



Easter 2016

Die Gute Nachricht
Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Matthäusgemeinde

The Good News
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Dear Members and Friends,

“Christ has arisen, alleluia!
Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,
even from death, dispelling its gloom.
Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!”
Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia, (ELW #364, verse 1)



This hymn from Africa has become one of my favorite Easter hymns (and we will sing it during our festive worship on Easter Sunday!). It captures what Easter is all about: abundant joy and praise, because our sins are forgiven, and we are offered a new life in God. And this new life leads beyond all the seemingly dead ends we run into all the time. Even death does not have the last word.

Now the thing about Easter is that even some Christians are done with it once the Easter egg hunt is over, and the ham is eaten. But what about the days following Easter Sunday? Do we just get ‘back to normal’, putting the joy and the certain hope of Easter Sunday aside? Do we live what we say and sing: that Christ has arisen, indeed, thus opening for us the door to everlasting life and making everything new? Or do we rather let our lives be ruled by worries and anxieties of not having or getting enough?

The big question is: How do we live as ‘Easter people’, touched by God's promise of new life? The most obvious answer: by spreading the joy of Easter each and every day. That doesn't mean we

have to be cheerful and upbeat all the time, shouting ‘Alleluia’ wherever we go (although that's one way to do it); no, often we spread joy in a more subtle way and in little doses. Sometimes a kind word, an open ear for listening, the encouraging squeeze of a hand, a hug, a prayer will do miracles. Imagine how you can be ‘good news’ to someone, by sharing the Easter hope and joy in your very unique way.

Maybe an even more challenging way to live as Easter people is to overcome the fears and anxieties we face. I read somewhere that the opposite of life is not death, but fear. Fear holds us back, it cripples us, it stands in the way of living the new God-given life to the fullest. The first disciples would have never succeeded in living the hope of the resurrection, if they had not overcome their initial fears (with the help of the Holy Spirit) and if they had not become true Easter people. The ‘Jesus movement’ would have faltered and died before it had even really started.

We at St. Matthew's, like so many churches these days, are faced with many challenges. Financial issues may be on the forefront of many people's minds, but I think financial woes are but a symptom of issues that are much deeper and multi-faceted. One of the main issues I see is identity. Who are we? What do we have to offer to the world as people of God? How does our heritage of German language and culture translate into the Bay Area of the 21st century? And we may ask ourselves: What will the future hold? Can we trust that God is offering us, as a congregation, the gift of a new life, that Christ died so that we may partake in the endless opportunities God provides?

But then we have seen signs of new life here in our midst, like new shoots breaking through the fertile soil and into the light. God is a God of new life. God gives us hope in seemingly hopeless situations. God is there to walk with us, to comfort us, and to encourage us, every step along the way. It is up to all of us to walk into the future, confident that God has a plan, and that there is God's future in one way or another. We are called to be Easter people, for the glory of God and for the sake of others, free of fear and full of hope. For God is with us, always. Christ died and rose for us. We need not fear.

“Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus' redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won.
Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sins forgiven, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!” (ELW 364, verse 4)

Pastor Kerstin

Council President's Message

March 15, 2016

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

As we now find this year's Lenten season drawing to a close with Palm Sunday and Easter week fast approaching, and Spring beginning this coming Sunday with its promise of rebirth, as well as Daylight Savings Time having begun last Sunday, and with the recent much needed rain replenishing our depleted water supplies and nourishing our drought-starved vegetation, let me bring you up to date on the previous two months activities since our last "Good News". And the news is indeed generally good and promising for our congregation's future.

Pastor Kerstin has been busy as usual preparing our wonderful Sunday services and attending the various meetings and events relating to the German-speaking community. She also has been leading Bible study sessions on Thursday afternoons during Lent. In addition she led a meaningful Ash Wednesday service on February 10 and led a well-attended memorial service for Rudi Fronk on February 20 at which the Freundschaft Liederkrantz and the Oakland Turnverein choruses also participated.

On January 30th our 6th annual ‘crab feed’ fundraiser was held in the social hall and was a great success as usual due to the hard work of Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich and Ulrike Hodges and their family member helpers. Due to the cancellation of California’s Dungeness crab season, the very tasty fresh crab was imported from the Oregon/Washington border area and fortunately at last year’s cost. Proceeds from this year’s event were designated to go to the Organ Restoration Fund.

The annual congregational meeting was held on February 28. The 2016 budget as prepared by the Finance Committee under Juergen Fehr and approved by the Council was also passed by the congregation. Member giving increased in 2015, significantly due to generous giving for the restoration of the organ and from memorial donations. Operating expenses came in slightly over budget last year. Rental income decreased and will decrease further this year since KinderHaus left the church at the end of August last year and a suitable replacement has not yet been found. No budgeted money from last year’s capital/special projects budget was actually spent; several new items were approved for 2016 including the organ restoration, some electrical and lighting improvements, sound system update, pastoral office relocation, and social hall floor refinishing. Details with numbers are available to members in the annual report, so if you were not at the meeting and would like a copy, extra ones are available in the church office.

A new member was added to the Church Council. Andreas Ginsbach graciously consented to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Michelle Berner several months ago. We welcome him and look forward to his expertise as he previously served his churches in Heidelberg and Kiev.

The organ restoration project is progressing on schedule. Currently a new set of pipes is being made at the Schoenstein Organ Co. in Benicia. Installation and repairs are to begin in mid-April and be completed after the first week of May. A dedication service with donor recognition and a concert are being planned.

As a reminder regarding Easter week: the usual two services will be held on Palm Sunday at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. On Good Friday a bilingual service will be held at 11:00 a.m. On Easter Sunday, March 27, there will be only ONE service, a bilingual one at 11:00 a.m. Also on Saturday, March 26 at 2:00 p.m. our church organist, David DeAngelis, and his friend and accomplished organist/pianist, Sam Post from the Washington, D.C., will be performing an organ and piano concert in our sanctuary.

In closing I wish you all the wonderful bounty of the new spring season and a blessed and meaningful Easter.

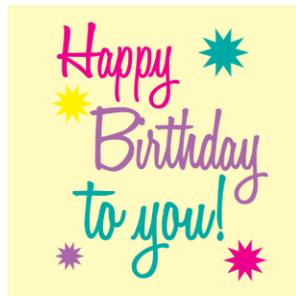
Respectfully submitted on behalf of your Council,

William H, Bremer, M.D., President

Birthdays

April

3 Margrit Buchmann
 4 Marijane Jeannette
 5 Brigitte Pfau
 7 Werner Dehnbostel
 8 Betty Kleinlein
 24 Stefanie Pressler
 27 Thea Scholz
 Alois Scholz



May

3 Richard L. Scopel
 13 Guenther Stottmeister
 16 Ulrike Hodges
 26 Ilona Frost
 28 Nicole Fahlman
 28 Marissa Barnes

June

19 Annika Braucher
 20 Andreas Pielhoop

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.

6th Annual Crab Feed – January 30, 2016





Crab Feed January 30, 2016

A huge thank you to all who organized and produced the delicious crab feed dinner



Baptism of George Scholz and Valentina Cosma on March 6, 2016

Mark Your Calendar

March 20 – Palm Sunday

9:30 a.m. – English Service
11:00 a.m. – German Service



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



April 3 – Second Sunday of Easter

11:00 – Bilingual service
Birthday Celebration & Potluck Meal



May 20-21 – Bibliodrama Workshop

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

3281 - 16th Street,
San Francisco, CA 94103-3323
Tel.: 415 863 6371
office@stmatthews-sf.org
www.stmatthews-sf.org

