Dear Members and Friends,

‘Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.’ Isaiah 60:1

‘Mache dich auf und werde licht! Denn dein Licht kommt, und die Herrlichkeit des Herrn geht auf über dir.’ Jesaja 60,1

This is the time of the year when the days are getting shorter, and we experience darkness later in the morning and earlier at night. Now I personally like the change of the seasons, and I don’t mind the darkness (although I have to admit it’s harder to get up in the morning, when it’s still dark). The main reason why the darkness doesn’t bother me is that there are usually some lights that shine in the darkness. And come the weekend after Thanksgiving – and soon after, the first Sunday in Advent -, people will decorate their homes with bright lights, and the first candle of the Advent wreath will be lit. To me, there is something hopeful about seeing such lights, and it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy.

But not only the days are getting shorter and darker. It seems that the times we live in get increasingly darker, too. Terror attacks on this planet and gun violence in this country are on the rise. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer.

People openly spew hatred and increasingly act on it. We are witnessing more and more natural disasters. In this country alone, several hurricanes wrought devastation. Just north of San Francisco, wildfires raged. Almost 200,000 acres burned; more than 14,700 homes and 728 businesses were destroyed, and at least 41 people killed – there are still some folks that are unaccounted for. One of our own parishioners who lives in Santa Rosa lost everything in the Tubbs Fire.

Of course we are not the only generation that has experienced darkness, disaster and desperation. The people of Israel the Prophet Isaiah talks to had to endure corruption, oppression and war. The people in Jesus’ days were desperately waiting for a Messiah as they experienced Roman occupation. Throughout history, violence, injustice, plagues and famines have wiped out large numbers of people. And so we find images in the Scriptures about the experience of dark times – but then also images of the light that shines in the darkness.

There has always been a stubborn hope that caused people to hang in there, to persist, and to move on. A hope that shines in the darkness - just like the lights we soon will see in our neighborhoods, the warm glow of the candles on the Advent wreath.

November is a month that reminds us of death, grief, and sadness. From All Saints Day to Veterans’ Day to the German observations of ‘Buß- und Bettag’ (Day of Repentance and Prayer), ‘Volkstrauertag’ (National Day of Mourning) and ‘Ewigkeitssonntag’ (Eternity Sunday, also called Sunday of the Dead), we go to some dark places in our lives and our shared history. But then comes December, and with it the seasons of Advent and Christmas. It is a time to be reminded of the perpetual light that shines in the darkness and the hope it gives – the light that shines forth from God, who loves and cares for all of creation.

As the days are darker, it is also a time for us to reflect
how to be the light of the world, as Jesus says. ‘Arise, shine!’ the Prophet Isaiah calls out to people across time and space. And Jewish wisdom says, ‘Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.’

So in dark times, ‘let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven’ (Matthew 5:16). May it be so!

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Council President’s Message

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew’s,

The holiday season is again fast approaching, which means the church will be quite busy for the next two months with various activities, so stay informed about upcoming events by checking our weekly worship bulletins, Facebook page and website. But now, let me briefly bring you up to date again with events since our last Good News of August 24.

Pr. Kerstin was on vacation in Germany from August 22 to September 19 and for one week during her stay there she represented St. Matthew’s at the Reformation World Exhibition in Wittenberg. For five days in October she also traveled to Toronto for the annual DELKINA conference and at which she was elected president… Congratulations Pastor! In her absence substitute pastors included Anders Peterson, Lyle Beckman, Peter Krey and our cheerful PLTS student, Rachel Swenson. We thank them. The annual church picnic was held on Sept. 17 at the Oakland Nature Friends.

On Saturday, October 7, an interesting and informative Reformation Music workshop was held. The GGMČ performed their summer concerts on Aug. 26 & 27 and our regular weekly and occasional choral groups are all back and rehearsing as usual.

Our special 500th Anniversary Reformation service was held on Oct. 29. It was supplemented with a wonderful brass quintet from the SF Conservatory that was found by our dedicated organist, David DeAngelis. The service was also highlighted by the special guest appearances of Martin Luther and his wife, Katherina (aka Andreas Ginsbach and Pr. Kerstin); it was followed by a light luncheon.

Other significant happenings of note include baptisms on Oct. 22 and Nov. 5 and the Oct. 29th confirmation of Eli Angelich and Christina Hodges. On Oct. 1 the wedding vows of Fred and Lynnette Sass were renewed. And lastly, on August 25 our Council vice president, Walter Elliott passed away; a short memorial service was held on Oct. 8. We will miss this unique person and may he find eternal peace in God’s grace.

In closing, may you find joy and special meaning in this upcoming season which has been hard to find recently what with all of the natural and man-made tragedies of late. Wishing you peace, happiness and God’s blessing.

Respectfully submitted,
William H. Bremer, M.D., Council President
Singer’s Festival at St. Matthew’s
On Saturday, October 7th, about 50 singers and music lovers gathered at St. Matthew’s. Three different speakers introduced the audience to the music of the Reformation and different Protestant traditions.

Dr. Sylvia Braselmann, with the help of organist David DeAngelis, led the group in the singing of hymns from different Protestant traditions, as she told us the (hi-)stories of these hymns. ‘Ein Feste Burg’, Martin’s Luther’s Reformation anthem, kicked off this section of the event.

The Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin, Bishop of the Southwest California Synod, gave a lecture on Martin Luther and music as an expression of Protestant spirituality.

Dr. Magen Solomon, Artistic Director of the San Francisco Bach Choir, led the participants in the singing of several simple settings of ‘A Mighty Fortress’ by J.S. Bach and other composers.

It was a morning of music and learning. We thank all donors who made this event possible. Thrivent Financial Services gave a community action grant to support this event.
**Festival Service in Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation**

**October 29th, 2017**

On Reformation Sunday, October 29th, more than 100 worshipers gathered at St. Matthew’s for a Festival Service. Our organist, David DeAngelis, has been able to invite 5 young brass players from the San Francisco Conservatory to provide some festive music. Deputy Consul Patrick Heinz brought greetings from the German Consulate General in San Francisco. Martin and Katie Luther talked about the importance of interdependence. Two of our young people, Christina Hodges and Eli Angelich, affirmed their faith in the rite of confirmation. During the reception afterwards, visitors had the chance to connect and talk more about the Reformation and its effects on our times today. Thanks to all who made the event festive and memorable!

**October 29th:**

Confirmation of Eli and Christina

**Baptism:**

We welcome into the family of God:
James Nickolaus, Oct. 22, 2017
Lina Marguerite, Nov. 5, 2017
Christmas Services at St. Matthew's

Sunday, December 24th
Christmas Eve
11 a.m.: Bilingual Family Service
4 p.m.: German Candlelight Service for the Whole Family
6 p.m.: Bilingual Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25th
Christmas Day
11 a.m.: Bilingual Service with ‘Freundschaft Liederkrantz’

St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, 3281 16th Street
Please use public transportation, if possible. Limited parking available.
Upcoming Events

Kaffeeklatsch
Wednesday, November 15th, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Pastor Kerstin will show pictures and tell stories from her recent travels to Luther sites in Germany.
All are welcome!

Eternity Sunday – Ewigkeitssonntag
November 26th, 2017
During our worship services (9:30 a.m. in English, 11 a.m. in German), we will remember our loved ones who passed. Please bring pictures of people whose loss you grieve, and we will display them in front of God’s altar.

Sunday, December 3rd, 11 a.m. – Bilingual First of Advent Service and St. Nicholas Day Celebration
The entire family is invited to come and celebrate St. Nicholas, the patron saint of all children (and those young at heart).
Upcoming Events

Sunday, December 10th – Second Sunday in Advent Service and Farewell to Parish Teaching Student Rachel Swenson

Services at 9:30 a.m. (in English) and 11 a.m. (in German), during which Rachel will preach and bid farewell to St. Matthew’s. After the service, a reception will be held in Rachel’s honor.

Advent Celebration – Adventsfeier

Wednesday, December 20th, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
All are invited to a ‘gemütliche’ gathering around the Advent wreath with songs and poems of the season. Glühwein and cookies will be served!

Sunday, December 31st – Sunday after Christmas

ONE bilingual worship service at 11 a.m. We will sing our favorite German and English Christmas carols.

December

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

We apologize for any birthdays missed in December. Please inform the Office of any omissions.
Mark your Calendars

November 26 - Eternity Sunday – Ewigkeitssonntag
9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion
11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

December 3 – Bilingual First of Advent Service and St. Nicholas Day Celebration
11:00 a.m. – Bilingual service
A service for the entire family celebrating St. Nicholas, patron saint of all children. Potluck meal.

December 10 - Second Sunday in Advent Service and Farewell to Parish Teaching Student Rachel Swenson
9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion
11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion
1:00 p.m. – Damenchor Liederkranz Concert

December 20 – Advent Celebration – Adventsfeier
Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

December 24 – Advent/Christmas Eve
11:00 a.m. – Bilingual Family Service
4:00 p.m. - German Candlelight Service for the Whole Family
6:00 p.m. - Bilingual Reflective Candlelight Service

December 25 (Monday) – Christmas Day / Weihnachtstag
11:00 a.m. – Bilingual Service with Holy Communion. Musical guests: 'Freundschaft Liederkranz'

December 31—Sunday after Christmas
11:00 a.m. – Bilingual service with Carols and Lessons

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