



THE GOOD NEWS

January/February 2008
Issue 4

FROM ST. MATTHEW

The community of St. Matthew exists in the world as a visible expression of God's love

Joyce Marxer Celebrates 30 Years Teaching at St. Matthew's School



Joyce Marxer, St. Matthew's teacher (photo from 1981-82 school yearbook).

In 1977, Fran Tarkenton was quarterback for the Vikings, Eagan had more farmers than strip malls and Joyce Marxer began teaching at St. Matthew's School. Of course, she wasn't Joyce Marxer when she started. She was Joyce Menden and she'd just moved to St. Paul from Buffalo, MN to become the new Jr. High math teacher.

Thirty years and hundreds of students later, Joyce Marxer is still teaching students at St. Matthew's. The years have brought many changes for her personally including marriage, motherhood, and a successful battle with cancer. She's seen lots of changes in education, too. Today, her presence is a living example of St. Matthew's commitment to providing a high quality Catholic education to all families who want it.

Joyce Menden Marxer came to St. Matthew's by chance. She had decided to change jobs and St. Matthew's was looking for a 7th & 8th grade math teacher. She met her future husband the following year. Joe Marxer, who grew up on the West Side, was playing in a band at St. Matthew's Fall Festival when a mutual friend introduced them. They got married in 1979 and children quickly followed.

The Marxer's have two children. Jeff was born in '80 and Jill in '82. The children were just 4 and 2 years old respectively when Joyce was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The options for treatment were not good and the doctors didn't expect her to survive.

She spent 1 1/2 years fighting the disease which included two surgeries, 15 months of weekly chemotherapy and 3 months of daily

radiation treatments. Joyce continued to teach through all of it. At that time, chemotherapy required an overnight stay at the hospital. So Joyce would teach on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, go to the hospital for treatment on Thursday and Friday, and spend the weekend recovering. Then back to school on Monday. Family helped out with the children and she beat the odds by surviving the cancer.

7th & 8th Grades Move to Brady

Joyce had recovered from cancer in time to deal with some changes that occurred at school. In 1987 the 7th and 8th grades were moved to Brady High School. Joyce began teaching 6th grade and did so until

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Schools Week

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Find Alumni



St. Matthew's School Open House

Sunday, January 27th from
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

See story on page 4.

MESSAGE FROM **father steve**



Fr. Steve's homilies are available on-line at www.st-matts.org

Each year at the end of January Catholic Schools throughout the nation celebrate "Catholic Schools Week". This offers us an opportunity to "show our wares" and tell our story.

The face of the Catholic Church in the United States, and to a degree the face of our nation, carries the imprint of Catholic Schools. We would be a far different church if it were not for the system of Catholic education that supported immigrant families of the 1800's and 1900's as they sought to make their way in the New World.

Our schools – elementary, secondary and higher education – were by and large "sisters' schools" and "brothers' schools". It would be hard to over estimate the contribution of these tens of thousands of men and women religious in shaping the US Catholic church.

The same is true of Saint Matt's – established 120 years ago – 1887 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The face of Saint Matthew has changed with each generation – what has stayed the same over the generations is a school dedicated to excellence in education and the support of families.

I began my journey in Catholic education 60 years ago – at the age of 5. I entered kindergarten, and from that day in September 1947 there has not been a single day in my life when I have not either been a student in a Catholic school, a teacher in a Catholic school or a pastor responsible for a local Catholic elementary or high school.

For almost forty years I have been a priest in urban parishes – South Minneapolis and the West Side of Saint Paul. I see first hand the difference Catholic education makes in the lives of urban families – often families rich in culture and faith and struggling economically. In urban communities Catholic schools are anchors in neighborhoods, often they are the longest continuously serving institution in neighborhoods.

Today Catholic schools serve not only Catholic parish families, they also serve neighborhood communities; they are centers for education and community life. Saint Matt's began its history by being a center of life for an immigrant population – German farmers. In each generation a new wave of immigrant families have found in Saint Matt's a center for family life.

My desire in life is to be a load bearing member of a community; I am committed to Catholic schools because these schools are load bearing institutions in neighborhoods.

Come and celebrate Catholic Schools Week with us. Bring a family with children to the Open House and help share the long tradition of Catholic education on the West Side. It's a tradition that has made a crucial difference to many families over the years and one which will continue to make a difference.

Yours truly,
Stephen Adrian, Pastor

...I strongly support those (dwindling numbers of) Catholic urban schools who truly minister to and with those in our society who may be cast aside and those children who are academically at risk. What a wonderful ministry for your parish and I hope it will be there for a long, long time.

JANET HUMPHREY

Letter received from a friend of St. Matthew's Parish.

Janet B. Humphrey
1748 Wellesley Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

November 27, 2007

Dear Father Adrian,
I first became aware of St. Matt's about
when I would visit my grandfather in what was then
called White Sulphur + I would look out his window
overlooking St. Matt's. Now I am in the continuing
prayer group (thank you for the great space) and have
celebrated in a limited way through just looking at
the social justice outreach around me, written
materials, and attending a few masses. Thank
you for your conscientious efforts resulting in
excellent homilies.
The conclusion that St. Matt's
parish. So much of our archdiocese
movement and influence is shifting
of love the central cities.
I'm Catholic now but grew
Catholic. My respect for innocence
comes from my experiences in
leave from the public schools when
I had a great and much loved teacher
we could start to reflect and discuss
our faith and I learned more in those
years than I could in college religion classes.
I attend St. Stephen's Church in Minneapolis
and I contribute to Jesus Christ School. I think
Jesus Christ is the son of mercy that the
Catholic Church should lead by; more city-
friendly, in faith, culture and

The Journey to Romania

By Marian Wolters '51

Monica O'Kane, '49, is a woman who has always let Christ guide her life. In February, 2000 she read an article in Guidepost Magazine that took her in an unexpected direction. She learned there were possibly thousands of orphans living under the streets of Bucharest, Romania. The deep faith of this mother of eight demanded action.

The article told of a New Yorker who started a soup kitchen and clothing source, to help these street children. Monica called to get a volunteer spot to go to Romania then started collecting money and supplies to get herself ready for the trip. She left on September 15, 2001 to start her two-week assignment, flying out on the first plane to leave the Twin Cities airport after 9/11.

Monica made soup and served it from a truck, pouring it into every kind of container that kids brought in, even cut off plastic liter pop bottles. She visited a 12 ft. square space in the sewers where 22 children slept. She also met with the Roman Catholic Archbishop Ioan Robu. The scheduled five minute appointment turned into 45 and she learned of his total frustration and sorrow over the orphans' dire situation.

One of the best things to happen to Monica when she returned to St. Matthew's was the enthusiasm of the Men's Club to help. Now one of the Lenten Friday Fish Fries is dedicated to the Romanian Orphans and an annual collection is taken during Sunday services. Since 2002 over \$24,000 has been sent from St. Matthew's to purchase such things as kitchen appliances, clothes, and food.

In the fall of 2006 parishioner, Joe Stevens, placed a notice in the parish bulletin soliciting people to travel to Romania. Many meetings and e-mails culminated in Bob and Judy Denardo, Rick and Barb Kraft, Becky Montgomery and Dave Haley, and Joe and Florida Stevens planning the trip. Becky Montgomery contacted Fr. George Oanca, the pastor of St. Mary's Romanian Church here in St. Paul and his wife Christina became their translator. These nine left St. Paul on May 22, 2007.

They spent 5 days visiting Pro Vita Association, which provides homes for young orphans in a family



Parishioners are welcomed to the Catholic Orphanage in Campina, Romania. Director, Sister Eugenia, is second from right, back row. Translator and guide, Christina Oanca, front row on right.



Roman Catholic Bishop Cornel Damien met with our parishioners in Bucharest.

setting and provides for over 200 children taken in by surrounding foster families. Pro Vita helps them with money for food and clothes. The St. Matthew's group delivered cash to purchase desperately needed building material to repair flood damage and helped rebuild flood walls in the area.

They also met with Roman Catholic Bishop Cornel Damien in Bucharest and presented him with money to help orphanages in Bucharest and Campina. The group returned filled with the satisfaction of having fulfilled the mission of the Community of St. Matthew. They were indeed a visible expression of God's love. For more information about this story, contact Joe Stevens.

Help Us Find 50 New Students Invite Your Friends to Our Open House

Alumni & Friends of St. Matthew's has set an ambitious goal to expand enrollment by 50 more students for next year. If we found just 25 new families who want their children to be a part of the St. Matthew's community, we'd probably meet that goal.

Open House, which kicks off Catholic Schools Week, is a great opportunity to get started. Invite your friends, neighbors & relatives who may be considering a new school to come and check St. Matthew's out.

The high quality of our education and our commitment to helping children live out Catholic values make St. Matthew's a school worth visiting. The \$150,000 scholarship fund Alumni & Friends is raising means enrollment is not just for families who can afford tuition. St. Matthew's is for families of all income levels who want the best for their children.

The Open House will be at St. Matthew's School on **Sunday, January 27th from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Teachers from all grades will be available. Homemade cinnamon rolls will be served outside the Kindergarten room.

Kindergarten Roundup Coming Thursday, February 21st at 9 a.m. & 7 p.m.

It's a chance for families to get detailed information about the Kindergarten program, the St. Matthew's community and some preliminary information about financial aid. Spread the word!



Excellence. E-X-C-E-L-L-E-N-C-E.

St. Matthew's will renew an old tradition on January 24th when it stages a school-wide Spelling Bee in the gym. Students in grades 4-6th will compete to be one of 12 finalists to appear before the school. The school-wide winner will then have the honor of participating in the Archdiocesan Spelling Bee held on February 2nd in Vermillion, Minnesota. The winner of the Archdiocesan Spelling Bee will receive a \$100 savings bond.

Why bother with a Spelling Bee in the days of computer spell-check? The event organizer, 4th grade teacher, Ms. Denise Felitto, thinks there are lots of reasons. "It gets students excited about spelling and gives them a chance to show off their spelling talents. We want to instill in our students that spelling matters because it is critical to reading and writing effectively."

If you'd like to come to the St. Matthew's Spelling Bee on January 24th or would like to go to Vermillion to cheer on the St. Matthew's Spelling Champ, call the school office for more information.

Join us for Chess Club Sunday – February 3rd

Looking for a break from football on Superbowl Sunday? Come and play chess with some students! Catholic Schools Week will conclude with an open invitation to come and play chess with members of St. Matthew's Chess Club after 10:30 a.m. mass in the social hall. You can also challenge Mr. Diaz, our instructor, who will take on up to 25 people at once in a simultaneous match. So whether you're an experienced player or a beginner, bring a friend and join the fun!



Mrs. Marxer,

continued from page 1

1992 when she was asked to fill in as principal. She served as principal for 1½ years but didn't seek the permanent position. Joyce said, "I didn't want to be an administrator. I prefer teaching." In 1994, after handing over her duties as principal, she became the 3rd grade teacher and has been there ever since.

Teaching the Next Generation

In her current class of 15 students, she's taught the parents of over half of the kids. "It makes it easier when you know the parents and they know you," Joyce observes. But having taught so many students over the years also presents its challenges. "When I run into former students they usually say, 'you don't know me, do you?' And I say, 'Give me a hint!'"

When asked how her teaching style has changed over the years, she points out that education has changed a lot. "Expectations are higher now than they were. 3rd graders learn multiplication and are expected to know their times tables. We used to teach that in 6th grade."

She also likes that teaching has opened up and she's free to work with the kids in different ways. "Used to be, kids just sat in their desks all day and didn't move. Now, kids can get up and do different things, work in different areas, sit on the floor, move around. Which is good. Kids need to get up and go. It improves the learning experience."

Service Project to Elders

If you really want to get Joyce talking, ask her about the 3rd graders Service Project. For the past eight years, she has brought her 3rd grade students for weekly visits to Wilder Nursing Home across from the school on Humboldt Avenue. Every Tuesday afternoon, the 3rd graders spend one hour visiting the elders who are residents. They play games, sing songs and make art projects with them. Joyce says, "The elders love when the children come. Even the ones who are cranky still come out. They don't miss it. And the children have done a wonderful job."

Joyce's commitment to this project runs deep. "I think kids tend to be afraid of old people in a way. In part, because they're not with them very much. But it's good for them to be around elders. To talk to them and listen to them."



Joyce, Joe, Jill Marxer Vinge, Peter Vinge, Jeff Marxer holding Abby and Stacy Marxer holding Natalia.

Teaching Skills for Life

Beyond academics, Joyce Marxer says what she most wants to impart to her students is the ability to work together. She observes that her classroom can be a mix of students from very different backgrounds and life experiences. That ability to work together and help each other out is an important life skill. And she says it starts with playing games. "Anything you can do with kids that they don't think is learning, they love it."

Every year she teaches her students how to play the dice game, Bunco. And every year the 3rd – 5th graders compete in a Bunco Tournament. "They have no choice who they play with. The game decides. And the kids learn from that. Whether it's a game, or math or reading class, they learn how to get along and help each other out."

Next time you're at the school, please thank Joyce Marxer for 30 years of outstanding service to the school and the community. And if you're a former student, remember to give her a hint.

Alumni & Friends Reach 40% of Goal

\$63,180 raised to date

Since announcing our goal to raise \$150,000 for scholarships, the total amount contributed has doubled, as has the number of contributors. You, too can join this effort. Your donation will help St. Matthew's continue its tradition of providing a Catholic education to students on the West Side whose families may not be able to afford it. To make a contribution, use the envelope provided in the newsletter. To find out more about Alumni & Friends, contact Roy Ferber '59, Joe Cullen '78, Jerry Sexton '44, or John Riehle '57 at the Parish Center.

Vogel Family Involved in Parish/School since 1934

SUBMITTED BY JIM VOGEL '56

St. Matthew's Parish was much more than just a parish to our family. It was my dad's employment from some time in 1934 to October 29 of 1964 as the maintenance man. He died at St. Matthew's, on the job in the



"workshop" in the basement of the old church, of a heart attack. Dad was also an usher and belonged to the Holy Name Society and Men's Club.



Peter Vogel and Mary Vogel.

To my mother, Mary, it was her place of daily worship for as long as I can remember. She was active in the Rosary Society and a daily Mass attendee. She even was a substitute teacher in the school on a few occasions, as she held a teachers degree from Mankato State Teachers College. She passed away in her sleep on April 17th, 1968, just two days after St. Matthew's Church fire. We still wonder if that tragic event didn't have something to do with her sudden

death. Her funeral had to be held at the "old" St. Michael's Church, (it's good we didn't have to tell our mother that.)

To us kids, all nine of us, it was our place of education. All nine attended St. Matthew's School through at least eight grade, some through 10th grade. The boys were all altar boys from mid-grade school through high school and we were all on school patrol. We helped my dad each day after school with the sweeping of the classrooms. In the summer we were "hired" as part time help for the the task of stripping and varnishing the hard-wood floors in the Church, the downstairs Chapel and all the school classrooms. This was an annual necessity and probably was not optional for us to say we would not participate. From my oldest brother, John, who started school in 1936 to me, the youngest, who graduated from 8th grade in 1956, someone from our family attended St. Matthew's School.

Most of my sisters were married from St. Matthew's Church. One sister, Clare is still a member of St. Matthew's Parish. Several of my sisters played for a dance band that provided music for several Parish



Vogel children from oldest to youngest: John, twins Catherine & Ann, Connie, Clare, Marian, Alice, Joe and Jim.

dances in the late 1940's and early 1950's. We had a very musical family. Dad played the violin and banjo, most of us kids played the piano and several also played band instruments including the saxophone, coronet, bassoon and guitar. We also participated in many Parish Talent Shows and Recitals.

By the way, we lived just two blocks from St. Matthew's on Hall & Isabel. So you see, it was much more than just belonging to St. Matthew's Parish. It was more like a way of life.

Classmates from '39 Celebrate 60th Anniversary

SUBMITTED BY BOB & LOIS (GERMAIN) WALLNER

We were born, baptized and all sacraments were made in St. Matthew's Church. We went all through grade school there and Lois stayed for two years of high school (no four year high there.) Bob went to Cretin. We met again after WWII at a Sunday Ice Cream social there and married one year later on November 21, 1947 at St. Matthew's. We give thanksgiving for 60 years of a happy marriage.

Bob and Lois have 4 children, 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



From the Editor

Where Have All Our Alumni Gone? Help Us Find Them

We've heard from those of you are getting more than one copy of the newsletter. We appreciate your letting us know and thank you for trying to help us save postage. We're trying to work the kinks out of our mailing list and if you've worked with mailing lists before, you know it isn't easy.

But we also want to hear about those alumni who are NOT receiving the Good News from St. Matthew. At best, we are probably only reaching half of our living alumni. So if you know people we're missing who'd like

to receive it, let us know. Check in with your brothers and sisters, cousins and former classmates to see if they're on the list. We don't want to leave anyone out.

And if you're getting an extra copy or two of the newsletter, go ahead and share them with a friend, drop them at a coffee shop or post a copy on a community bulletin board. After all, who couldn't use a little more Good News in their life?

Maggie Lee
Editor

Student Service Projects

At St. Matthew's, students not only learn Catholic values, they live them. During the school year, every student in school will take part in a Service Project that will emphasize the importance of acting on Christian values and beliefs.

4th Graders Collect Pop-Tops for Charity

This year, 4th grade students will be collecting pop-tops to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House Charity. From January through the end of March, they will collect the metal pull-tabs on the top of aluminum cans, then turn them over to Ronald McDonald House who will recycle them and receive 57 cents per pound. The Ronald McDonald House provides a place for families of seriously ill children to stay while the children are receiving treatment at nearby hospitals.

The students liked this project because, by asking for pop-tops, people would be giving something they already have. **You can help by bringing your pop-tops in to school or church and depositing them in containers the students have provided.**



4th grade class collected pop-tops for the Ronald McDonald House Charity.

2nd Graders — Warm Hands, Warm Hearts

The 2nd grade students completed their 7th annual Hat & Mitten Collection for families in need. For their Service Project, the 2nd graders encouraged students in every grade to bring in donations and they advertised their drive with posters and announcements. By Christmas vacation they had collected 9 bags and were still counting. All of the donated items are brought to Joseph's Coats, a free store that supports families in St. Paul.



2nd grade class collected hats and mittens for families in need.



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www.st-matts.org

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St. Paul, MN 55107

Pastor: Fr. Steve Adrian

Parish Office: 651-224-9793

Weekend Liturgies:

Saturday - 5 p.m.

Sunday - 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

www.st-matts.org

EVENTS calendar

ST. MATTHEW'S SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE — January 27
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

METROPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA – February 3 at 3 p.m.
This community orchestra will perform a FREE Family Concert in the church. After the concert, children are welcome to meet the musicians and try out some of the percussion instruments.

SUPERBOWL PARTY — February 3 at 5 p.m.

The Men's Club invites everyone to watch the big game in the Social Hall on a REALLY big screen. There's lots of games and food for kids too so bring the whole family. The cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 per kid ages 13-18, and free for kids under the age of 13. Doors open at 4:30 p.m.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES — February 6

Masses with ash distribution at 6:45 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. Prayer Services with ashes 9:00 a.m. with school, 12:15 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. with Religious Education.

LENTEN FISH FRY — Fridays, February 8 – March 14

Regular serving time is from 5-7:30 p.m. with a Senior Citizen Special from 4-5 p.m. The Fish Fries will be co-sponsored by the Rosary Society, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Home & School. We also dedicate a portion of our profits to the Street Children of Bucharest.

MEN'S CLUB MEETING — February 13 at 8 p.m. in the social hall

CLASS OF '44 BREAKFAST — February 6 at 9 a.m. at Joseph's Restaurant

Class breakfast held the first Wednesday of every even numbered month.

CLASS OF '57 QUARTERLY BREAKFAST — February 16 at 9:00 a.m. at the Capital View.

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP — February 21 at 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.