

# RELAY FOR LIFE

May 17/18, 2008

Luminaria Ceremony

9:00 p.m.

Speaker Pastor Bob Rasmus

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Urbana, IL

Good Evening. My name is Bob Rasmus. I am one of the pastors of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Urbana. This is my fifth Relay for Life and it is wonderful see so many people year after year, joining in this community effort.

All of us come, don't we, for our own personal reasons, with our own personal stories. Some with stories of triumph, some with stories of loss and sadness, some with a measure of uncertainty. But all of those stories are under girded by, first of all, hope . . . . hope that we together can change things, can make a difference. Hope that what we know now is not what we will know, and hope that what we do now will affect forever the lives of millions. So, we come with hope.

All of our stories are fueled by love, love for friends and family, for parents and family, brothers and sisters, spouses, love for life, life for present days and a future that beckons. We come here with love.

All of us have come here to keep a promise. That we will not forget. That we will not give up. That we will remember. And that we will continue in hope and love to work and to believe. We come to keep a promise.

As we bring together our personal stories, our personal convictions, our personal energy, power grows and change happens. The common gifts of hope and love and memory bring us together, bind us together, now not only with those whom we love, with whom we have journeyed, not only with those we have lost, but with one another, here tonight. And it is these shared gifts and convictions that the future turns and change happens.

These gifts are all around us tonight. If you look into the face of the person next to you and you see one of the gifts of this gathering, it is the gift of hope, and it is confirmed in the face of your neighbor, and it now joins yours. Look again and you will see in that same face the gift and fire of love, and now it joins yours. Take that person's hand and you will feel the power that hope and love and memory bring, and now it joins yours.

These stories now bound together in one common voice and purpose is the power is what is afoot among us tonight. It is what draws us and drives us, steadily and persistently, forward as we love and hope and remember together to find a cure.

Thank you for your story. Thank you for being here tonight.