



Fall - 2014

Die Gute Nachricht
Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Matthäusgemeinde

The Good News
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Dear Members and Friends,

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of God has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment." Matthew 10:1,5a, 7b-8, NRSV

I have been pastor of St. Matthew's for a few weeks now. Everything still feels fresh and new; however, you have welcomed me with such warmth and love, that I already feel pretty much at home in this congregation. Thank you for all your kind words and your support!

We have started to walk together, and our journey has just begun. We may not quite know where this journey is leading us. How can we, as people of faith and people of a congregation with a strong and proud tradition, be God's church in our day and age, and in the ever-changing Mission District of San Francisco? It probably will take some time before we discern and figure out together where God is leading us. As we are in this process, I invite you to share your stories and your vision for St. Matthew's with me. Everyone here at St. Matthew's is an important part of the whole, and it is essential that we share our hopes and dreams with each other as we are the body of Christ together.

We may not know exactly where our journey together will lead us, but Jesus gives us something to start with. In Matthew 10, Jesus instructs the 12 disciples to go out and proclaim the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God. And this remains Jesus' mandate for his disciples today, that is, for us: to proclaim the good news of a God who loves and forgives us and longs to establish a kingdom of peace and justice for all. Jesus even gives clear instructions on how we proclaim and spread God's kingdom: by healing all who are hurting. In other words: to be present with those who need love and forgiveness and healing, in our immediate environment, and around the world. This way, God's good news becomes visible through us. This way, God's kingdom will grow. And maybe our congregation as well.

The community of faith here at St. Matthew's has a lot to offer. As God's children, we have received love, mercy, forgiveness, and God's grace which is truly amazing. As the people of St. Matthew's, we have been blessed with a strong history and tradition: our specific German, Swiss, and Austrian background and culture, a beautiful building in a beautiful place, and an awe-inspiring sanctuary with great acoustics (something I as a passionate singer deeply appreciate). May God guide us and inspire us *how* to best share the amazing gifts we have received. And may God continue to be with the saints in this place, just as God has been present with, in, and through the people of St. Matthew's for more than 125 years.



I am looking forward to ministering to you and with you. I am looking forward to getting to know you and hearing your (faith) stories. May God bless the journey we have embarked on together!

Pastor Kerstin Weidmann

Message from Your Council President

August 13, 2014

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

Much has happened since our last newsletter and this one is long overdue, for which I apologize. However, in this interim transition period we have sent out several postcards and posted current events and information on our new website, which contains an up-to-date calendar. This can be accessed at www.stmatthews-sf.org and I strongly urge you to utilize this site for timely information between newsletters. It is our intention to issue a newsletter on a regular bi-monthly basis to be distributed by e-mail for those whom we have addresses and by postal service to those who don't. Please keep the church office advised of any changes to your contact information.

As you are aware, our previous pastor, Robin Ressler, resigned effective on January 31. The previous call committee, again ably chaired by Ulrike Hodges, was then reactivated. Pastor Kerstin Weidmann was invited to meet the congregation on March 29 at an informal "Meet & Greet". As a result of a very favorable reception by the congregation, the call committee voted to extend a call to Pr. Weidmann. This was followed by a congregational vote of eligible members on May 4, again with overwhelming support in favor of offering her a call. Pr. Weidmann accepted our call with an effective date of July 1, since when she has attended a required one week Synod meeting at Lake Tahoe and spent ten days in New York with her minister husband tending to the needs of her mother-in-law. Some of you may recall that Pr. Kerstin (then Barnes) served as a parish assistant here at St. Matthew's in 2001-2002 under Pr. Pielhoop. She is a native of Lower Saxony near Bremen and did most of her theological training in Germany and is perfectly bilingual. We feel very happy and blessed that Pr. Weidmann is now with us and hope that she will be with us for an extended period of time and help the church grow in membership, relevancy and sustainability while still fulfilling our special ministry serving the German community in the greater San Francisco Bay area and also reaching out to new sources for potential growth, both within our core group and the larger neighborhood. The Council extends a very warm welcome and thank you to Pr. Kerstin!

At least through the month of September, the Council and Pr. Kerstin have decided to continue with just one combined English/German service at 10:00 AM. The Pastor would like more time and feedback from the congregation as to how best and in what format to reinstitute two Sunday services. You should also be aware that the annual church picnic will be held at the Oakland Nature Friends on September 7; the 10:30 AM service will be followed by a potluck meal as no food will be available for purchase. Also, on September 14 at 3:00 PM Pastor Kerstin will be formally installed as our new pastor. Please do your best to attend this important event!

The church building itself has seen overdue and needed attention. The kitchen remodeling work was completed in early April and we now have a more functional and much better appearing facility. Also, as of last week the front facade has now been repaired and repainted, greatly increasing our 'curb appeal' on 16th Street. A new sign has been installed on the parking lot side of the building to better identify us to the neighborhood. Work is currently in progress on painting and repairing the sacristy, the hallway behind the altar, the conference room, the pastor's office, and the women's restroom. We would like to thank Ingeborg Stottmeister and the recently closed Arbeiterbildungsverein for their very generous contribution to our building/preservation fund, which helped make these renovations possible.



The church website, which is available in both English and German, continues to be fine-tuned as our hard-working church secretary learns how to manage this increasingly important source of information to both our own membership and the outside world. We also now have a Facebook page which will be managed by Pr. Kerstin. I encourage you to visit this page, and while there, to "like" us, as this raises the church profile.

The Council and a special committee are currently in negotiation with KinderHaus regarding a new lease agreement regarding their desire for increased enrollment in their pre-school program while also considering the needs of the church and our other tenants. KinderHaus is our main tenant and also the source of the largest non-member income to the church.

The church continues to be busy most evenings with various regular meetings and special events. Freundschaft Liederkranz meets on Monday evenings and the Golden Gate Men's Chorus rehearses on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, as they both have for many years. Thursday and Saturday evenings are occupied with two different Al-Anon groups. Sam Palmer, our vocal leader, gives private voice lessons at various times during the week. The church has also hosted many special musical concerts, recitals, and rehearsals. These include those given by the GGMC, the International Orange Chorale, Musae, Lyle Scheffler's Duo Boheme, Inspire Music, Damenchor Liederkranz, and several others. I would encourage you to attend these concerts if at all possible, both because they are of high quality and also as a way to support our long- and short-term tenants.



Several members are also due special thanks: Juergen Fehr for working out the compensation package for Pr. Kerstin and also for chairing the finance committee in preparing the annual budget and overseeing our financial health and related issues; Dorothy Praeger for representing us at the annual Synod Assembly in May; Ulrike Hodges for her work on the call committee, and Gerda Beisel for assisting the various supply pastors on Sunday mornings during our pastoral vacancy. Thank yous are also offered to Prs. Fred Merrick, Andreas Pielhoop, Lyle Beckman, Cary Bass-Deschenes. We especially want to thank Rev. Monique Ortiz, who so graciously filled in on so many Sundays and whom the congregation came to admire, respect and love... we wish her all the best and God's blessings in her new role as interim pastor at nearby St. Mary & Martha and her continuing work with the San Francisco Night Ministry. Recognition needs to be given also to Brigitte Pfau, who has selflessly helped out in the office for many years, edited the weekly bulletin and, who along with Walter Elliott and Frieda Schoenach, have opened up the church on Sunday mornings and prepared the communion. Frieda also has reorganized our new kitchen and has been doing an excellent job as its chief overseer.

As this summer vacation season is nearing its conclusion and we are beginning a new chapter in the long life of St. Matthew's, I would like to yet again remind you that we still need volunteers in many capacities. Please consider giving of your time and talent as a means of supporting our new pastor and solidifying a viable congregational future. Your help is needed and will be very much appreciated. The motto of the ELCA is "God's work. Our hands". We need to see more 'hands' in furthering God's work in our church.

May I now wish you all good health, safe travel, and God's blessing.

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



August

1 John Pressler
6 Dr. Helmut Rolfes
7 Richard Blanz
8 Robert Hodges
22 Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich
28 Frieda Schönach
28 Gerd Kupfer



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

September

4 Jonathan Barnes
10 Louise Tschudi
26 Corinna Witt
27 Jakob Berner

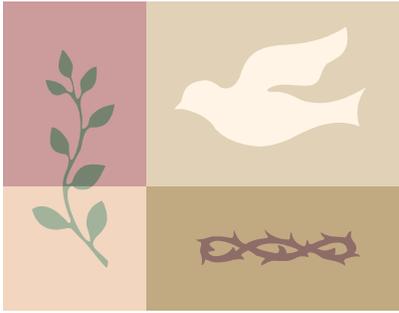
We apologize to any members and friends whose birthdays have been omitted. Please contact the Office if you wish to have your birthday included in future bulletins and newsletters. Thank you.



*The Annual Church Picnic, September 7, 2014 will begin at 10:30 a.m. at Oakland Nature Friends, 3115 Butters Drive, Oakland. There will be **NO food or beverages for sale.** Pot luck meal.*

God's Work - Our Hands

In 2013, the ELCA started the initiative "God's Work – Our Hands". On the first Sunday in September all ELCA congregations were invited and encouraged to purposely engage in a social service project within their respective communities. This year's "God's Work – Our Hands" Sunday officially has been designated to be observed on September 7. However, since St. Matthew's has their annual picnic at the Naturfreunde Oakland planned for that day, the St. Matthew's Council has decided to engage in a social service project later this year. The tentative date is November 23 (Sunday before Thanksgiving). The project has yet to be determined. We will make sure that folks of all abilities will be able to participate and to let their hands do God's work in and for our community. If you have any ideas, please let Pastor Kerstin Know!



You are cordially invited to attend the Service of Installation for

Kerstin Weidmann

Pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church,

San Francisco

Sunday, September 14, 2014

3 p.m.

A Reception will follow after the service.

Please come and join the celebration!

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

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