



Lent 2016

**Die Gute Nachricht**  
Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Matthäusgemeinde

**The Good News**  
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Dear Members and Friends,

“For God so loved the world that he gave God’s only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” John 3:16, NRSV

The year 2016 is a remarkable year in several regards; first of all, it’s a leap year, which means that we will be given an extra day this month of February. Secondly, Easter is really early this year, March 27 (a reminder: the date of Easter shifts because it is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox on March 21). This means Lent starts really early this year, too; we will celebrate Ash Wednesday on February 10th. And because Lent starts this early, it will be one of those rare occasions when Valentine’s Day falls into the season of Lent.

We all have seen the typical displays in the stores for the upcoming Valentine’s Day: red and pink candies, chocolates, cards, and decorations. Restaurants ask for reservations for this special day, since everybody seems to take out their sweetheart on February 14. Valentine’s Day is about luscious love, it’s about indulging the special loved one (or special loved ones). I have to admit that Valentine’s Day during Lent to me feels a little out of place – isn’t Lent all about restraint, repentance, and fasting?

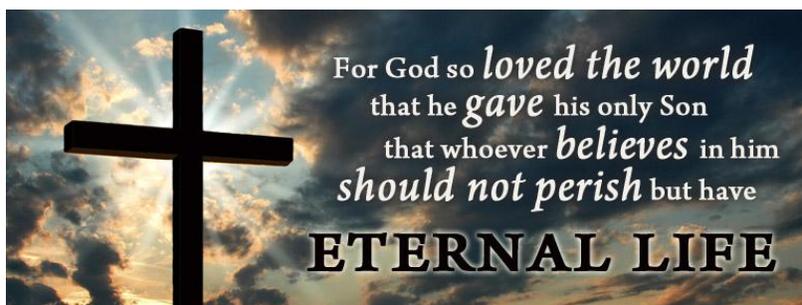
Yet there is an odd connection between Lent and Valentine’s Day is: love and passion. Actually the German name for Lent is “Passionszeit” (“Time of Passion” - remember the “Passion Plays” of Oberammergau?).

Many seem to have forgotten that a certain St. Valentine lent his name to the feast day we still celebrate today. Actually there are three St. Valentines who lived and died around the same time; one was a Roman bishop and martyr who, according to legend, defied the decree of Emperor Claudius II that no young men should be married. Claudius needed the young men for his armies and did not

want them to be bound to a wife and family and lose their zest for battle. Bishop Valentine of Rome (again, this is a legend) continued to marry young Roman

couples – and was executed on February 14, 273 A.D. for his defiance against the Roman emperor.

Another legend pertaining to a different Valentine in the Roman Empire states that he was jailed for his beliefs and started an exchange of letters (some say love letters) with his jailor’s daughter, the last one supposedly signed with “your Valentine”.



Both legends explain how St. Valentine became the patron saint of all lovers. However, what scholars know for sure about those Valentines is that they dedicated their lives to God, taking care of those on the edge of (Roman) society, defying all empirical laws and decrees, which were opposed to Christ's radical law of love, grace, and forgiveness. It is this kind of love and passion, a love and passion for God and their neighbors that doesn't fear death, which made them saints in the first place.



And it is the same kind of love and passion we encounter during the Lenten season as we remember the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. God so passionately (and one meaning of passion is "pain") loved the world that God chose to come and live among us. God loves the world so much that he embraces especially those who are or feel lost and broken. God loves the world with so much painful love that he died an excruciating death so that we may be set free from death.

May our Lenten Season (and that includes Valentine's Day) be full of love and passion – a passion that doesn't only touch our sweethearts and those close to us whom we love and cherish, but a passion which includes all those who are beloved in God's eyes.

*Pastor Kerstin*



Dear Community,

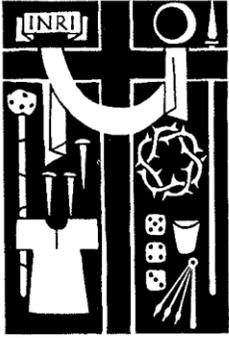
Thank you SO much to those of you who have already donated to our socks and underwear drive!! As the rains continue, the need continues for socks and underwear for our homeless community members. There is an ongoing socks and underwear drive, with a new deadline of March 1st. Thank you in advance for all of your help and support! Your generosity matters and is felt deeply by those in need.

**Julianne Carroll, MA**  
**Lutheran Social Services**

**Donations may be dropped off at St. Matthew's**

## Council President's Message

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,



As we have now entered a new year and the church and you have now made it through yet another busy and joyful Christmas season, from which I hope you have by now fully recovered, we are about to enter the more contemplative and quiet Lenten season. Easter arrives early this year on March 27, so Ash Wednesday will occur on February 10, only a few weeks away! We hope you are able to attend our services during this special time of year.

The church and our Pastor Kerstin have been busy since my last report to you. Of special note: at the annual general assembly of DELKINA (German Evangelical Lutheran Conference in North America) held in

October in San Diego, Pr. Kerstin was elected as its new vice president. She also delivered remarks at the annual Volkstrauertag gathering at the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno on November 15. In addition she also led special church services on Totensonntag and Nikolaustag. Several baptisms were also performed with more coming up soon. The Pastor also attends various social/cultural meetings and celebrations as a representative of our church, thus making our presence in the community more visible. Her weekly sermons are also posted on both our website and Facebook and I encourage you to read them if you are unable to attend in person on Sundays; they are always meaningful and contain much food for thought.



The finance committee under the expert guidance of Juergen Fehr met on December 2 to prepare the 2016 church budget, which will be presented for discussion and adoption at the **Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on February 28** and we urge you to attend if possible, so mark your calendars! Our Church Treasurer and also Secretary, Elizabeth Karp, has both the office and the church bookkeeping under control and working more efficiently; the Council greatly appreciates her dedication and thanks her for her excellent work at these very important positions.



Other recent events include the annual Damenchor Christmas Concert on December 6, and the Freundschaft Liederkranz Christmas party on December 14. The Golden Gate Men's Chorus held five well-attended winter concerts between December 10th and 15th after beautifully decorating our church for the holidays.

The Pastor and I have also attended meetings of neighborhood churches sponsored by the city concerning weekend median parking on Dolores and Guerrero Streets; this has become a very contentious issue in our increasingly secular city.



As you are aware, the church recently embarked on a fundraising campaign to renovate our historic pipe organ. I am very happy to announce that our goal has been attained and the preliminary restoration work has begun. The Schoenstein Organ Co. has now removed one rank of pipes, which they will use as a template to build a new set of pipes that will replicate the original. It is anticipated that this work will begin in earnest at the end of April and be completed by mid-May during which time the organ will be out of service. We wish to thank all of those who gave most generously to make this project possible. Any further contributions to this fund will be used for the organ's regular future maintenance, which unfortunately has been somewhat neglected in the recent past.

The annual Crab Feed, our only regular fundraiser and coordinated as usual by Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich and Ulrike Hodges, is coming up very soon on January 30. Tickets are still available and cost \$ 50 for adults. Please contact the church office right away if you are able to attend. Proceeds this year will be allocated to the organ preservation fund.



And lastly, as we begin this new year, I am again asking you to give greater support to St. Matthew's, both with your presence on Sundays and with your financial giving. Pastor Kerstin is doing her part and doing it well, but she can't do it alone. I know you know where to find the church as nearly 500 of you found your way to our Christmas services, in contrast to the dedicated 40-55 persons who show up on a typical Sunday. There is a new energy

present, so please become an active participant in our renewal if you wish our very special and unique church to survive into the future. If you have any suggestions to make our church services more meaningful or relevant or easier for you to attend, please contact the Pastor or a Council member.



Wishing you God's blessings and all the best in 2016,

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

## Birthdays

### January

8 Isolde Bamberger  
25 Georg Teslawski  
28 Eleonore Wynn

### February

14 Dorothea Ilg  
16 Saskia Braucher

### March

2 Anita Bairogh  
4 Arnold Steeg  
Henry Sass  
10 Juergen Fehr  
22 Maria Blanz  
23 Erich Craciun  
28 Richard Braucher  
31 Niels Nielsen



*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.*



Tickets are still available for the Annual Crab Feed on January 30<sup>th</sup>.  
Please call the office or send your check to reserve a place,  
Tickets: \$50.00/person  
Seating is limited/



**Bilingual service @ 1:00 p.m. on  
Ash Wednesday, February 10.  
Followed by a Bible study at 2:00 p.m.**



**Bilingual service at 11:00 a.m. on  
Good Friday, March 25**

## Weekly Bible Study

During Lent a Bible study will be offered each week. The first one follows the Ash Wednesday service at 2:00 p.m. on February 10. The other classes will be held on Thursday afternoons, February 18, 25 and March 3, 10 and 17 at 2:00 p.m.



## Mark your Calendars

**January 30 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Crab Feed**

4:30-7:30 – Social Hall

**February 10 – Ash Wednesday**

1:00 p.m. - Bilingual Service

2:00 p.m. – Bible study

**February 14 – First Sunday in Lent**

9:30 a.m. – English Service

11:00 a.m. – German Service

**February 18, 25**

2:00 p.m. – Bible study of Mark

**February 20 - Memorial service for Rudi Fronk**

11:00 a.m. – St. Matthew's

**February 28 – Annual Congregational Meeting**

12:30 p.m. – Social Hall

**March 3, 10, 17 – Bible study**

2:00 p.m. – Study of Mark

**March 25 – Good Friday**

11:00 a.m. – Bilingual Service

**March 26 – Organ & Piano Concert**

David DeAngelis & Sam Post

**March 27 – Easter Sunday**

11:00 a.m. – Bilingual service



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