



Blessed SACRAMENT

BECOMING STEWARDS IN COMMUNITY

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NOVEMBER 2018

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE PROVIDING FOR COMMUNITY WITH JOYFUL ANTICIPATION

This is a season of joyful anticipation. And as a faith community, we can make this time even more joyful by spreading the abundance of what we have to others.

The Blessed Sacrament Christmas Giving Tree Project will be returning this month to bless three local charitable organizations with our parish's generosity. In ways big and small, the tree presents an opportunity for parishioners to get involved in the true meaning of the season.

The ornaments on the tree represent families who receive services from United Ministries in Erlanger, Catholic Charities, and Care Net Pregnancy Services of Northern Kentucky. As coordinator Bridget France explains, the tree provides a way for parishioners to help their neighbors at every level of ability.

"Having three ministries is kind of nice because there are people who want to give just diapers, but then Catholic Charities gives us one or two families and the requests are very specific down to the size," she says. "United Ministries will ask for clothing items and toys for each person or gift cards. Some people love to shop for those specific things, but others don't have that kind of time."



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THE BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY:

CHANNELS OF CHRIST'S LOVE AND MERCY DURING TIMES OF LOSS

For a family facing the recent loss of a loved one, the process of planning a funeral can easily become overwhelming. In the midst of intense grief, family members are suddenly faced with numerous decisions, choosing funeral homes, coffins, burial plots and an entire funeral liturgy. Each one of these choices is important, helping us commemorate the deceased and begin the grieving process. And having parishioners there to support and walk us through the process can make all the difference during such an intense time.

This, says parishioner Bob Meihaus, is ultimately the mission and purpose of Blessed Sacrament's Bereavement Ministry.

"Losing a family member can be one of the most difficult and painful experiences a person will ever go through," Bob says. "It is important to have a solid support system of friends and other family members during such devastating times. The Bereavement Committee members perform a number of tasks and hold various responsibilities vital to helping the bereaved deal with their loss and aiding in the beginning of their healing process."

This ministry of care, Bob says, is divided into two core groups — the Liturgy Planning Committee and the Host Reception Committee. The first is there to reach out to and assist bereaved family members with the planning of the funeral liturgy. From the selection of readings and hymns, to the scheduling of servers, lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Bereavement



Parishioner Bob Meihaus feels incredibly blessed to be able to help parishioners during their time of loss through his service on the Bereavement Liturgy Planning Committee.

Liturgy Planning members are there to help ensure a smooth liturgy where the deceased can be properly remembered and grieved.

"Most of the time we meet at the parish office, but are willing to meet at their home and/or nursing facility," Bob says. "We are there to help guide the family in choosing the readings and hymns for the funeral Mass — to provide comfort, support and hope."

In turn, the Bereavement Host Reception Committee handles the set-up, serving and clean-up of a funeral reception in the undercroft of the church following a funeral liturgy. This allows grieving parishioners to visit with loved ones and remember the deceased without having to worry about the logistics of a reception.

Together, these two Bereavement groups help provide support and comfort to grieving parishioners. Generously giving of their time and talent, ministry volunteers become channels of Christ's love and mercy, offering comfort and oftentimes becoming an unexpected source of evangelization. This, in turn, becomes a great blessing to ministry volunteers as they witness God working through them for the good of others.

"I feel blessed to help those in such a vulnerable situation," Bob says. "I have witnessed a couple of people that have returned to church after a long absence because of what I said, or what they told me I didn't say. I have found new friends, I have learned new skills, it has increased my self-confidence, and it's fulfilling to know that I am able to help."

Both the Liturgy Planning Committee and the Host Reception Committee welcome new members. To join or receive additional information, please contact Liturgy Planning Committee coordinator Bob Meihaus at 859-331-1704, or the parish office at 859-331-4302.

NOVEMBER:

A Time OF FAITHFUL *Celebration* AND SHARING IN THANKS

Dear Parishioners,

As I look over the calendar for November, my mind is filled with thoughts of thanksgiving. These aren't just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day, although I look towards it with happy anticipation — more than that, they are thoughts filled with a variety of reasons for why we should be thankful.

The month begins with a great celebration that should be a day of thanksgiving for all of us — All Saints' Day. This is a great feast celebrating the great company of Christians now in heaven — a company we shall eventually join, whether or not we're formally canonized, if we remain faithful to Christ.

And the communion of saints — the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven to us who are still in our pilgrimage — is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read the lives of the saints to be encouraged and inspired by their examples. Plus, we are strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and we are aided by their prayers.

And then, the very next day, we celebrate All Souls' Day. Although this day commemorates all the faithful departed who are being purified in Purgatory, it is natural for us to concentrate on the members of our own family and our friends who have died. While we pray for them, that they may soon experience the joys of heaven, at the same time we also are thankful for the love they gave us and for the faith they passed on to us.

Then, later in the month comes Thanksgiving Day, the national holiday celebrating all the things for which we are thankful. The fact that it comes

toward the end of autumn reminds us that it was originally a harvest festival. For Christians today, it's a wholesome reminder that we should thank God for everything we receive, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Why

not participate in the Church's Great Thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist, on Thanksgiving Day? It's the ultimate way to give thanks.

A reminder — while much of our attention this month may be drawn to the often contentious goings on in our country, we need to remember that God is in charge of the universe, even though He has given us free will. If we trust in His loving care, demonstrated by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us, we can withstand the troubles of life. It's a good principle to follow in this month of thanksgiving.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Daniel J. Vogelwohl

Rev. Daniel J. Vogelwohl
Pastor



BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT O

What is a Stewardship Renewal?

This isn't a parish fundraiser – far from it. Our annual Stewardship Renewal is the time when we ask each other to re-prioritize the way we use God's gifts in the Church. It is the time we write down how we will support Blessed Sacrament.

Why should I fill out a commitment card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and of-fertory giving, or what we at Blessed Sacrament call "time, talent, and treasure." There's a two-fold reason to complete your card. First, it is an excellent opportunity to move forward spiritually and personally. Second, when you fill out a card, our parish is much better able to manage our many volunteers and make budgeting decisions.

How many parish ministries are there at Blessed Sacrament?

"Ministry" is a general term for any parish group, organization, or regular activity. There are dozens of ministries in our parish. You can sign up for certain ministries, or re-commit yourself if you're already involved.

What if I sign up for a ministry, but later find I'm not very interested?

You are not making a solemn promise to participate in a particular ministry when you mark it on your commitment card. If you find that the parish group is different than you thought, or simply that their meeting time doesn't fit your schedule, you can change your mind. There are plenty of other ministries to consider.

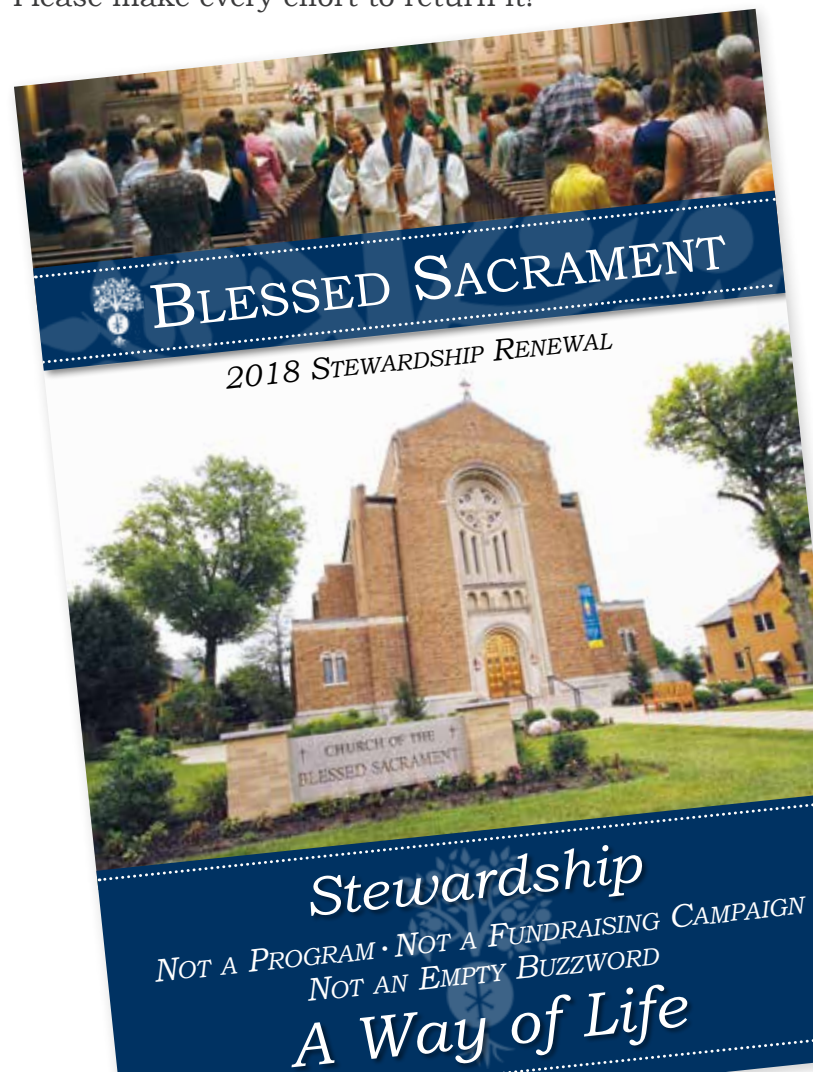
I'm hesitant to make a firm financial pledge. What if I lose my job?

Your commitment card isn't a legal contract. If your circumstances change, your gift will change. In Scripture, we are asked to "give according to our

means." So if you lose your job, you may be unable to give at the level you pledged. Likewise, if you get a promotion, you may be able to give more. That is why at Blessed Sacrament, our standard of giving is based upon a percentage of income.

What happens if I don't fill out a commitment card?

Returning a card is an important part of being an active member of Blessed Sacrament. If for some reason you lose your card, we'll send you a reminder letter with an extra commitment card. Please make every effort to return it!





OUR STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

Time, Talent and Treasure

Please bring your Commitment Card to Mass on Commitment Sunday, November 17-18. How will you use your time, talent and treasure in our parish?

STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

Our definition of Stewardship of Time: Using my time on earth wisely; making time for personal prayer, family prayer, and quality time with friends and loved ones.

The bottom line about prayer: Without prayer, we cannot thrive spiritually. As Catholic Christians, it is a necessity to spend time each day speaking to God. This includes reading Scripture and saying prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary, but even more importantly, it should include a heart-to-heart conversation with Jesus. He wants us to bring him all our fears, longings, needs, and desires.

What kind of Time commitments should I make? Your commitment card lists several suggestions for how to spend time with God in prayer. Review your current prayer life and take a step forward. For instance, start having daily prayers with your children or spouse. Commit to praying the rosary on the way to work or reading scripture before bed each night.

STEWARDSHIP OF TALENT

Our definition of Stewardship of Talent: Using my God-given abilities to strengthen the Church and help others, especially through parish ministries and activities.

The bottom line about parish ministry: No Catholic Christian exists in a vacuum. Scripture makes it clear that we must function within the wider faith community, putting our gifts in the service of others. It's not enough to go to Sunday Mass; we need to be involved in parish life and ministry.

What kind of Talent commitments should I make? If you're not involved in anything in our parish, now is the perfect opportunity to take a step forward. Check out our commitment card for a list of ministries. If you're already involved, re-commit yourself to the important work you do. And if you feel God is calling you forward – sign up for something new!

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Our definition of Stewardship of Treasure: The wise and just management of my financial resources; giving a proportionate amount of my income to the parish.

The bottom line about financial support: We need to take seriously the Biblical concept of the tithe, and start giving based on a percentage of income. It's our responsibility to support the Church with our personal involvement *and* our financial support.

What kind of Treasure commitments should I make? Our goal at Blessed Sacrament is to give five percent of income to the offertory. Grab a calculator and figure out your target gift based on your total household income. Then make a plan for increasing your gift incrementally to reach five percent. During our Stewardship Renewal, choose a weekly or monthly gift to the parish, and be faithful to it for the next year.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT BLESSED *Ready*

The dress. The flowers. The menu. There are usually a million things to accomplish between “Will you marry me?” and “I do.” But for couples preparing to be married at Blessed Sacrament, we hope to help not only in preparing for the details of the big day, but also in supporting couples as they plan for a marriage that will last a lifetime.

There are three primary parts of marriage preparation at Blessed Sacrament. First, the couple goes through Pre Cana classes, which can be done over the course of a weekend, two Saturday sessions, or weekly meetings with a facilitator. Secondly, the couple attends Natural Family Planning, or NFP, courses. And finally, the couple will meet several times with the priest or deacon who will witness their marriage, for individualized preparation, including planning the details of the wedding ceremony.

Deacon Jim Bayne serves as the Marriage Preparation Coordinator, and works with couples as their big day approaches. According to Deacon Jim, there are three primary messages that he hopes to convey to the couples he works with as they prepare for marriage.

“God has to be the central focus of your marriage,” he says of the first message. “When you give vows to each other, it doesn’t say that you’ll live happily ever after. You’ll go through good times and bad, sickness and health, rich and poor. You’re going to experience those things. Marriage has ups and downs. How do you get through downs? You



Kyle Couch and Emily Cooney were married on Sept. 8 at Blessed Sacrament Church.

turn to Christ to help you through those times.

“Secondly, your job is to get your spouse to heaven,” he adds. “Anything you can do to help your spouse increase their relationship with God, that’s a great thing. [Finally] your job is to make your spouse happy. When you love somebody, you sacrifice. You sacrifice whatever you can to allow that other individual to grow.”

This preparation process is designed to help couples understand the commitment that they’re making in the Sacrament of Matrimony, as well as to help them to deepen their level of communication with one another. Topics such as children, family of

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SACRAMENT:

for a Lifetime of Love and Faith



For Kyle and Emily Couch, the marriage preparation process was an opportunity to share in important reflection as they prepared for the commitment of a lifetime.

origin, finances, communication, and more are discussed in a way that invites continued conversation.

“Pre Cana gives couples the opportunity to talk about things you don’t normally talk about when you are engaged,” Deacon Jim says. “You have to start talking about those things now — don’t wait until after you’re married to start talking. Pre Cana prepares people to be able to sit and have discussions about these things.”

Kyle and Emily (Cooney) Couch were married at Blessed Sacrament earlier this fall. For the couple, who met in high school and began dating in college, the marriage preparation process was an

opportunity to reflect back on conversations they’d had over seven years of dating, as they prepared for the commitment of a lifetime.

“My favorite part was taking time to focus on the commitment we were about to make to each other,” Emily says. “We’re both so busy, we’re working all the time, and with wedding planning and other stuff. It’s so hard to find the time to have those conversations and make sure you’re on the same page with each other. It was a great opportunity for us to be together, uninterrupted.”

“I was a little unsure about how the weekends would go and I feel like I got a lot more out of it than I was expecting,” Kyle adds. “It’s easy to get wrapped up in life in general, and I felt a lot closer to Emily after going through all of this stuff. They did a great job presenting and making sure all the couples were very open and honest with each other, discussing all aspects of married life. It was really nice to get to share that experience together and let everything else fade away.”

Deacon Jim encourages engaged couples to consider the significance of being married in the Catholic Church.

“Marriage is so important in the Church that it is a sacrament — it’s a lifetime commitment to each other,” he says. “The Catholic Church does a lot of work in preparing you for marriage. Why? Because if you’re truly in love, we want you to get married here and have that commitment to be married for the rest of your lives.

“It’s not just two people — it’s three people,” he adds. “It’s you two and God in this relationship. Seeing the love [a couple] has for each other, that’s showing us God’s love for us.”

If you are interested in getting married at Blessed Sacrament Church, please contact Deacon Jim Bayne at the parish office, 859-331-4302.

Blessed SACRAMENT

**2409 Dixie Highway
Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017**

**Phone: (859) 331-4302
www.BSCKY.org**

Christmas Giving Tree *continued from front cover*

The process for the Giving Tree is simple — Bridget and volunteers will place tags on the trees that represent each gift request. The weekend of Thanksgiving, parishioners simply take a tag from the tree and return it to church with their gifts the following two weekends. Bridget says parishioners can help in a variety of ways.

“Of course, taking the tags and returning them is always hugely appreciated — kids like to do that,” she says. “Then they can help make sure things get in the bins and then we take them over to the parish center and pack them up. Offer to help older people carrying things in. Be on the lookout for people returning gifts and help them stack them.

Little things like that are helpful.”

Students in need of service hours can also lend their time by assisting in sorting gifts and making sure each item matches the charities’ lists.

Bridget, who has served as project coordinator for the past several years, is looking for someone to take over the reins of the project next year.

“I’ve had four kids go through Blessed Sacrament School and my youngest is in eighth grade,” she says. “If someone feels the call to take over the project, I’ll be happy to walk them through it. It really isn’t a hard project, it just takes time. It would be very fun if a group of friends, maybe moms from one class, took it over.”

*If you would like more information on the Christmas Giving Tree Project,
please contact Bridget France via email at brdgtfrance@gmail.com.*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 4 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8, 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. | **Weekdays:** Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.
Holy Days: 7 p.m. (prior day Vigil, excluding All Saints Day) 6:30 & 10 a.m.

Eucharistic Exposition: Wednesdays following Mass — Benediction to close exposition: 6:15 p.m.

SACRAMENTAL RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 2:30-3:30 p.m. | **Thursday before First Friday:** 10:30 a.m. | **Third Tuesday:** 6:30-7:30 p.m.