

# Missionary Mom!



By Michelle Marciniak



I heard the call the first time I stepped into the church. I was home. Well, it wasn't so far fetched, after all I attended St. Luke's parish as a young child. We moved away when I was six years old and I had not been back since that time. Now as a mom with many little ones of my own, I was back. And I loved every minute of it. I brought my family and we fit right in. I knew that God had been calling me to something even more than what I was already living, but until that time I didn't know what it was.

Okay, so people thought we were crazy. Over the five years it took us to discern whether or not to become missionaries we added two children to the family. Most people thought that having eight children should have been enough for us. But I knew in my heart He was asking us for more. Every year I would stand there with tears streaming down my face as the missionaries made their promises, because my heart ached for what I knew God was calling my family to.

We paid our dues. I remember when Sunday Mass started at the mission. Just a small group of missionaries and a few of us large families made up the congregation. We were a small but faithful crew. We only filled up the first few pews. We watched our children become accustomed to long but lively Masses. My children started to call the missionaries Aunt and Uncle. We became family. When we finally answered God's call and became a missionary family it was just a natural progression. Some of my missionary brothers and sisters said that it was like we had been missionaries all along.

Since then we have added one more child to our fold and we are now ending our third year as missionaries. Exciting things have happened along the way that I may touch upon in future editions of the newsletter but I wanted to share something that I have just experienced recently.

A few weeks ago I was sitting at Sunday Mass and I was nursing our youngest. God nudged me to look around me and I did. In the pews in front of me there was another nursing mom, and a mom whose baby was nestled against her, fast asleep. Behind me was another young family with a new baby that was also nursing. I looked up and said, "God, You must be smiling down at this beautiful picture of families." And He told me to turn around, so I did. I looked at rows, upon rows of people. The church was full, like it has been for a few years now. I turned around and smiled to myself as I remembered our humble beginnings. I was sitting in the middle of the families that were there from the beginning and look how we grew. I felt a great comfort in knowing that one of my missionary sisters was in the back balancing babies and putting her arm around her own daughter. I thought of another missionary sister who had a boy on each knee, one her own, one not her own, keeping them busy with snacks.

This is family, I thought. I looked down the row at my own brood, sitting quietly between my husband and me. I thought about parishes that are closing and I felt blessed that we were growing. I gave God thanks at that moment. Thanks that in a time when people are leaving their faith and churches are closing, we were busting at the seams. Thanks that my children felt comfortable in these pews and that they loved my missionary family as much as I did. Thanks for a place to worship that loves children of all shapes, sizes and color. After all that I felt like a little girl myself, watching God beaming down on me. Thanks God!

## January Health Fair has Record Attendance!

By Dave Marciniak



The January Health Fair was a rousing success! Nearly three hundred people from the St. Luke's community took part in our "brunch" event featuring presenters from the Catholic Health System, Sisters Family Health, Fidelis Insurance, Diabetic Education, and many others. At eight separate stations healthy foods were served to the attendees with recipes and nutritional fact sheets available. The food preparation was spearheaded by Molly Dennybodkin, with Amy and the missionaries lending a hand.

The ECC Dental Hygiene program offered free dental assessment and cleaning appointments and many participants took advantage of this opportunity. Sisters Family Health offered appointments on-the-spot for those without a primary care provider. The Student Nurses Association of D'Youville College provided blood pressure screening. Volunteers from Sisters Hospital, Holy Angels Academy, and D'Youville College provided quick registration, and the VNA provided free flu shots for those in need. Over \$400 in gift cards were raffled off to the delight of all, and one lucky winner walked away with a grand prize of a TV/DVD combo!

We are busy planning our next Health Fair in June, promising to bring more services and opportunities for the special people in our care. In addition, we are planning a week-long program focusing on health and wellness during our Kids of the Kingdom program. There is so much to do!

**If you would be interested in presenting at our June Health Fair please call Dave Marciniak at 880-5981 today to reserve your spot!**

As always, medical professionals who feel they have something to offer are welcome to call and volunteer! We have many opportunities for "Cafeteria Clinics", where you can join the community during our dinner or brunch hours offering educational or screening opportunities. Call Dave to schedule your clinic!

Finally, we are always in need of over-the-counter cold and flu preparations, as well as acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Please consider picking up an extra bottle of medicine for St. Luke's the next time you are at the pharmacy. Remember, all our medicine must be alcohol-free.



