

- Being A Witness To Your Faith
- Christian Rock Band To Play Here
- Pinewood Derby Photos/Results
- Outreach; Eagle Scout Project
- Harvest of Hope Farmers' Market

Stories to Move Hearts

The How and Why of Being a Witness to Your Faith

We're in the middle of the Easter season, temperatures are warming up, and visions of summer vacation are already dancing in school children's heads. Spring has definitely sprung in Southeast Wisconsin and that means a lot of exciting things are in the works at St. Matthew Parish. Besides the plans for a new church and all the wonderful summer activities that are being planned, a new call for people to serve as lay witnesses is starting up. You might be wondering what exactly is a 'lay witness'. The answer is simple... it's someone who shares an important story about how God has touched their life.

Witnessing Yields Positive Results

One of the most effective means to encourage parishioners to get involved in parish life is through lay witnessing. These talks are often given during the Mass by people who are already involved in the parish. In some cases, a youth may be asked to give a talk. The talk has two purposes: To inspire people to use their time, talent and treasure to build God's Kingdom - to be good stewards; and to share real life experiences of how people are already living this out.

On March 16th, several members and leaders of St. Matthew's Parish attend-

ed an event called "Stories to Move Hearts" at the Cousins Center in St. Francis. It was about helping parishioners become better lay witnesses. The main speaker was Deacon Gene Brah, who became an ordained permanent deacon in 1994 and currently serves at Mary Queen of Heaven Parish in West Allis. Archbishop Timothy Dolan was also in attendance for part of the presentation and offered words of encouragement.

Stories Resonate With All Ages

Deacon Brah says, "All of us desire to hear stories. Go back to your childhood and you will certainly remember a story someone told you. Stories impact everyone... not just the young or just the old. It's important to share with others where we have been, where we are going, and what we desire to be."

In the months ahead, we will begin to hear the stories of fellow parishioners as we experience lay witness talks here at St. Matthew's. If you would like to learn more about this ministry and how you might become involved contact Alice Hatzenbeller, 762-4200, ext. 24, or by email at ahatzenbeller@stmattoc.org.

— article and photos by Robert Tabern



Several St. Matthew Parishioners attended this presentation, "Stories to Move Hearts". It was held March 16 at the Cousins Center, and offered advice on being a witness to one's faith.



Deacon Gene Brah was the main speaker for the "Stories to Move Hearts" presentation.

Christian Rock Band to Perform At St. Matthew

Band Made Up of Local Musicians, Including Some From St. Matthew

Members of St. Matthew Church have joined with other Catholic churches in the area to form a Christian rock band geared toward welcoming in more youth to the church.

Two Upcoming Performances

Life Blood Praise Band will hold its next concert at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at St. Matthew Church. Another band performance will be at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, May 22, at Divine Mercy, (formerly St. Sylvester's,) 605 E. College Ave., South Milwaukee.

“Through the consolidation of all the churches, we’re just trying to get kids

together more or less to appreciate the Masses,” said Bob Hill, an organizer and member of Divine Mercy.

Middle and high school-aged children are encouraged to attend for the entertainment and stay for a youth-focused Mass following the performance.

New Band Members Welcome

Any youth interested in joining the band should attend as well. There are about 10 people from St. Matthew, Divine Mercy and Nativity of the Lord churches in Oak Creek, South Milwaukee and Cudahy who make up the band, including back-up players

and vocalists. Adults and high school students participate. The group gathers each Sunday to practice, holding concerts before the specially-designed youth Masses.

Long Term Hopes

Hall said he hopes that the youngsters will stick around, recruit more teens and middle-school age musicians to continue the group in years to come. If you are interested in joining the band, contact Hall at (414) 486-0752.

— *article by Heather Clark*

Hot Wheels!

Annual Pinewood Derby Includes a New Track Record

A fourth-grader set a new track record at St. Matthew Boy Scout Pack 251’s annual Pinewood Derby. The annual derby took place on March 16 with 38 cars taking to the track.

Five scouts earned awards with those having the top four times advancing to the District Pinewood Derby to be held in June at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

The winner of Best of Show was Alex Mrotek, a fifth-grader. Luke Mauer, a fourth-grader, captured first place with a record-setting time of 10.168. Second-grader Robbie Reid came in second place with a time of 10.308. Jacob Wolf, another second-grader, took third place with a time of 10.340. Tory Purpora, a third-grader, raced into fourth place with a time of 10.382.

— *article and photos by Heather Clark*



Parishioner and School Generosity Reflected in Donation to Sojourner Truth House

On March 2, St. Matthew School 6th grade students helped load a large donation of food and household items for delivery to Sojourner Truth House in Milwaukee. Sojourner Truth House is a shelter for battered women and their children. It provides shelter, safety and support while restoring dignity and self-worth while breaking the cycle of violence for present and future generations.

With an average lunch at the shelter requiring 15 cans of soup, you can see why this donation is needed and appreciated — thank you!

— *article and photos by Mike Kuick*



Eagle Scout Project Helping To Prep South Wing For Use as a Parish Youth Room



As part of his Eagle Scout project, Adam Maurer organized the prep work needed to get the South Wing ready to be remodeled into a Parish Youth Room. This included the removal of old carpet. Adam is shown here on the job with his parents, Paul and Sue Maurer.

— *article and photos by Mike Kuick*

Easter Farmers' Market Held to Benefit Harvest of Hope

On Saturday, March 19th, St. Matthew's cafeteria was transformed into an old-fashioned farmers' market. Regional farm families brought their outstanding selection of meats, eggs, cheeses, honey, maple syrup, jams, jellies, wool products and goats' milk soap to offer for sale to parishioners. Participating farmers donated 10% of their sales' proceeds to Harvest of Hope, an emergency fund operated by the Madison Christian community to assist struggling farm families in Wisconsin.

Did you know that farmers typically make only 4 cents on the dollar from the sale of their crops and livestock? Much of what consumers spend on food goes to the "middleman" and marketing expenses. Most supermarket food travels 1500 miles to reach the grocery store shelves... while food grown and sold locally from sustainable farming methods cuts down on environmental pollution and helps to support local economies. When you buy directly from the farmers, more of your dollar goes immediately to those who produce the food.

In addition to the wonderful food choices, there were exquisite hand-crafted religious items for sale from the Holy Land, Bethlehem. Olivewood carvings made by 600 Christian artisans were displayed including crucifixes, rosaries, angels, busts or Mary and Jesus, and more.

— *article by Amy Cicigoi*
 — *photos by Mike Kuick and Dick and Carol Tenner*



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