



Autumn - 2014

Die Gute Nachricht

Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Matthäusgemeinde

The Good News

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Dear Members and Friends,

„Herr: es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr groß.
Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren,
und auf den Fluren laß die Winde los.“

Auszug aus „Herbsttag“ von Rainer Maria Rilke

‘After the summer's yield, Lord, it is time
to let your shadow lengthen on the sundials
and in the pastures let the rough winds fly.’

From ‘A Day in Autumn’ by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Mary Kinzie

I had to learn the above poem by heart in the 7th grade, and it is still one of my favorite poems. I love autumn. Or should I say, I used to love autumn.

Something that I dearly miss here in California is the radical change of the seasons. Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring are pretty much alike here; well, it gets a little colder and wetter during winter, but we usually don't experience extreme weather changes in this part of California.

The area I am from in Northern Germany is fairly moderate in climate. Really hot summers and really cold and snowy winters are rare. Yet every season is distinct. In fall, the colors of the trees are vibrant. Leaves burst with a fire of late life before tumbling to the ground, still beautiful in death.

And then come the cold and mostly clammy days of late fall and winter with its long, long periods of darkness. November is often referred to in Germany as the “most depressing month of the year” because of its grayness and the numerous commemorative holy days on which we show our reverence for the dead. In fact, immigrants brought these traditions to other parts of the world, and the German ‘Volkstrauertag’ will be commemorated in the Bay Area once more, like every year.

I miss the season of fall in Germany. I miss the gray and clammy days. I miss the solemn and slightly depressed mood. It might sound weird to you, but I do not get homesick around Christmas, but in the fall. I miss the moods of the different seasons. After the high energy of summer with its long days and many outdoor activities, I need a break. I need a time of retreating to the house, preferably with a crackling fire and a cup of hot cocoa in my hand. I need a time for quiet reflection, meditation and prayer. I need the presence of death in nature to make my peace with human frailty – and with God.

Since I came to California in the fall (sic!) of 1997, I often had the feeling that death is somewhat absent in this society. Graveyards are often hidden away in industrial cities and remote hillsides. The media and advertisements proclaim eternal youth as the ideal of living. Most of our elderly die in a nursing home, far away from the busy and bustling life of society. We don't talk about our life-threatening ailments, may they be of

physical or mental nature. Is it a mere zest for life? Is it denial? Is it the inmost fear that most of us carry around, the fear of dying? Is it the lack of the experience of radical cycles of death and new life in nature?

In the lush climate of central California, where you can pick the last strawberries of the long lasting summer season in November, we experience nature in some sort of uniformity. Life flows on, one day just like the other, under the golden sun. It is hard to think of death on a bright, sunny day.

Fall is a season of endings – the season of harvest, the season of the last burst of life before dying. But it is also a season to rejoice – to rejoice in the beauty of the many colors. To rejoice in the knowledge, that new, fresh life will enter the world in spring. To rejoice in the marvelous example for death and rebirth, a rebirth that we have been promised through God.

I am your pastor. I know about human fears and sorrows. I have been with the ill and the dying and done my best to be of spiritual help to people during difficult times. I encourage you to share your thoughts and fears about dying, death, and resurrection with me. This fall, this autumn may be a good time to reflect on our human frailty and God's promises – together.

Pastor Kerstin Weidmann



To all who helped make the service and reception on the day of my installation as pastor of St. Matthew's so very special: thank you so very much! I enjoyed the festivities immensely; I also heard many good comments from people who were visiting that day. May God bless our joint ministry in this place and through this church.

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Daylight Savings Time ends November 2.



Welcome

Ms Erika Spaet, a Parish Teaching Student from PLTS, was installed at the morning service on September 14. She will be with us until May 2015. Ms Miriam Schmidle, a Deaconess in Training from the Synod of Bavaria, will be working with Pr Kerstin beginning in mid-October.

Message from the Congregation's President

October 6, 2014

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

As we now find ourselves entering the fall season, not withstanding the recent high temperatures we have been experiencing that are typical of early fall in the Bay Area, let us remember to give thanks for our many blessings as we begin planning for the busy holiday season, which seems to come around more quickly with every passing year.



As you are likely aware, by far the biggest event since our last edition of **The Good News** in mid-August, was the installation of our new full-time pastor, the **Rev. Kerstin Weidmann**, and that is very good news indeed! We are thrilled to have her with us to help guide our historic church with its unique history into an exciting, sustainable, and long-lasting future. The Council and Call Committee feel very fortunate with her acceptance of this challenging position of leadership in our congregation. She brings with her a warm and welcoming personality, years of experience, a perfect command of both the German and English languages, excellent organizational skills, and a desire to more fully reach out and strengthen our ties to the German speaking community of the Bay

Area. Since her arrival on July 1, she has been getting to know our members, friends, and the various German organizations, as well as our immediate church neighbors. Once this is accomplished, she will undoubtedly be bringing and instituting some new programs and ideas in order to position our church for its future role and mission. There will likely be some changes, which we must embrace, as this process moves forward. Change is not always easy, but is often necessary for growth and even preservation.

Pastor Kerstin was installed the afternoon of September 14 in a very nice and inspiring service led by Pastor Susan Strouse, Dean of the San Francisco Conference of our Sierra Pacific Synod (ELCA) and assisted by our new teaching student from the PLTS in Berkeley, Erika Spaet. The sermon was delivered by her good friend, Pastor Diane Bowers of St. James Lutheran Church in San Leandro. The Bishop's office of the Synod was represented by the Rev. Katy Grindberg. Pr. Kerstin's husband, Rev. Fred Weidmann, a minister at Hillcrest Congregational Church (UCC) in Pleasant Hill, and her son, Jonathan Barnes, also participated in the service along with various other clergy, both from our own conference and her former East Bay conference. I counted fifteen clergy in attendance. Of special significance for her, was her father's ability to attend while visiting from Germany. Special music was provided by our own accomplished musicians: our organist, David DeAngelis and our vocal leader, Sam Palmer. We thank all who participated and contributed in making this very special event a resounding success.

The installation service was followed by an enjoyable reception in our social hall. This was coordinated by Ulrike Hodges and Frieda Schönach with flowers provided by Dorothy Praeger. We also thank them for their time and effort.

As far as other news, the scaffolding from the church front was removed on September 11. This painting project is now complete with the exception of a new wooden display case, which Juergen Fehr is having made by a cabinetmaker to match the style of our old one, which had deteriorated beyond repair. The polycarbonate window coverings over the stained glass windows on the church front were also replaced. Our church now presents a clean and attractive facade to busy 16th Street.



We also had the pastor's office, the sacristy, the hallway behind the altar, the conference room, and the women's bathroom repainted.



The annual church picnic at the Oakland Friends of Nature facility was held on September 7 under a blue sky and perfect weather. A good time was had by all who attended.

The council and a special committee composed of Juergen Fehr, Alois Scholz, Ulrike Hodges, Annett Wagner, Pr. Kerstin, and Bill Bremer have been dealing with the desire of KinderHaus to increase their enrollment. We now have had several meetings with their board/parent group. To accomplish their goal, they need to have two additional and more readily accessible bathrooms for their students. This would also be a big benefit for our church, but will require the reconfiguration of the social hall. We have been through several proposals and have now agreed in principle to a possible plan. The details, followed by a question and answer period, will be presented at an informational meeting after the church service on **Sunday, October 19**. This major work will be paid for by KinderHaus, but will still require the approval of our voting members at a special congregational meeting currently scheduled for **November 2**. Voting members will be receiving postcards to officially notify them of this special meeting. Please plan on attending these two meetings.

Mrs. Elizabeth Karp, our church secretary, continues to work on and fine-tune our new website. I encourage you to make use of this valuable resource. Likewise, Pr. Kerstin has been updating and managing our Facebook web page. Recent photos as well as her sermons will soon be posted on both websites for those unable to view and hear them in person. And once again, while visiting these two increasingly important websites, along with 'Yelp', please remember to 'like' us, as this raises the church's profile on these sites, which is an aid in attracting new and especially younger members.

As promised, the Council and Pr. Kerstin have agreed to re-institute our previous worship schedule beginning on the first Sunday in November. The first Sunday of each month will be a combined English/German service at 11:00 AM followed by a potluck meal. The remaining Sundays will consist of an English service at 9:30 AM and a German service at 11:00 AM. Communion will continue to be offered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Please make this transition a success by attending, if at all possible. The church is now starting to plan our holiday events. Quite a few musical events are being scheduled, both for added income and our own enjoyment. Your support for these groups would be greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I would again like to thank all of you who made these various undertakings possible with the generous giving of your valuable time, energy, and financial support. And please support Pr. Kerstin as she begins her journey with us. Your continued resources will be needed as she cannot bring the church to a successful future by herself! God's most gracious blessings to you all.

Respectfully submitted,

William H. Bremer, M.D., Council President

October

1 Lian Siem
6 Jana Thalheim
8 Michelle Berner
12 Walter Elliott
13 Dorothy Praeger
17 Elizabeth Karp
22 Gerda Beisel
22 Barbara Fehr
25 Ilse H. Silbermann
26 Bruce Leibrock
26 Eli Angelich

November

7 Verena Tent-Braucher
18 Elsie Kehl
Alfred M. Silbermann
25 Ursula Younger
29 Jaden Berner



December

1 Bill Bremer
2 Lore Sternberg
6 Ilse Carnes
Hans Kleinlein
7 Edith Schober
Hans-Peter Raub, Jr.
8 Hansueli Surber
13 Elisabeth Lahman
15 Norma Hahn
19 Jutta Leibrock
23 Richard Gutknecht
24 Claus Hildebrandt
26 Annett Wagner
30 Elfriede Werth
31 Fred Weidmann

We apologize to any members and friends whose birthdays have been omitted. Please contact the Office if you wish to have your birthday included in future bulletins and newsletters. Thank you.

New Service Schedule

Beginning in **November** Sunday services will return to the previous schedule:
First Sunday of the month: **11:00 a.m. - Bilingual** service followed by Potluck Meal and
Birthday celebration
All other Sundays: **9:30 a.m. – English service**
11:00 a.m. – German service

God's Work - Our Hands

On November 16th, the people of St. Matthew's are invited to help with the assembly of homeless kits, to be passed on to the San Francisco Night Ministry team. We need the following items to put in these kits:

Travel-size toiletries:

Toothpaste
Mouth Wash
Shampoo
Liquid Soap
Deodorant
Hand Sanitizer

Tube Socks

Gloves (simple ones from dollar store are just fine)
Knit hats (again, dollar stores may be a good place to find those)
Combs
Washcloths

High Protein Snacks, like individual size tuna and crackers and protein bars

If you want to donate some of these items, please bring them to church by Sunday, November 9

May God bless the work of our hands!

Mark your Calendars!

October 19 – 11:30 a.m. – Informational meeting re: KH remodeling proposal

November 2 – 11:00 a.m. – Bilingual service with Potluck meal and Birthday celebration

12:30 p.m. – Congregational Meeting to vote on KH remodeling proposal

November 9 (and following) 9:30 a.m. – English service

11:00 a.m. – German service

November 16 – 'God's Work - Our Hands' Sunday. Following service: Assemble kits for homeless

November 30 – Damenchor Liederkrantz / Freundschaft Liederkrantz Advent Concert – 2:00 p.m.

December 6 – German Christmas Fair: organized by KinderHaus and co-sponsored by St. Matthew's

December 21 – Christmas Carol Sing-a-long

December 24 – Christ Eve Services: German candlelight service – 4:00 p.m.

English candlelight service – 6:00 p.m.

December 25 – Christmas Day Service – Bilingual service – 10:00 a.m.; Freundschaft Liederkrantz, guest choir

January 24, 2015 – Sixth annual Crab Feed

On Wednesdays in Advent (**December 3, 10, 17**) Pr. Kerstin plans to offer special times of devotion and Bible study. Stay tuned for more information!

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