Dear Members and Friends,

‘The devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the word of God.’ Martin Luther (1483-1546)

‘Wo man singt, da lass dich ruhig nieder – böse Menschen haben keine Lieder.’

(‘Where people sing, there confidently settle down – evil people meet joyous song with a frown.’) Johann Gottfried Seume (1763-1810)

There is something special about songs and music; since time immemorial, song and dance have been human expressions of zest for life and life itself. Whenever we come together to raise our voices, play our instruments, or just clap our hands, we take part in something that’s much bigger than we are – we become part of a community.

Music is powerful. Music can lift our spirits, make us somber, help us grieve, bring back memories. Some of the first things we hear are lullabies and nursery rhymes our parents or grandparents sing to us. Music has a way of carrying words and knowledge and emotions no other medium can.

And music sometimes is the last thing we relate to. My late mother-in-law Kathryn suffered from dementia the last years of her life. In the end, she didn’t even recognize her own children anymore.

The last time my husband and I saw her, it was impossible to have any kind of conversation with her. But then we decided to just sing hymns with her because Kathryn always loved to sing. And a little miracle happened: her face lit up and she sang along to all the familiar hymns (it was mainly Christmas carols since these were the songs we knew by heart). So we basically spent a good hour in song – my mother-in-law did not miss a beat – and we felt connected in and by the music. We had something to share despite her loss of memory.

Music is a power that says yes to life in all its expressions; for it is not only joyous tunes and songs that say something about life; just look into the biblical book of Psalms, ancient songs we still pray today, and you find all kinds of feelings: anger, grief, fear, despair – next to joy, confidence, love and exuberance. All these experiences are part of life and they make our life what it is: an amazing, deep, multi-layered and multi-faceted experience.

Music is a power that says yes to life. And so it is often connected to the divine, which in most faith traditions is a life-giving and life-sustaining force. In our Christian faith tradition God certainly is a God of life, and Jesus Christ has been called the ‘Lord of the Dance’. God-music-life, all these cannot be separated from each other. It is no coincidence that in many traditions that imagine heaven, there is the expectation that angels play their harps and fill the heavens with celestial music. Where God is ever-present, of course there must be music!
Martin Luther loved music and understood it as a special gift from God – so precious that he even could say that it drives the devil, the evil, away. No wonder he was a champion of congregational singing. Up to the Reformation, the congregation at large would not sing in mass – usually it was choirs who would chant the liturgy and maybe a musical piece specially composed for a special holy day. With Martin Luther and the Reformation, this changed dramatically and music became much more important for worship. Luther also understood hymns as an excellent way to teach the people the word of God (the Christmas Carol ‘Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her’ – ‘From Heav’n Above to Earth I come’ is a great example of Luther telling a biblical story, in this case the Christmas story).

In short, Luther and the Reformation revolutionized church music; and not only the Protestant Church benefited from it, but in the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation, the Catholic Church adopted congregational song. And so today we have this immense ecumenical treasure of 500 years of hymnody.

As one way of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this year, St. Matthew’s, in cooperation with the San Francisco Bach Society, will offer a ‘Singers’ Festival – The Whole Church Sings’ on Saturday, October 7th, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. We will sing and learn about favorite hymns in Christian tradition, hear a keynote by Luther scholar Dr. Guy Erwin on the topic of Luther’s spirituality as it is expressed in music, and learn simple 4 part chorales by J.S. Bach under the direction of Dr. Magan Solomon from the SF Bach Society. Admission is free.

Come for the music – sing or just listen! May we rediscover the transformative power of music, this special gift from God.

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Pr. Weidmann’s 15th Ordination Anniversary

On Sunday, July 9th, St. Matthew’s celebrated Pr. Kerstin Weidmann’s 15th ordination anniversary (and her 3rd anniversary as pastor at St. Matthew’s). We welcomed many guests from the larger German community and the Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson, Assistant to the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod, who brought greetings and gave a special blessing. German ensemble ‘Kammerchor Elikuren’ gave wonderful musical offerings during the service. A big thank you to all who made this event festive and memorable!
Council President’s Message

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew’s,

We are now approaching the end of summer (per the calendar), but we who live in ‘The City’ know that ‘summer’ here doesn’t really arrive until September and October when the morning fog retreats and the days warm. Regardless of the weather and even solar eclipses, the life and work of the church goes on, albeit at a somewhat slower pace while we relax and hopefully enjoy some vacation time.

In fact, beginning on July 16 the Church Council decided to hold just one combined service at 10:00 AM until September 3, on which date we will revert to our regular worship schedule. This arrangement seemed to work quite well in view of lower summer Sunday attendance. And speaking of vacations, Pastor Kerstin left yesterday for one month on a trip back to Germany. She will be visiting family and friends and do some sightseeing in ‘Luther Land’ while also spending one week in Wittenberg representing St. Matthew’s during the final week of the EKD’s special Reformation anniversary celebration.

Reformation themed events have occurred already and more are planned. On July 22, after the Council decided to add another fun fundraiser for the benefit of the church, a “Wurst Wedding” was held which humorously reenacted the marriage of Martin Luther and Katherina von Bora complete with period costumes and food typical of the time. By all reports this event was a big success. Who knew our Pastor was also an actress? The food preparation was overseen by two of the women who also prepare our January Crab Feed, Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich and Ulrike Hodges; they were ably assisted by Annett Wagner and Steven Angelich and others. Also coming up on Saturday morning at 9:30, October 7, will be a special Reformation Music Workshop, to which all music lovers, especially singers, are invited to attend and participate. Detailed information is available in the church as well as a sign-up sheet.

On July 9 the Pastor marked the 15th anniversary of her ordination. The service was attended by many of her friends and colleagues as well as the participation of a visiting guest chorus from Germany, Kammerchor Elikuren. Following the service a nice reception has held in the social hall.

Our regular organist, David DeAngelis, was again gone for six weeks this summer while he was back in Rochester, NY at the Eastman School of Music completing his master’s degree in music education and also taking more organ lessons. We congratulate him on this professional achievement. In his absence our regular substitutes ably filled in, Matthew Phinney and Nicole Fahlman and we also thank them for their service.

Other special events at St. Matthew’s since our last newsletter of May 21 include a Tactus concert on May 27, an Under-Earners Anonymous meeting and retreat on June 10, two rehearsals by the chorus Cappella SF on June 17 & 18, an all day Tactus retreat on July 29, and a Resound Ensemble rehearsal on August 12. Also please note that the Golden Gate Men’s Chorus is giving their summer concert series on August 26 at 8:00 PM and at 3:00 PM on August 27 to which all members of St. Matthew’s are invited and may attend for free by mentioning at the ticket table at the door that they are members of the church.

The Council and I hope that you all had a wonderful summer and will continue to support the work of the church and attend the services and upcoming events prior to a special Reformation Day service on October 29. Also please remember that the annual church picnic will be held at the Oakland Nature Friends on September 17.

Wishing you all peace and God’s blessings.

Respectfully submitted,

William H. Bremer, M.D., Council President
A Wurst Wedding

On Saturday, July 22nd, about 50 guests attended the ‘wedding’ of Martin and Katherine Luther at St. Matthew’s. Dr. Andreas Ginsbach reprised the role of Martin Luther, Pr. Kerstin Weidmann played Katherine, Pr. Fred Weidmann officiated as Pr. Johannes Bugenhagen, and Hans-Christian Kasper made an appearance as Luther’s best (and disgruntled) friend Philipp Melanchthon (who, for strange reasons, was not invited to the wedding in 1525).

There was song, dance, games and, of course, good food and drink. Except for the potato salad (the potato had not been introduced yet to Germany) all dishes served could have been on the menu in the 16th century – especially the ‘Wurst’, the sausage.

A big thank you to all volunteers who set up the venue, worked in the kitchen, and served food and drink to all actors and all guests!
Upcoming Events

Pastor Weidmann will be in Germany 8/23-9/19. Part of this time, she will be representing St. Matthew’s at the Reformation World Exhibition in Wittenberg (9/5-9/11). In case of a pastoral emergency, please send an email office@stmathews-sf.org or call Bill Bremer.

Starting September 3, St. Matthew’s will go back to its regular worship service times. Sept. 3, like any other first Sunday of the month, one bilingual worship service will be held at 11 a.m., followed by a potluck meal. All other Sundays, there will be an English service at 9:30 a.m. and a German service at 11 a.m.

Through August 27, there will be one bilingual worship service at 10 a.m.

God's Work - Our Hands on Sunday, September 10th
This year, we will support the San Francisco Night Ministry. Pr. Lyle Beckman, Night Minister, will be preaching and presiding at St. Matthew's services that day and gladly take the following items: new white socks (for men and women), new underwear (for men and women, all sizes), used clothing, hats, scarves and gloves. Special monetary offerings for the SF Night Ministry will be appreciated as well. Please bring donation items for the SF Night Ministry to St. Matthew's by Sunday, 9/10. May God bless all gifts and givers.

Annual Open Air Worship Service and Potluck Picnic
On Sunday, September 17, St. Matthew’s annual open air service and picnic will be held at 11 a.m. at the ‘Naturfreunde Oakland’, 3115 Butters Dr. There will be no worship service at the St. Matthew’s church building that day.

‘Singers’ Festival’ on 10/7 (please see separate flyer).

Worship Service with ‘Damenchor Liederkranz’
On Sunday, October 15, the ‘Damenchor Liederkranz’ will be participating in St. Matthew’s German service at 11 a.m. Luther scholar Rev. Dr. Peter Krey will be the guest preacher that day and give a sermon on Luther and the Reformation.

Festival Worship Service in Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation Sunday, October 29th at 11 a.m. (with Confirmation)
On Sunday, October 29th, St. Matthew’s will hold one bilingual service at 11 a.m. celebrating the Reformation – and the Confirmation of two of our young people, Christina Hodges and Eli Angelich. All are invited to attend this festival service with special musical guests. A finger food reception follows the service.

Birthdays

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<td>4 Jonathan Barnes</td>
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We apologize for any birthdays missed in September and October. Please inform the Office of any omissions.
500 years – Music of the Reformation

A Singers’ Festival

“The whole church sings” Martin Luther, in 1526

*Come and sing – or just listen!*
*Part singing encouraged, but not required*

**Saturday, October 7, 2017**
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM
St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, 3281 – 16th Street, San Francisco

**FREE - RSVP requested**: 415 863 6371
Or email: office@stmatthews-sf.org
(please include choral experience, if any, and voice part)

**PROGRAM**

**HYMN SING: What’s in a Lutheran Hymnal?**
Favorites from five centuries and different Protestant traditions

**GOD’S WORD IN MUSIC: Luther’s Hymnody and Spirituality**
Bishop Erwin, who has devoted much of his life to the study of Luther, will reflect on the close ties between Luther’s theology and his hymn-writing.

*Rev Dr. Guy Erwin, Southwest California Synod,*
*Evangelical Lutheran Church of America*

**LUTHER’S MUSICAL TAPESTRY: Weaving a New Tradition**
Sneak Preview – Sing and explore pieces from San Francisco Bach Choir’s October 15 concert of Reformation inspired music.

*Dr. Magen Solomon, Artistic Director, San Francisco Bach Choir*

**CONCURRENT POSTER EXHIBITION**
“#HereIstand. Martin Luther, the Reformation and its Results”
Mark your Calendars

September 24 - Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
  9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion
  11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

October 1 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
  11:00 a.m. – Bilingual service
  Potluck Meal and Birthday Celebration

October 8 - Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
  9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion
  11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

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