

## *Sacred Hearts Parish*

48 South Chestnut Street, Bradford, Massachusetts 01835 | 978-373-1281 | [sacredheartsparish.com](http://sacredheartsparish.com)

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Dear families of confirmation-age students,

September 9, 2024

We hope you have had a wonderful summer. You may have seen the announcement this past spring that the Archdiocese of Boston has made a change in the age that young people will typically receive the sacrament of confirmation. For years, the norm has been to confirm students completing 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In the spring, however, the Archdiocese announced that the new norm will be to confirm students completing 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

In this letter, we hope to answer any questions you may have about this change.

The biggest announcement has to do with the timeline for current 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. It is as follows. This fall, students who are entering grade ten will complete the second year of our two-year confirmation program, as planned. At the same time, students who are entering grades eight and nine will both begin a one-year confirmation program. All three of these cohorts will be confirmed by our regional bishop, Bishop Robert Hennessy, in the fall of 2025.

By fall of 2025, our confirmation program will run according to the “new” schedule, that is, each class of eighth graders begin a one-year program to culminate in receiving the sacrament of confirmation in the fall of their ninth grade year.

Eighth graders enrolled in Sacred Hearts School will receive confirmation preparation classes as part of their regular religious education classes this year, as they did for first communion. Eighth graders who do not attend Sacred Hearts School will receive confirmation preparation classes as part of our K-8 religious education program led by Ms. Laura Montes. Ninth graders will receive confirmation preparation classes at once-monthly classes held on Sunday evenings by Dr. Elizabeth Woodard, as you may have already been expecting. Ninth graders who wish to attend the weekly classes in Ms. Montes’ program are welcome to do so, if you prefer. Tenth graders will, as they did last year, attend the once-monthly Sunday evening classes with Dr. Woodard. Again, all of the aforementioned students will be confirmed in the fall of 2025. If you know of any 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade family who may not have received this letter, please do share this information with them so students do not miss registering for confirmation.

Many demands are being placed on the bishop’s time due to the age change. Almost all parishes in the area will be asking him to confirm larger-than-normal groups of students, requiring multiple services. As such, confirmation for our large class of students may take place on a weeknight or other time that is different from when confirmation has been held in the past (typically a Sunday afternoon). We will announce the date(s) of confirmation as soon as the bishop makes them available.

You may be wondering what opportunities there will be for high schoolers to grow and nurture their faith. Please be assured that we are committed to our high-schoolers and intend to put energy into the formation of a new, robust high school ministry. Regardless of when a person is confirmed, faith formation is a lifelong endeavor. Our teens, as well as adults of every age, deserve rich opportunities at their parish to discover God and to cultivate a life of faith. Our parish is committed to forging new opportunities for high schoolers through youth ministries and roles for teens in the life of the parish. Please stay tuned for more information about those opportunities as they develop.

If you have further questions, please visit our website at [sacredheartsparish.com](http://sacredheartsparish.com) and follow some of the links we have provided. Of course, we are always available by phone, email, or in-person as well. Ms. Montes is at [lmontes@sacredheartsparish.com](mailto:lmontes@sacredheartsparish.com) and Dr. Woodard is at [ewoodard@sacredheartsparish.com](mailto:ewoodard@sacredheartsparish.com). Our office phone is 978-373-1281. The office is open Monday through Thursday 8:30-4:30 and Friday 8:30-1:00.

To register your child for confirmation in our faith formation program, please visit our website to download a registration form. We are honoring “early bird pricing” through September 29. We are prayerfully open to the new and exciting endeavors that God has in store for our parish with these changes. Blessings to all,

Fr. John Delaney, Pastor

Dr. Elizabeth Woodard, Pastoral Associate

Ms. Laura Montes, Coordinator of Faith Formation