

Benediction January 2012

Newsletter

Benediction Lutheran Church – 8475 W. Fond du Lac Ave

Milwaukee, WI – 414-463-9158

JANUARY PAC MAN MISSION OF THE MONTH



Our PacMan offerings on January 22nd will go to **A Place of Refuge**. APOR is a ministry of our S. Wisconsin District which supports women in crisis pregnancies with counseling and physical and spiritual support. They also operate Refuge House which offers women who do not have a home a place to safely raise their newborn child.

There are many opportunities for individuals, families and groups to use their gifts and talents at A Place of Refuge Ministries. Here are some servant events opportunities at Refuge House: wash walls, wallpaper our kitchen, share a hobby, share musical talents from hand bells, choirs, and musical groups. Please call our house manager Dawn at 414-760-2483 for more information or to discuss scheduling an event.

There are also service opportunities at **Blessed Again Resale**: Blessed Again is staffed ENTIRELY by volunteers. Regular volunteers are essential to keep the store operating. Individuals can volunteer to work during business hours on the sales floor, ringing up sales or behind the scenes. Groups of adults or well supervised teens can volunteer as well. Please contact Dawn, our store manager, at 414-464-9099 for more information. Blessed Again Resale is located in the shopping plaza on the northwest corner of 76th St. and Hampton Ave. in Milwaukee.

For more information visit:

<http://aporonline.org/>

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



Over 120 people attended the Sunday School Program on December 18. Thanks to our Sunday School staff, the children, and all of the children for their hard work in presenting the Christmas story to the members of our congregation.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

We had about 100 people for the German Christmas service. The Milwaukee DANK Choir sang, and refreshments were served following the service. We also had good attendance for the all of our Christmas services. With the help of Trinity, Freistad; Peace, Beaver Dam; and our own Giving Tree, we were able to give Christmas gifts to over 120 needy children. Here is a report from when the gifts from our tree were given:

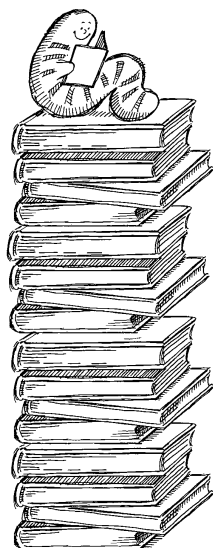


*A very **Merry Thank You** to all the members who contributed to the Giving Tree. I want to share with you the experience I had delivering the gifts. The children mobbed me, calling me Santa and with excited shouts of "awesome" stated they would be good. The wows, wide eyed joyful smiles showing their elation warmed my heart. Your generosity has helped to make the Christmas of these children special.*

You can find several pictures of our Christmas services at :

<http://www.facebook.com/benedictionlcms?sk=photos>

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY



The **CHILDREN'S LIBRARY** will soon be coming back to Benediction! On the side of the narthex with the elevator, you might have noticed a bookshelf. This will be the location of the Children's Library. Along with new books to check out, there will also be a chance to win prizes! (Details to follow.) The plan is to have it ready to use by the first of the year. Happy Reading!

THRIVENT CHOICE

Thanks to all of our members and friends who have made Benediction their Thrivent Choice designation. We are one of the top beneficiaries of Choice dollars for 2011 with almost \$3,000 in receipts.

If you would like to designate Benediction for your choice funds, please call 1-800-847-8436 and state "Thrivent Choice." Tell them that you would like to designate your choice dollars to Benediction.

NARTHEX RENOVATION

In 2010 the SIS group formed a committee to decorate the narthex with memorial funds. Our thanks to all who helped to purchase items and decorate the narthex in the past few months. It is very comfortable with a sofa and chair, and the decorations make it much more appealing.

BOY'S BASKETBALL

Our boys basketball team goes into the Christmas Break with a 2-1 record. Cheer them on, on Jan 8 at 2:15 against First Immanuel, Cedarburg Black, and on January 15 at 1:00 against St. John's Glendale. All games are at Pilgrim Lutheran.

Pastor's Article and Calendar

You can find Pastor Hougard's January article at:

<http://benediction-lcms.org/pastor/>

The January Calendar is at:

<http://benediction-lcms.org/calendar/>

STEWARDSHIP 2012

How did you do with your resolutions for the year 2011? About the same as for other years? Can you even remember what those resolutions were? Why do we struggle so much with resolutions? Is it because they are not realistic? Is it because we try to do it completely on our own without any outside help (even from God)? Failure is one of the biggest disappointments in life. Is it possible to start over successfully?

As we enter into this New Year we have another opportunity to start over. Having the privilege of starting over is one of the things in life that gives us hope and courage as we look to the future. As we take down our 2011 calendars and replace them with 2012 calendars we really can start over.

In Romans 12:12 (NIV) the Holy Spirit gives us some great ingredients for a really good New Year's resolution. The encouragement is to ***"be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer."*** Life would be so sweet if everyone could adopt and live out those three pieces as a New Year's resolution.

"Be joyful in hope" should be pretty easy for Christians because our hope is in Christ and ***"that hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us."*** (Romans 5:5 NIV)

"Be patient in affliction" can be considerably more difficult because we do not like affliction. Who of us likes to be mistreated by people who are rude, inconsiderate and downright nasty? Where can we get the strength to be patient in affliction? It takes a giant transformation to behave so nicely when afflicted? Our comfort is that the power to do that does not come from within us, but from outside of us. When we were baptized ***"we were buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*** (Romans 6:4 NIV) No one in the history of mankind had to deal with as much affliction as Jesus, our Savior! And He did it out of love for us so that we do not have to fear eternal affliction!

"Faithful in prayer" keeps us in touch with God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus spent entire nights in prayer with His Father in heaven so that He would have the strength to carry out His mission of dying for sinners so that they might have the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Prayer is an excellent way to stay in touch with God and His love and power.

How does this threefold resolution make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us? It does because the Holy Spirit is at work within us to make us more and more the children of God. As children of God we seek to do the same things that give Him such delight. John 3:16 tells us that God delights in **loving** and **giving**. God has entrusted us with all of life and life's resources and desires that we manage them wisely according to His purposes. **Loving** and **giving** are at the heart of Christian stewardship.

May God bless us all as His stewards in this New Year of 2012!

THE CATECHISM FOR JANUARY 2012 THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR - PART 3

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: "forgiveness of sins."

Scripture Verses

Mark 9:24 Lord, I believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!

Luke 1:45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished.

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (NKJV)

Hebrews 11:1 Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Scripture Accounts

Numbers 21:4-9 The Israel who looked at the bronze snake were healed

Matthew 9:1-8 Jesus' words have power and authority

Catechism Hymns

Jesus Comes Today with Healing (LSB 620)

O Jesus, Blessed Lord, to Thee (LSB 632, LW 245; TLH 309)

