the Church's



Kenneth and Jan Noyes

Kenneth (Ken) Noyes

Age: 60
Spouse: Janice
Children: Kris, Katie, Lisa, Nicole, Stephanie
Home Parish: Holy Redeemer, Marshall
Occupation: Consultant
Hobbies: Hunting and golf

Past and present church and/or parish involvement:

Trustee, lector, extraordinary minister of Communion to the homebound, RCIA (leader/sponsor/representative at the Rite of Election for RCIA candidates), parish council, finance council, leadership role on parish building committee and fundraising, Knights of Columbus, leadership in campaign to upgrade Campus Religious Center at SMSU, education building committee, TMIY (That Man is You) men's program small group leader, Confirmation sponsor, faith formation instructor, marriage preparation mentor.

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon.

My parish pastor, Fr. Paul Wolf, sent out an email to a handful of men asking if there was interest. I deleted it because I felt it was not for me. However, something kept tugging at my heart to consider the calling. I tried to ignore God's voice. Eventually, I talked with my wife, Jan, and we prayed about it. After meeting with Deacon Mark Kober, director of the Office of the Diaconate and with Bishop LeVoir, we felt God was calling us to pursue this ministry. It has been a great journey.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

The extremely knowledgeable instructors that presented at the diaconate formation weekends, which led me to recognizing how much I did not know about my Catholic faith. The learning has been tremendous. Yet I know that I must continue to grow in my knowledge and I am committed to doing so. Being able to share the experience with my wife was also significant part of my formation.

Anthony (Tony) Grack

Age: 36
Spouse: Mary
Children: Cody Vacek and Kylie Grack
Home Parish: St. Peter, St. Peter
Occupation: Production Manager at EI Microcircuits in Mankato
Hobbies: Golf, hiking, biking - most outdoor activities

Past and present church and/or parish involvement:

Core member on LifeTeen (9-12 grade) and the MC for Roots (5-6 grade), Catholic Watchmen, RCIA, men's bible study, extraordinary minister of Communion, lector.

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon.

I felt God was calling me to do something, but I didn't know what. I really didn't know much about the diaconate so when I heard about it I decided to check it out. Shortly after that, I was convinced the diaconate was not for me. It turns out I was wrong. A few years later God began putting signs in my life that pointed me back to the diaconate. After much prayer and discussion with my wife, we decided to apply for the program. At this time, I was only moderately sure this was the right direction. However, throughout the discernment process during formation it has become clear to me that God is calling me to the diaconate and I am very happy to serve his Church in this way.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

While all the studying and learning more about our faith has been great, the most influential part of formation has been the growth I have experienced in my spiritual life. Through the help of spiritual direction, my prayer life has improved tremendously which naturally leads to a stronger relationship with God. I have also experienced great spiritual growth through the annual retreats with the current deacons and their wives.



Anthony and Mary Grack

resources to meet those needs. This might include hospital or prison ministry, serving at a food bank, or a host of other parish or diocesan ministries.

Formation process of a deacon

The Diocese of New Ulm has a five-year formation program. The first year is called aspirancy, a time when the Church and the deacon candidate evaluate whether he is called to this ministry. At the end of aspirancy, if it has been determined that the candidate should continue formation, he will enter a four-year program. Each year consists of 10 weekend gatherings and one, three-day retreat in the summer.

How do I find out more about discerning a call to the diaconate?

The best place to start is with your parish pastor, who can put you in touch with Deacon Mark Kober, the director of the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program for the Diocese of New Ulm. Deacon Kober will be able to outline the various requirements and processes to be followed. Further information is also available on the diocesan website, www.dnu.org.

Ryan Pope

Age: 39
Spouse: Erica
Children: Noah, Cadence, Theodore "Teddy", Aria, Joseph (deceased 2017), baby due in July
Home Parish: St. Catherine, Redwood Falls
Occupation: Physical therapist
Hobbies: Computers, auto maintenance/handyman work, archery/gun range practice

Past and present Church and/or parish involvement:

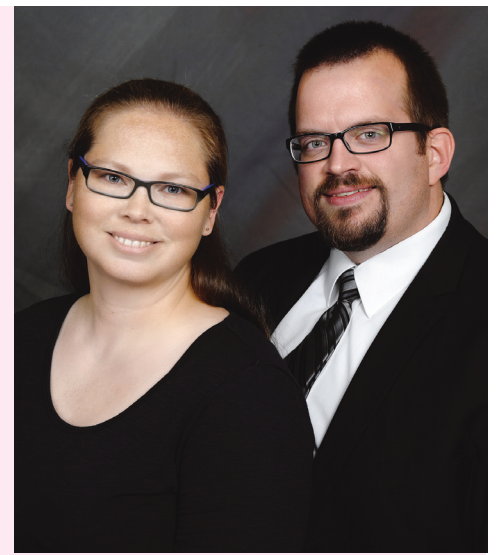
Parish evangelization and catechesis committee, catechist for the religious education program, extraordinary minister of Communion, which also includes helping with hospital visiting and homebound visiting ministries, cantor, lector.

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon.

As a convert to Catholicism, my formation and ministries in other Christian traditions served as a launch point for formation in the Catholic Church. As I learned and engaged more within the life and ministries of the Church and the parish, I heard about the order of deacons. The ministry of service resonated well with me as a healthcare worker, husband, and father. Early in considering the diaconate, I had a great conversation with a deacon who shared his passion for the ministry, and through discernment with my wife, I chose to apply to be a deacon.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

During homiletics formation week at the Abbey of the Hills Retreat Center in South Dakota, we were given a specific topic and Sunday readings from which to formulate a homily to present to our peers and instructors for critique. One topic was abortion and Respect Life Sunday. However, this formation week took place about a month after the in utero loss of our son Joseph at about 20-weeks gestation. With the grief weighing heavily on me, I began to research statistics on abortions in Minnesota. I engaged in Lectio Divina (scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer) to help formulate my homily. But the words didn't seem to come. So I decided to take a walk around the grounds of the Abbey and was drawn to their new outdoor shrine for Our Lady. As I was kneeling there in silence, a profound peace came over me. It was like permission from Our Lady herself to feel my grief and sorrow, to lay down my anger and frustration, to acknowledge my raw emotions instead of "being strong." What followed that encounter was a realization and understanding that it was not my homily to be written. Sure, it may have been my words and it may have been my life's experiences and that of those around me, but the homily did not come together well until it was with Christ – through the intercession of Our Lady. This was one of several significant moments in these years of diaconate formation.



Ryan and Erica Pope

Barry Reindl

Age: 58
Spouse: Karen
Children: Jessica, Jenny, Jackie, Julieann, TJ, Christina, Andrew
Home Parish: St. Raphael, Springfield
Occupation: Electrician
Hobbies: Small home repair

Past and present Church and/or parish involvement:

Liturgy committee, maintenance committee, extraordinary minister of Communion, volunteer for Catholic Heart Youth Work Camp mission trips.

Tell us something about your call to become a deacon.

I enjoy helping out in the parish and school, but there always seemed to be something missing in my lay ministry, which caused me to pursue the diaconate.

What was the most significant or memorable part of your diaconate formation?

The most memorable part is all the reading and papers we were asked to write. Through the years of formation, we learned a lot about the Church and her teachings. My wife and I will miss the strong community that was built during formation.



Barry and Karen Reindl

