

## **Christmas pageant resurrected**

Written by Carol Pomeday  
Thursday, 23 December 2010 17:14

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### **Religion students put on program at St. Mary's with director Mary Navis**

There was no Christmas program at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Lake Church last year because the school closed in June.

On Sunday, Mary Navis, volunteer youth music minister, resurrected the pageant with children in the Sunday morning Catholic Religion Education classes portraying Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, wise men, townspeople and a variety of animals.

They used costumes and props left in the school, which is now the parish office and used for religion programs.

The pews were filled with parents, grandparents, siblings and parish members.

For the finale, the children led the audience in singing "Silent Night."

Navis said many people thanked her, saying it put them into the true Christmas spirit, which is what she wanted.

"Now that the school is closed, I wanted the kids to still have the opportunity to put on a Christmas pageant in our church," she said.

"The parish loses out when there isn't a pageant. It's good for everybody to have a heart-warming Christmas."

Organizing 80 children from kindergartners to sixth-graders was chaotic at times, but worth the effort, Navis said. She went from classroom to classroom Sunday mornings to work on songs for about five minutes with each class.

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“We started learning songs in November, but we were only able to do the talking parts the last two weeks. I wasn’t sure what to expect,” she said.

“They did just fabulous. I’m so proud of them. Only one kid got sick and couldn’t make it.”

Navis, who plays second violin with the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra and teaches private violin lessons, grew up singing in St. Mary’s choir with her parents Pat and Richard Uselding, and often played the violin at Masses during Christmas, Easter and other special occasions.

She has sung for Christmas Eve midnight Masses since she was 8.

“Now, my children sing with me at midnight Mass,” she said. “It’s a magical time.”

Four years ago, Navis formed St. Mary’s youth choir for children ages 8 to 18. It has grown to 20 members who sing and play instruments at youth Masses on the fourth Sunday of each month.

“Music is a gift God gave me, and it’s something I can give to others,” Navis said.

“The kids are the future of the parish. They need something now to hang onto. Hopefully, they will enjoy the pageant and choir enough that they will continue. If they don’t do it as kids, they won’t do it as adults.”

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