

St. Mary of the Purification Church

230 Queen St E, Mount Forest, ON

N0G 2L3

(519) 323-1054

Dear Parents of the Grade Two Students,

I pray this finds you well.

If you have received this letter, it is because you are the parent or legal guardian of a child who has reached the age of discernment and/or is attending St. Mary's School in Mount Forest. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the planning for the celebration of **First Holy Communion** is well underway. Accordingly, **Sunday 07 June, 2026** has been set as the date to celebrate this joyful occasion. There will be a special Mass celebrated that day at **3:00 PM** on this date.

As pastor it is my responsibility to organise this event and help you prepare your child for the reception of this most important Sacrament. To this end both the Parish and School are working together to provide a meaningful and prayerful experience for your child. In preparation, I offer you my full support as you are the primary formators of your child in the ways of the faith. That having been said I want you to feel free to contact me at any time to assist you in this solemn responsibility. You can reach me at the address and phone number given above and my schedule is flexible.

As you decide if your child is prepared or not, I urge you to consider prayerfully your child's readiness to receive this sacrament. This is not something to be taken lightly. To help you understand what 'readiness' means please consider the following:

- A child is eligible to receive Holy Eucharist for the first time when she/he: has been Baptised according to the Rites of the Catholic Church, or, having been baptised in a different church, has been welcomed into the Catholic Church through a Rite of Reception; has reached the age of discernment (seven years old); and understands that the Eucharistic Host is not an ordinary piece of bread but is the true Body of Christ.
- A child is fully prepared for the reception of Holy Eucharist when they appreciate the need for Sacramental Reconciliation (Confession) before receiving Holy Communion. This means that they understand that there is a deep connection between what they believe and how they live their lives. They must understand that should there be any disagreements between the two, changes need to be made. Furthermore, it is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we learn God's love and mercy is available to help them at every step of life's journey.
- A child is well prepared for the reception of Holy Eucharist by regular (weekly) attendance at Mass. Because this is a Sacrament of Initiation, by which a person is invited to enter deeper into the mysteries of our Faith, its fruitfulness can only be expected by those who cooperate with the graces available to them at all times. Parents who have had their child Baptised in a Catholic Church have made a promise to God to make attendance at Mass their family's practice. If attendance at Mass is something that has slipped, no fear, you can return at any time. No questions asked.

To help you prepare your child I will be sending you two books. These are work books for you to complete with your child. Research show that children pick up information much easier when they are taught by their parents.

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Sacramental Reconciliation: It is a well-established tradition that a child intending to receive *Holy Communion* for the first time make an opportunity for Confession sometime before. This year a special Reconciliation Service, for the children of our parish, receiving this sacrament for the first time, will be held at **11:00 on Saturday 28 March, 2026**, at **St. Mary of the Purification Church, Mount Forest**. Every effort to attend should be made. If for some good reason a child cannot make this celebration, please make other arrangements with me or another priest for the first reception of this sacrament.

In order to help your Child make a good confession it may be helpful if they: (always according to their ability and appropriate to their age):

- Understand the difference between right and wrong; good and evil, and the reality and danger of sin.
- Understand that their actions, both good and bad, have real life consequences and that they are accountable for them.
- Understand that God is patient with us for the sake of our salvation and that he desires to forgive the sins we confess.
- Demonstrate sorrow for wrongs they have done and a willingness to guard themselves from doing these things again.
- Demonstrate a willingness to do penance as a means of growing deeper into their relationship with God
- Understand that penance it is not punishment for their sins or a way of paying for them.
- Understand that what is said between them and the Priest is under the seal of the confessional and will never be discussed again under any circumstances.

It is also helpful if they know an *Act of Contrition*. The one I am most fond of is “*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner*”. Frequent recitation of this during prayer time is often beneficial.

Lastly, I ask you to take some time to fill out the *First Holy Communion Registration Form* that follows. There is record keeping to be done and this information will help ensure that an accurate sacramental record is kept for your child. If no *Registration Form* is submitted it will be understood that it is your intention that your child is not to participate in any this year’s celebrations. Please note, you must submit the registration form with all required information to the church office no later than **3:00 PM on Friday, 27 March, 2026**.

To submit a form:

- Please mail it to the above address
- Drop it off at the parish Office (to a member of the staff). The Office is open from 09:30 to 1:30 Tuesday to Friday.
- Place it in the collection basket at Church on Sunday
- With Principal’s permission they may be collected by teachers in the class rooms.

If the dates given for either of the sacraments do not work for your family, please contact me so that we may discuss options. Once a child is prepared, they can receive the sacrament at any time after.

If you have any questions about preparation or the celebrations of these Sacraments, please contact me as soon as possible.

In Christ,

Rev. Michael Anderson P.P.

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First Holy Communion Registration Form

(Please print in all Fields except for signature)

Name of CHILD: _____

Name of Parent/ Guardian: _____

Home Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address _____

Age of Child as of 01 February 2026: _____ **School Attending:** _____

Church Attending: (Check One)

St. Mary (Mount Forest) _____ **St. Thomas (Harriston)** _____ **St. Peter (Aytton)** _____

Other (please specify) _____

Church of Baptism: (Check One)

St. Mary (Mount Forest) _____ **St. Thomas (Harriston)** _____ **St. Peter (Aytton)** _____

Please Note: If your child is not Baptised, there will be time to have them Baptised before First Holy Communion. This is the last opportunity for a child to be Baptised without also receiving Confirmation at the same time. Please contact the Church as soon as possible if you need to have your child baptised at this time.

If your Child was Baptised at one of the Churches in our Parish, no further action is required. We will verify the Baptism from our records.

If your Child was not baptised at one of the Churches in this parish a hard copy of the child's Baptism Certificate is required for registration. You can get a certificate by requesting it from the church of baptism.

I would like to help with the cost of preparation materials by donating a one time gift of \$ _____ (\$25.00 suggested – to given at the Mass for First Holy Communion).

Office use only

Date of Verification _____ **Performed by:** _____

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