

Our Lady of the Woods Parish in Orland Park, IL, is in Vicariate V of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Our parish is served by ministries that are grouped into four Commissions. The *Spiritual Life Commission* guides, encourages and empowers the assembled Church to full, conscious and active participation in the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. With the



spirit alive in us, this commission's ministries enable our parish community to experience God while living the Gospel message in daily life. Our *Education/Formation Commission* invites our parishioners to strive for a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. It is the call of this ministry commission to encourage all in our faith community to embark on a life-long journey of learning, growing and sharing our Catholic faith. The *Human Concerns Commission* witnesses to the reality of Jesus' desire for us to love our neighbor. Through Baptism we have been called personally by God to minister as Jesus did. We depend, not on ourselves alone, but on the Spirit for the power to do this. This ministry commission is the organized effort with our parish through which God's peopled can directly carry out the Corporal Works of Mercy. The *Parish Life Commission* is a multifaceted commission that builds and supports our parish community through social activities, the enrichment of spiritual life and the commitment to serve the developing needs of the people of Our Lady of the Woods.

In 2019 our parish established a Creation Care team to help carry out in our parish the call from Laudato Si to be good stewards of our environment. Our team meets regularly with Creation Care teams at Elizabeth Seton Parish and St. Stephen Deacon and Martyr Parish. Although the pandemic had interrupted our parish life, our team has now become active in three areas of parish life, often with the support of these other parishes:

- Religious Education Program in the Education/Formation Commission: We have developed and presented a "field trip" focused on carrying for creation by reducing single-use plastics. This is an interactive presentation where students rate products by their effect on the environment. In cooperation with Friends of the Forest Preserves, we have chaperoned a confirmation project in a local forest preserve that removed invasive species to improve the health and diversity of the forest.
- Adult Education in the Education/Formation Commission: During Lent of 2020 and during this Lent 2022, we developed and manned displays that encouraged environmental stewardship. These displays were in the gathering space after the Lenten weekend masses. The displays for this Lent gave practical tips for recycling plastics, electronics, auto fluids, and bulk materials. These displays were shown together at the parish fish fry. Throughout the year we are placing twice-monthly bulletin notices on creation care tips drawn from the Creation Care Corner inserts developed at Elizabeth Seton Parish.
- Parish Operations: In 2020, we assembled an Energy Benchmark report that identified all the electricity, gas, and water meters and the parish properties to which they are connected. We are now in the process of implementing the Environmental Protection Agency's Portfolio

Manager software to monitor those meters to discover trends in parish utility usage, comparisons of that usage to national norms, and opportunities for energy reduction.

Our parish has within or touching its boundaries the largest area of Forest Preserves in the Archdiocese. Our parish has “Woods” in our name. This gives our parish additional incentive to embrace the call of *Laudato Si*, to expand our care for our environment, and to engage all our ministry commissions in caring for creation.

**Our Lady of the Woods**  
**10731 131<sup>st</sup> Street**  
**Orland Park, IL 60462**

A Parish Community of  
2000 Families Celebrating Since 1984

