

Helping parishioners hear the Good News

Sauk City parish installs system for people with hearing aids

BY KAY RINGELSTETTER
For the Catholic Herald

SAUK CITY — Sauk City has recently added their first hearing looped establishment — St. Aloysius Church, part of Divine Mercy Parish.

The hearing-impaired parishioners at St. Aloysius are delighted and invite all to come and listen.

Hearing more

The hearing loop allows all with enabled T-coils in their hearing aids or cochlear implants to hear excellent audio clarity reception which is free of background noise and echo caused by sound reflections from all speakers in the church.

Each listener receives personalized sound customized by their own hearing aids to address their own hearing loss.

For those who do not wear hearing aids or have T-coils in their aids, personal loop listener assistive devices are available.

Bob Henseler shared, “I didn’t know what to expect, since I had never had the opportunity to use the feature built into my hearing aids before. The more I listened, the clearer the sound became, and I could hear all of Father’s sermon, as well as all speech through the speaker system! Nice to finally have the hearing loop available!”

In addition to the entire church being looped, there is also a separate hearing loop in the confessional with the same amazing results.

Mike Mair owner of My Hearing Loop, LLC, and his team installed the hearing loops and offered exceptional customer service.

Mike was readily available for questions and provided excellent advice from initial consultation through the final installation.

Steve Koehler said, “My hearing aids were greatly improved by the addition of the T-coil to work with the hearing loop at church. It definitely clarifies, redirects, and amplifies



The hearing loop’s universal T-coil symbol required on all doors entering a building with the system. (Contributed image)

sounds. Using the hearing loop will surely make my involvement in Mass more meaningful!”

Introducing the hearing loop

An open house was held in the St. Aloysius gym to introduce the hearing loop to parishioners.

Present were My Hearing Loop owner Mike Mair, and Nhu Y Tran, Au.D., CCC-A, audiologist at Sauk Prairie Hospital.

Mike explained the loop system, and all were introduced to the loop listener assistive devices.

Dr. Tran described the benefits of the T-coil in the hearing aid and answered questions.

The program was steamed live for all and can still be accessed at <https://go.divinemercy-parish.org/loop>

Sandy Fuchs shared, “Not needing hearing aids, I could always hear Father during Mass ok. However, after using the new loop listener devices provided at the church and connecting with the hearing loop, everything was clearer and more pronounced. I was really impressed with the quality of the sound. We encourage everyone to try it, especially those with hearing impairments.”

The Apostolate for Persons with Disabilities provided a generous grant towards the hearing loop.

In spite of COVID-19, parishioners



John Hilfer and Mark Schell, from My Hearing Loop, work to install the hearing loop at St. Aloysius Church in Sauk City. (Contributed photo)

generously and quickly donated the remainder of funding needed after explanations and encouragement from Fr. Miguel Galvez.

How it works

The receptive copper coil in a hearing aid is known as a T-coil because it was first used to transmit audio through a magnetic field in a landline telephone.

A hearing loop installation consists of various types of copper cable and contains a low level of electric current that creates a magnetic field throughout the looped space.

Audio is picked up by the T-coil in a hearing aid, a cochlear implant processor, or a loop listener.

Hearing loops are safe for everyone, including those with implanted medical devices.

Extensive studies have been done, and the magnetic field generated by the hearing loop is always much less than the earth’s magnetic field and definitely far less than the fields generated by the electrical appliances that are in our homes.

Viola Gruber, who is 94, is deaf in one ear and wears a hearing aid in

the other.

She had experienced great difficulty in hearing at Mass.

When Father spoke into his wireless microphone after the open house, one of her first comments to him was “It was money well spent”.

She later shared, “The sound was nice and clear, and I am so happy the church has it”.

Although hearing loops are common throughout Western Europe, the movement wasn’t launched in the USA until 2010.

Today, loops can be found throughout the United States, but advocacy continues to push for more and more loops as a way of creating hearing friendly communities.

The National Institutes of Health estimates that 12.7 percent of Americans 12 years or under have bilateral hearing loss, and this increases to 20.3 percent when also including individuals with unilateral hearing loss.

The Sauk Prairie area now has its first hearing loop, and hopefully more will follow as they are becoming common in health care, businesses, and places of worship.

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Telephone: 608-821-3070 Fax: 1-608-709-7612 Email address: info@madisoncatholicherald.org

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