



## Die Gute Nachricht

Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St.  
Matthäusgemeinde

## The Good News

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

*Dear Members and Friends,*

**‘Sieben Wochen Ohne’ – Seven Weeks Without...**



**Jesus says, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Luke 12:32-32, NRSV**

Have you ever heard or read the name Marie Kondo? As I learned only a few weeks ago, Marie Kondo, a Japanese lifestyle expert, is currently conquering the Western World with her You Tube show, ‘Tidying Up with Marie Kondo’. Quite a few of my Facebook friends think highly of her and her philosophy.

Kondo is a proponent of decluttering – she wants to help people get rid of stuff that fills up their attics and closets, stuff that dominates their lives. Her mantra is simplicity. Her theory is that only if we simplify our lives (and do away with the many things that keep us from having uncomplicated lives) can we experience fulfillment and happiness.

She wants all of us to clean up. And the question we are to ask ourselves as we go through our many possessions and make the decision to either keep it or give it away is: Do I experience joy when I hold or look at this object? If yes, we should keep it – if not, we should give it away.

Millions have heeded her advice so far. There are many who feel that their lives are filled with too many things, things they don’t need, things they don’t even enjoy. There are many who are tired of the mindless consumption we are lured into in the developed world. There are many who long to find true fulfillment that money just can’t buy and stuff just can’t give.

I understand why Kondo has such an appeal, especially among the younger generation. There is the growing awareness that things can’t and won’t make us happy, and that unbridled consumerism is a major factor in the ongoing destruction of our planet. Now to many, Kondo’s approach may sound like a new and revolutionary thing – but it isn’t. Many

## Council President's Message

religions throughout history have taught simplicity as a spiritual practice to improve the connection with the divine.

There have always been Christians who lived simply. But then there also has been the tradition of fasting. Fasting originally meant to give up certain foods on certain days or during certain periods during the church year, like Lent. But nowadays fasting often also includes the consumption of things.

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Lent will begin with Ash Wednesday. The Lenten season ends on April 21<sup>st</sup>, Easter Sunday. In between, there are seven weeks (if you don't count Sundays). In 1983, 70 German theologians and journalists first decided to re-introduce the practice of fasting during the period of Lent. They started the initiative 'Sieben Wochen Ohne' – 'Seven Weeks Without', forgoing certain things or habits during Lent (certain foods, cigarettes, alcohol...). Today, millions of Christians in Germany commit to 'Seven weeks without...' as a practice to be more mindful about the things that tend to fill up our lives – and don't leave enough room for prayer and meditation, enough time to think about how we best serve our neighbor, enough room for God.

Fasting can help us to get rid of things and habits that keep us from living life to the fullest and to find fulfilment in serving God and our neighbor. And so I would like to invite you to give fasting a shot this Lenten season and to go 'seven weeks without' - be it without a certain (unhealthy) food, be it without too much TV or computer time, be it without stuff or too much work or envy or gossip - or whatever you feel takes too much time or space or attention in your life and keeps you from finding a deeper connection with God and neighbor. What will I fast from? The obsessive use of my I-Phone for social networking...

May God bless your Lenten season – *without* the things that we don't really need or that are not good for us, and *with* an abundance of blessings.

*Pr. Kerstin Weidmann*

Dear Friends and Members of St. Matthew's,

Here we are in February of 2019 with yet another wonderful Christmas season now a part of our history, and speaking of history, 2020 will mark the 125th anniversary of our church's founding in 1895 with special events now starting to be planned to celebrate this special event. Recently the weather has been quite cool and rainy, even with snow present on the Bay Area's higher mountain tops. This indicates we will likely not be in a drought condition this year and hopefully there will be no further disastrous wildfires during the upcoming fire season. However in spite of the cool weather, the atmosphere in our church remains warm, friendly and inspiring under the guidance and leadership of our own Pastor Kerstin.

Beginning in January we are very happy to have a pastor-in-training with us for the year, Pastor Tia Pelz from Hamburg, Germany. She is now living in Berkeley with her two children and husband, who is doing post-doctoral work at U.C. Berkeley. Beginning this month we will also have a parish teaching student, Monica Butler, from the seminary in Berkeley with us for a year or so as she pursues her studies. Yet another student pastor from Siegen, Germany, Dung Bich Nhi Dang, will be with us for one month in March.

Since the last newsletter at the end of November the church has remained quite busy. Church related events included the well attended Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, and this in spite of the parking lot being co-opted by Mission Dolores, its owner, as a retail Christmas tree lot. From November 19th until just after Christmas people attending events and services at St. Matthew's were offered parking behind the Mission Dolores Basilica and school; this worked out fairly well but likely caused a small decrease in attendance.

On January 26 our 9th annual 'Crab Feed' fundraiser was held and it was another big success with a capacity crowd of 75-80 persons devouring

250 pounds of crab along with other tasty food and drink. Thanks again to Ingrid Angelich, Ulrike Hodges, Annett Wagner and Verena Tent-Braucher for their hard work in making this possible.

On February 3rd the annual congregational business meeting was held with only 27 voting members attending. The written reports of the council president, Pastor and treasurer were summarized and the 2019 budget as prepared by the finance committee was presented and approved by voice vote. After the repairs and improvements made last year, the building itself is now functioning well and is in good condition considering its age. However our financial position is not great but remains fairly stable. We had to dip into our investments again but fortunately the good stock market performance helped minimize the loss. A major concern as noted by Mr. Fehr is our continued over reliance on a handful of members for their generous giving; we can and should do better in this regard.

Outside events occurring at the church included a Damenchor concert on December 9th, five Golden Gate Men's concerts from December 13th to 18th, the annual Swiss Turnverein party on January 12 and the annual German school (GISSV-SF) Fasching party on February 2.

Sadly, several of our members and friends passed away over the past several months: Margarete Brenncke, Inge Bultmann, Norma Hahn and Marie Hoffmann. May they rest in peace.

As we are soon to enter the Lenten season (Ash Wednesday is March 6th), let us all work to continue the mission of the church and support it with the means and talents each of us possesses. God's blessings!

Respectfully submitted,

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



**Monica Butler**

I am a first-year student Master of Divinity Student at PLTS. I grew up in Denver, Colorado, and lived in Boulder, CO and Santa Fe, NM before moving to California in 2010. I have a BA in art history from the University of Colorado and an MA in art history from the University of California, Davis. Before starting seminary, I worked for five years at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco coordinating programs for students and educators. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, cycling, yoga, art museums, and reading novels. I am looking forward to getting to know the community at St. Matthews this year!

My name is **Dung Bich Nhi Dang**, and I will be your intern at the Ev. Lutheran St. Matthew's Church from March 'til April 2019.

I grew up in one of Germany's smallest cities called Siegen. I've started my theology studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz from 2014-2018 and am currently enrolled at Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel. I am honored and happy that I got the opportunity to do my internship at your church.

I, myself, am from a family with a migrant background. Every week I attend the Ev. Vietnamese Church in Wuppertal. Therefore I am very much interested in the topic of intercultural theology. So it was a conscious decision to seek out German churches which are located abroad to observe the phenomenon of migrant churches in a different context than what I am used to. I'm looking forward to seeing how origin, tradition and theology shape your church and what kind of effect it has on the surrounding as on one's life.

Again I would like to thank you for giving me this amazing chance for doing my internship at your church. I am excited for all the upcoming experiences, impressions and most importantly for the many first encounters. God bless you. Kind regards,



Mein Name ist **Dung Bich Nhi Dang**, und ich werde von März bis April 2019 Ihre neue Praktikantin in der Ev. Lutherischen St. Matthäus Kirche sein.

Aufgewachsenen bin ich in dem kleinen Städtchen Siegen, Deutschland, und studierte an der Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz von 2014- 2018 und derzeit an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel Ev. Theologie auf Pfarramt. Ich fühle mich geehrt und bin erfreut, dass ich mein Gemeindepraktikum bei Ihnen in der Gemeinde absolvieren darf.

Ich selbst komme aus einer Migranten-Familie und besuche eine evangelische vietnamesische Gemeinde in Wuppertal. Aufgrund meiner Herkunft interessiert mich das Thema ‚Interkulturelle Theologie‘ sehr. Ich habe mich bewusst für eine deutschsprachige Gemeinde im Ausland entschieden, um eben das gleiche Phänomen in einem anderen Kontext beobachten zu können. Ich bin gespannt darauf, welche Rolle Herkunft, Tradition und Theologie bei Ihnen in der Gemeinde spielen und wie diese sich auf Ihr Umfeld als auch das eigene Leben auswirken.

Nochmals möchte ich mich für die Gelegenheit, bei Ihnen mein Gemeindepraktikum absolvieren zu dürfen, herzlichst bedanken. Ich freue mich auf all die neuen Eindrücke und Erfahrungen und besonders auf tolle Begegnungen.

Liebste Grüße und Gottes Segen, *Dung Bich Nhi Dang*

Dung Bich Nhi Dang

## Past Events

### Deaths in the congregation:

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of **Inge Bultmann**, who died on November 14<sup>th</sup>. A service in her memory was held at St. Matthew's on Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Norma Hahn** passed away on November 20<sup>th</sup>. A gravesite service was held on January 12<sup>th</sup> at Olivet Memorial Park in Colma.

Both will be missed by the people of St. Matthew's. May God grant them eternal peace.



### Damenchor Liederkranz Holiday Concert

On Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, Damenchor Liederkranz gave their annual holiday concert at St. Matthew's. Freundschaft Liederkranz also contributed to the program. Both choirs delighted the audience with mainly German, but also a few English holiday classics. What a wonderful way to celebrate the holidays!



### Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at St. Matthew's

About 450 people attended St. Matthew's Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. As in previous years, especially the German language Family Service on Christmas Eve drew many worshippers, among them many children.



### St. Matthew's Annual Meeting

On Sunday, **February 3<sup>rd</sup>**, St. Matthew's voting members came together for the annual meeting. As any not-for-profit organization, we are required to gather at least once a year to conduct the business of the congregation in an orderly manner. Among other things, the budget for the year 2019 was approved. Furthermore, Pastor Kerstin Weidmann, Council President Bill Bremer and Treasurer Juergen Fehr offered reports reading the ministries and finances of St. Matthew's. Pr. Weidmann pointed out that this year in September, a worship service will be recorded at St. Matthew's, to be broadcast on the 'Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen' on September 29<sup>th</sup>. She also alerted the congregation to the fact that St. Matthew's will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.



## St. Matthew's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Crab Feed

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, St. Matthew's held its 9<sup>th</sup> annual crab feed. About 70 people enjoyed good food, conversation and fellowship. We thank 'the crew' for making this event happen: Ulrike, Robert and Christina Hodges, Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich and Steven, Eli and Ilse Angelich, Verena Trent-Braucher and Annett Wagner. We also thank the following people for their help with the preparations: Angie Holt, Dorothy Praeger, Bill Bremer and the Scholz Family.



## Upcoming Events

### **Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11 a.m.: Bilingual Worship Service for Young and Old**

The St. Matthew's church council decided to offer quarterly worship with a special focus on families with young children. These worship services will be shorter and less liturgical than the usual Sunday services. The first of these worship services will be held on **Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11 a.m.** Come and enjoy a different kind of worship experience!

### **Memorial Service for Marie Hoffmann**

The memorial service for Marie Hoffmann, an ardent supporter of St. Matthew's, will be held on **Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1 p.m.** at the Altenheim / Excelsior German Center in Oakland (1720 MacArthur Blvd). All are invited to attend and celebrate her life. A reception will follow the service.

### **Ash Wednesday Service at St. Mary and Martha's Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.**

Once more, St. Matthew's and St. Mary and Martha Lutheran Churches will offer joint worship services during Lent. On Ash Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, we will gather at St. Mary and Martha at 11:30 a.m. to consider our existence 'Between the Dust and the Ashes'. St. Mary and Martha is located on 1050 S. Van Ness Ave. A luncheon is to follow the service (and if you attended the service at St. Mary and Martha's last year, you know it's going to be scrumptious!).

### **Lenten Bible Study: 'Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy' – a study based on Brahms' German Requiem**

#### **Thursdays, March 14<sup>th</sup> through April 11<sup>th</sup>, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m**

Join us for a special Lenten Study, 'Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy'. Each session, we will listen to a piece from Brahms' 'German Requiem' and discover how it relates to our experiences with grief. All are welcome!



### **Good Friday Service at St. Matthew's Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 12 noon**

The people of St. Mary and Martha will join us again for a joint Good Friday Service. This year, we will meditate on the 'Seven Last Words of Jesus'. Coffee and light refreshments will be served before the service, starting at 11 a.m.

### **Easter Sunday Service Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 11 a.m.**

Join us to celebrate the resurrection of Christ! We will gather for **ONE** bilingual worship service for the whole family at 11 a.m. Easter egg hunt and festive coffee hour are to follow after the service.

## Mark your Calendar

### February 24<sup>th</sup> – Seventh Sunday after The Epiphany

9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion

11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

### March 3<sup>rd</sup> - Last Day After the Epiphany - Bilingual Service for the Young and Old

11:00 a.m. - Bilingual Service

Coffee Hour and Birthday Celebration

### Council Meeting

### March 6<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday

11:30 a.m. - Worship Service at St. Mary and Martha Church

1050 S. Van Ness Avenue

### March 10<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion

11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

### March 17<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m. - English Service

11:00 a.m. – German Service

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