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- Why you'll want to stay late after Mass...
- Youth Mission Trip

We're Done...And Only Just Beginning Parishioners and Staff Reconfigure Worship Space

With our worship space "reconfiguration" nearly complete, we can now explore liturgical changes including decor, how we gather for sacramental celebrations, rituals, blessings, prayer services, concerts, etc. We believe the quality of our prayer (spoken, sung, and preached) will improve in our new configuration, and it gives us a taste of our future.

The reconfiguration of our worship space is an idea that had been talked about for years. Last April, Tom Schneider, Director of Stewardship and Administration, presented a proposal to reconfigure our worship space to the Prayer & Worship Committee. With the skills, talents, time, and hard work of our parishioners, especially our Building and Grounds workers, Tom felt we could accomplish this at minimal expense. Ed Siira, a parishioner and an architect, volunteered to draw plans to scale.

Dialogue and approvals were obtained from Prayer & Worship, Building and Grounds, Phase II Building Committee, Pastoral Staff, Maintenance Staff, and Parish Council. In light of the liturgical calendar, including weddings and



Ron Freimark calls on his carpentry skills while installing flooring on the new altar.

school needs and the Garage/Pavilion projects already "on our plates," we waited until June 9, 2006 to begin the reconfiguration.

Once the project began, the work crews learned to "expect the unexpected. For example:

- It was a lot easier to remove the carpeting, the old altar

platforms, and the pews than we had envisioned. Since we had quite a bit of help on Friday, June 9, we accomplished a lot that first weekend.

- We were a bit surprised by how the old altar platform was built. But seeing how it was



Mike Kuick demonstrates the "measure twice and cut once" method while working on the new altar platform.

constructed showed us that we needed to use 3/4" plywood when building the new platform to ensure a safe, solid platform for all to use.

- We found that where the old altar platform was attached to the back wall is going to be a bit of a challenge to adequately cover. Right now most of it is hidden by a pew, but we will need to find a way to match the existing walls at the back of the old sanctuary.
- We had to re-build the floor under the formerly raised area of the old sanctuary.
- The sound system had quite a few conduits terminating under or next to the old ambo (lectern). This will prove a challenge to get this cut down and properly terminated without affecting the quality of our sound system.
- We will have to expand our sound system into the old sanctuary, probably adding a number of speakers.
- We learned easier ways to move the heavy pews. We only cut two pews, but separated about 6 in half — some are missing the end pieces.

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Worship space reconfigure, continued from page one.

- We only lost one pew of seating and gained more space for overflow chairs when needed.
- Wood and hardware cost \$2000. Workers provided their own tools.
- The amount of support that we got from various people, men, women, and youth in the parish was very gratifying. Also, the commitment of time from a number of retired men of the parish.
- The fact that the whole project was finished ahead of schedule was quite a surprise as well.

Special thanks to **Mike Kuick, John Weiss, and Carl Micech**, who spent endless hours detaching, moving, and securing every pew into the tile and concrete. Mark Kozlowski assisted by Brian Kucharski, Mark Zapp, Ron Freimark,

Alan and Mary Bronikowski, and Tom Schneider worked on the platform, and Gary Marifke worked on the sound systems. Each week we published the names of those who helped. Dan Wachs and his cleaning crew removed 41 years of wax build-up. Over 21 youth and adults helped clean the church on several Fridays. Let us offer prayers of thanksgiving for these generous stewards, as well as those who painted the walls or scrubbed the bricks in church to revitalize our worship space.

The workers are thrilled with the results of their labor. Let us all pray and sing out with JOY as we make this place a "Great Place to Praise God!"

— *Article by Tom Schneider and Alan Bronikowski*

— *Photos by Dick and Carol Tenner*



After a busy week of work on the worship space, it took many hands every Friday to clean the church prior to that weekend's liturgies.



John Weiss (L) and Carl Micech ready a pew for moving to its new location.



St. Matthew School Students Ride Fire Truck to School

On the last day of school, four first graders got the opportunity to ride to school on an Oak Creek fire truck. The whole school was outside waiting to greet them that morning as the sirens blared.

The boys' parents bid on the prize at the school auction held in February at the Oak Creek Community Center. This was definitely a moment these boys will remember!



Pictured: (L to R) Ryan McNeive, Chief Satula, Keagan Wardius, Jacob Kucharski, Danny Sievert

Only 3 Minutes, or What I Always Wanted to Know But Didn't Get To Ask



By Fr. Bill Stanfield,
co-pastor.

My sister-in-law was more excited than she usually is as she told me about the great new idea the pastor at her parish had started that was so great people actually stayed after Mass for it.

Most of us use 3 minute timers because that is how long it takes to boil an egg and if you go any longer it will ruin the egg. That can also be true when you want a quick answer to a question you always wanted to ask, but were afraid

you would get a much longer answer than you wanted! So why not let people ask those questions and let everyone know you'll get an answer in 3 minutes or less, but never more than 3 minutes.

Starting a few years ago my brother and sister-in-law's parish tried that and they found it worked so well they are still doing it. What, you're asking? Well, people are invited to submit questions about anything related to the parish, reli-

gion, or the Church, and for 3 minutes or less (that's where the egg timer comes in) after Mass for those who wish to stay (in their parish my sister-in-law said almost everyone stays and wants to hear the brief answers) the pastor answers one question a week.

So why not try it here too? We will! Beginning this Fall, we will invite you to put in the collection basket any question you would like answered and each week I or Fr. Steve will read one question from the week before and, if you wish to stay after the final blessing, will give a 3 minute or less - the timer will be set! - answer. Then we will have the going forth song. If you don't want to stay for the Q & A you will be free to leave after the blessing.

The best part is you get to submit the questions about whatever you would like to know more about or would like an answer to. More information will be announced and be in the bulletin. We will give it a try and do it as long as there are questions. Get those egg timers ready!

Parish Youth Visit Hurricane Damaged Mississippi

In last month's edition of "The Buzz", I had the opportunity to share some of my experiences while visiting post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. During my time there, I witnessed incredible damage, but there was also incredible hope beginning to surface. Recently, a group of youth and chaperones from St. Matthew got to visit neighboring Mississippi, where residents are also still trying to pick up the pieces of their lives.

Between June 17th and June 24th, ten youth and four adults from St. Matthew and Divine Mercy Parishes spent time in Coahoma County, Mississippi. The area is located more than 600 miles from Milwaukee, in the northwest part of the state bordering Arkansas and the Mississippi River. The mission site our

parishioners served at was based in the town of Coahoma, but work was done both in Coahoma and neighboring Jonestown.

According to YouthWorks, the organization that helped organize St. Matthew's mission trip, Coahoma County was once a small, but self-sufficient area. However, with the decrease of successful farming operations, it's become a region struggling to keep itself on the map. Some of the economic problems that face people in Coahoma County include: drug use and sales; gangs; a lack of decent, affordable housing; a shortage of adequate play space for children; a high teenage pregnancy rate; and high unemployment due to little or no economic stability. Remnants of Hurricane Katrina



Shelly Madden (center), St. Matthew Director of Youth Ministry, has organized mission trips in which Trisha Burns (left) and Mary Bronikowski have participated. Tricia designed the mission trip brochure shown on the next page.

also hit the area in late August 2005, adding to the problems.

Images of the deadly storm bearing down on the Gulf Coast were a big reason why Shelly Madden decided to head to Mississippi this summer. She explained, "Even though the area we went to was not directly hit by Hurricane Katrina, it saw a lot of the after effects like flooding damage." According to Shelly, it wasn't really possible to take the youth closer to where Katrina washed ashore because of insurance and liability issues.

A "typical day" for the mission trip volunteers begins around seven o'clock in the morning when everyone gathers for breakfast and devotions. About two hours later, a group meeting is held along with prayer...before everyone departs

for the ministry sites. The youth typically spend about six and a half hours doing a variety of jobs -- including repair work, meal preparation, and odd jobs residents need. In the evening, the group has dinner followed by an evening activity like sharing time or music. Things wrap up with a debriefing. "Lights out" is typically past eleven o'clock every night.

Mary Bronikowski, who went on this year's mission trip, says, "One of my favorite memories is helping people rebuild homes." The St. Matthew parishioner and soon-to-be sophomore at Thomas Moore High School, also went on last year's trip to Red Lake, Minnesota. Her mother, Lisa, was involved in this year's trip as well. She helped out in a variety of fundraisers so the youth could afford the cost of

the mission trip... including a rummage sale which ended up being quite popular.

Spreading the word about the upcoming mission trip to Mississippi was also an important part of the planning process. One of the people involved in that



Trisha Burns created a 16-page brochure entitled "Mission Trip Experiences" both as a keepsake for Shelly Madden and as a tool to promote the mission trips.

aspect was Trisha Burns. Even though she just graduated from UW-Parkside with her degree in communications, Trisha is already putting her skills to good use. She designed a 16-page brochure for the church that promotes mission trips. Trisha says, "Since I couldn't actually go on this year's trip I wanted to do something to help. Right now, I am not old enough to be a chaperone, but I am too old to go as a youth...so this was the perfect fit."

Trisha's brochure called "Mission Trip Experiences" was done for a college graphics design class. It features numerous color photos taken during the mission trips she went on with St. Matthew between 1999 and 2002 to such places as Wounded Knee, South Dakota and Calico Rock, Arkansas. Trisha says, "The best way to promote a mission trip is to give people something to look at. I sometimes talk to people after Mass about it, and this is a great tool because it's visual."

Trisha's brochure was also a thank you gift and keepsake for Shelley...who will probably soon begin work on next summer's youth trip.

— Article and photos by Robert Tabern

St. Matthew Parish Buzz

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