

- Learning about the meaning of Epiphany with Generations of Faith
- How We Welcome New Members
- You're Invited! Card Party Next Month
- St. Matthew School Auction Draws Near

Generations of Faith Epiphany Journey

Parishioners of all ages came together during the week of December 10-17th to participate in the second Generations of Faith program offered by St. Matthew Parish. Even though Epiphany is actually celebrated this month, the program was held a few weeks in advance to give everyone the chance to reflect on its meaning.

Epiphany Explained

This latest edition of Generations of Faith began in the cafeteria where everyone enjoyed delicious sloppy joes. Following the meal, the meaning of Epiphany was explained to everyone. Officially called "The Epiphany of the Lord," this feast celebrates the epiphany of Christ to the Gentiles, symbolized by Christ's manifestation to the Magi (or Wise Men). This solemnity is celebrated on January 6th. The story of the Magi traveling from the East to see the Christ child appears only in the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Upon seeing a star rising in the East (the Star of Bethlehem), they realized it was a sign that the king of the Jews had been born. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, the star shone with an inexpressible brilliance, and the sun, moon, and other stars all formed a chorus around the special star. The wise men followed the star to Bethlehem of Judea, and to Jesus' dwelling there. Having arrived, they

worshiped the infant Jesus, and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

According to its organizers, the overall theme of December's Generations of Faith was two-fold, "First, just as the wise men followed the star to Jesus,



we also follow Jesus for guidance in our life. Just as Jesus is revealed to us, we are called to reveal Him to other through our words and actions."

Learning by Doing

During the next hour, participants made their way to four different stations that were set up around St. Matthew.

In the Saint Rooms, families packed food boxes for Milwaukee's House of Peace. Generations of Faith organizers were hoping that participants would

see that by sharing food, we helped others to have a holiday meal with their families. It's something some of us might have taken for granted.

So what kind of organization did your food go to? Well, The House of Peace has been serving the needy in the heart of Milwaukee's Central City since 1968. During this time it has been a Beacon of Hope for thousands of individuals who were without food or clothing. It has been there to comfort those in despair and to offer help to those who had nowhere else to turn. If you are interested in learning more about the House of Peace, or donating more of your time to this worth-while cause, you can contact them at (414) 933-1300.

The second station took place in the kitchen side of the cafeteria, where everyone got to decorate star cookies. While there, everyone was explained the tradition of king's cake and how Christmas leads to Easter.

Another station took place in the gathering space at St. Matthew. This station served as a discussion of our gifts and how we can use them for others. The 15-minute group talks were led by discussion leaders.... and asked the

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questions.... “What are some gifts God gives us?”, “What are some gifts we can give God?”, and “What are some gifts we can give others?” Participants were also given boxes at this station, which were filled with good deeds done for others, and returned to church on the weekend of January 5th and 6th.

The fourth and final location, called the “Star of Wonder Station” took place on the “gym” side of the cafeteria. Our parish theme for 2006 was JOY Jesus, Others, You! How do you share the light of Jesus with others? On the back of the star families were given, everyone got to finish the phrase, “I show the light of Jesus to others by...” On the other side, everyone got to decorate the star. These were hung on a tree in church or the gathering space.

Towards the end of the day, everyone gathered back in church for a song, the play called “The Unwise Men”, and a special blessing.

Mark your calendars! Two more Generations of Faith events are set to take place before the summer rolls around. One takes place in mid-March, the other in mid-May. For exact dates and to register, call St. Matthew’s Parish Office at (414) 762-4200.

Hope to see you there!

— Article and photos by Robert Tabern



New Member Social: Part of Welcoming Process

Many new members share the reason they chose to join our parish is “the welcoming atmosphere and the genuine



Tom Schneider leads the parish trivia game in the Gathering Space.

hospitality they experience.” This is a great tribute to our parish. New member families meet extensively with one of the Pastoral Staff members who help them understand our philosophy of stewardship. We take their picture and it is placed on the “new member board” in the Gathering Space. New members are connected to various staff members depending on their needs and interests. They also receive a phone call of welcome from another parishioner. They are encouraged to review our Parish Ministry

Directory and return their stewardship involvement forms.

Four times each year, new members gather at the 9:30 Mass and walk in and out together in procession and sit together in front where they can be recognized for the “new life” they bring to our community. They receive written invitations and follow up phone calls.

Twice a year for the last two years, we’ve held a “New Member Social,” a pizza party with lots of beverages after the 5:00 Mass on Saturday. Free child care is provided by our youth. Adults interact with members of the Stewardship Committee and some members of the Parish Council. Adult competitive “get to know each other” games



Youth with adult supervision (Sharon Stelter) provide child care while the adults play.



New Members have fun competing guessing who’s older: Fr. Steve or Fr. Bill.

are played using trivia from parish life. New members find it an excellent way to get to know some other new members as well as some of the staff. Separately, our school community hosts new families for a pot luck supper in August to welcome new school families.

Hospitality is a gift from God delivered by us. It takes effort and time, but brings “J.O.Y.” to the entire community. Each one of us can help us grow in our spirit of welcoming and hospitality!

— Article and photos by Tom Schneider, Director of Stewardship & Administration

Holy Name Society to Host Card Party on February 16

Looking for a fun evening out? You are invited to enjoy an evening of friendly card playing and socializing at a card party sponsored by the parish Holy Name Society.

The fun will begin on Friday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m. and will include door prizes, refreshments, and a menu

coordinated by Bob Ilk and Ray Sagan that will include some of the best tasting goulash this side of Hungary.

Tickets will be available for \$8 at the door. For more information or advance tickets, please call Bob Johnson at 762-8039 or Mike Kandziora at 764-9196.

See you there!



Anna and John Bissell enjoyed an evening out at last year’s card party.



St. Matthew
School Auction
 02 - 24 - 2007

“Priceless”

In 2005 St. Matthew School held its first ever auction as a way to raise funds for the school. That auction and last year’s auction have combined to raise \$74,750 for new textbooks and other needs for the school.



This year’s auction will be held on Saturday, February 24 at the Oak Creek Community Center. You are invited to come and enjoy dinner, live and silent auctions, cash and prize raffles, games, and more. Tickets are \$35.

For more information, call 571-9069 or email stacysims@wi.rr.com.



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Welcome

New Parishioners

Brett and Dina Mendola, Graham, Mya and Hailey