

1/18/22 Elizabeth Ministry at St. Agnes

Elizabeth Ministry is an outreach program to women during the special times of their motherhood. St. Agnes Parish affirms, supports, encourages and assists them during this time in their lives.

The Elizabeth Ministry is based on the Scripture story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45). This Scripture story presents us with two women who are pregnant in difficult settings. Elizabeth is too old to have children and has been criticized for being barren. Mary is very young and finds herself pregnant although she is not married. The beauty of Mary's encounter with Elizabeth is that both women realize that they had found someone who understood and with whom they could share the marvel of what God was doing for them. As they shared their stories, they helped each other recognize God's will and the sacredness of their lives.



Theresa Nadolski is chair of Elizabeth Ministry at St. Agnes.

"My whole career as a nurse (32+ years) has been in women's health," Nadolski said. "So, I'm very passionate about that. Elizabeth Ministry is about supporting women and families during the childbearing years, so seemed like a natural fit for me. I also feel it is extremely important to help make new and young families feel welcome at church – if we don't bring any young families into parishes, the parishes will eventually no longer exist."

Today, many women feel isolated from other women. In the past, the presence of intimacy and support needed during childbearing years were found in the structures of family, neighborhood, and church. Women no longer feel the sense of community that automatically existed years ago.

This program helps us identify, pray for and support those who are pregnant; celebrating birth or adoption; grieving miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, infant or child death; or wanting to become pregnant or adopt.

For example, the Elizabeth Ministry program supports mothers and their newborns.

"We give a gift of a new handmade blanket to each baby/child who gets baptized in our parish," Nadolski said. "We also send mailings with information about raising a child in the faith and how to do that at different ages. The mailings come about every six months until the child is about age 3."



Donated baby blankets, some store-bought, some homemade.

Families with little children are welcome at St. Agnes, but we understand it is difficult to keep them occupied during Mass. The Elizabeth Ministry offers toddler bags for families to use during Mass.

“Toddler bags are available in the prayer room, but I’d like to move them out to the area with the Elizabeth Ministry table,” Nadolski said. “Each bag has a book, coloring book with crayons, and toys for toddlers to play with that are Bible-based to help teach the child about God.”



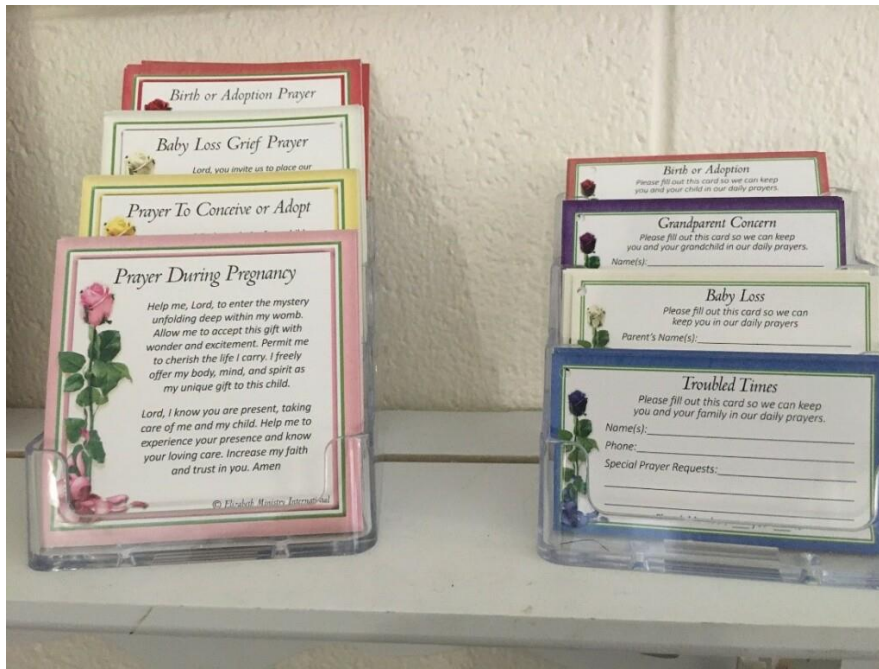
Toddler Bags



Coloring books, crayons, toys are in the toddler bags.

The Elizabeth Ministry Rose Bud Program is located in the northwest corner of the Gathering Space on a table and shelf.





“This is for people who would like prayers said for them for specific things, centered around pregnancy and trying to get pregnant, family life, loss, etc.,” Nadolski said. “We pray for Elizabeth Ministry prayer requests as part of our petitions at each Mass.” Each color of rose bud is for a different need:

Pink Rosebud ~ honoring pregnancy and unborn babies

Red Rosebud ~ celebrating births and adoptions

White Rosebud ~ grieving with families suffering a miscarriage, abortion, still birth, infant or child death

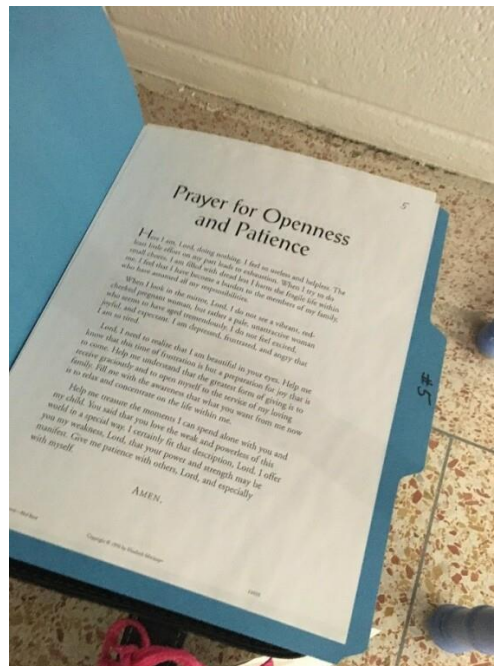
Yellow Rosebud ~ those waiting to conceive or adopt

Blue Rosebud ~ troubled times

Purple Rosebud ~ grandparents’ concerns

The shelf has prayer cards (photo above left) and notecards (photo above right) to be filled out and attached to the rose you put in the vase, so we can all pray for the specific intentions.

Order of Prayers		
<i>The prayers in this collection appear in the order that follows.</i>		
<i>The title of the prayer appears first, followed by the subject matter that it addresses and the item number.</i>		
Prayer Title	Prayer Focus	Item No.
PREGNANCY		
Prayer of Wonder	General Pregnancy	1
Prayer for Gratitude	Pregnancy—Married	2
Prayer for Help	General Pregnancy	3
Prayer for Awareness of God's Presence	Subsequent Pregnancy	4
Prayer for Openness and Patience	Pregnancy—Bed Rest	5
Prayer for Joy and Trust	Pregnancy after Miscarriage or Infant Death	6
Prayer for Insight	Pregnancy—Prenatal Testing Concerns	7
Prayer for Strength	Pregnancy—Fetal Abnormality Issues	8
Prayer for Trust and Confidence	Pregnancy Later in Life	9
Prayer for Wisdom	Prenatal Testing/Fetal Abnormality Issues	10
Prayer for Courage	Pregnancy—Single Parent	11
Prayer for Peace	High-Risk Pregnancy	12
Prayer for Faith	Pregnancy Complications	13
Celebration of Birth		
Prayer of Praise	Celebration of Birth	14
Prayer for Guidance	Birth—Raising Child	15
Prayer for Acceptance	Birth—Choosing Adoption	16
Prayer for Blessing on a Large Family	Pregnancy/Birth—Large Family	17
Prayer Celebrating Birth	Birth—First-Time Mother	18
Prayer When Another Child Joins Our Family	Subsequent Birth	19
Prayer for Multiple Blessings	Multiple Births	20
Prayer for Confidence	Delivery Complications	21
Prayer for Inner Peace	Postpartum Depression	22
MISCARRIAGE AND INFANT OR CHILD DEATH		
Prayer for Broken Dreams	Miscarriage	23
Prayer for Healing a Grieving Heart	Silenced Child	24
Prayer for Faith in the Face of Tragedy	Infant or Child Death	25
Prayer for Consolation	Multiple Birth Loss	26
Prayer to Calm a Broken Heart	Infant or Child Death	27



In the file box below the table, you'll find an index of 27 specific prayers for pregnancy, celebration of birth, and for miscarriage and infant or child deaths. The item number corresponds to a folder in the file box with those specific prayers.

All of this takes a lot of time to organize, replenish and care for. "I can always use volunteers," Nadolski said. "There are many other things that could be done as part of the Elizabeth Ministry. I just can't do it all by myself!" To volunteer, ask questions or offer suggestions, you can reach Theresa Nadolski at theresanadolski65@gmail.com.