



Die Gute Nachricht

Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St.
Matthäusgemeinde

The Good News

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy Birthday, St. Matthew's! 1895-2020

How lovely is your dwelling place,

O LORD of hosts!

My soul longs, indeed it faints

for the courts of the LORD;

my heart and my flesh sing for joy

to the living God...Happy are those who
live in your house,

ever singing your praise. *Psalm 84: 1-2,4*
NRSV

This spring, St. Matthew's will celebrate its 125th anniversary. In 1894 the leadership of St. Mark's Lutheran Church (St. Markus Kirche – this congregation can still be found on O'Farrell Street) decided to plant a German speaking mission congregation in the Mission District of San Francisco. The need for churches in the late 19th century was great: many immigrants, especially from northern Europe, arrived in San Francisco in search for a new life, often escaping economic hardships, bringing with them their customs, looking for ways to worship in a similar way they worshiped back in the Old Country.

St. Mark's young associate pastor, Hermann Gehrcke, a recent immigrant from Germany himself, was tasked to lead this new mission start which was to become St. Matthew's. On February 18th, 1895, St. Matthew's (St. Matthäus) was chartered. First, the congregation

worshiped in rented space on 11th Street. But within 10 years, its members were able to raise sufficient funds to buy a plot on 16th Street and start building a church, which, to this day, has one of the most light-filled and beautiful sanctuaries in the City.

But what is the most beautiful church without people, and what is a church without God? For generations, people have found God and community at St. Matthew's and have been able to worship in the languages of their heart, be it German or English. 'Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.' (Ps 84,4) This is what we celebrate this year.

With thankfulness I think about all those faithful people who were a part of St. Matthew's way before I came to this congregation. Without them – their love, hope and faith, their tenacity, their care for the building, for each other, and for the neighbor beyond church doors, St. Matthew's wouldn't be here today. We stand on the shoulders of all those generations who came before us. This is what we celebrate this year.

In a time when institutions, organizations and churches where German is spoken in the U.S. slowly disappear, St. Matthew's is still providing a (spiritual) home to many in the San Francisco Bay Area. I want to thank all the faithful people who make St. Matthew's what it is today – those who share their various gifts to keep the ministries at and beyond St. Matthew's going, those who help keep St. Matthew's as a spiritual home for others. Average Sunday worship attendance may go down,

but on special occasions, many still seek God and community on the corner of 16th Street and Dolores – just think about Christmas Eve! There is still a need and longing for German language ministry in the Bay Area. This is what we celebrate this year.

Only God knows what the future holds. Will St. Matthew's celebrate its next big anniversary in 2045? Whether or not this will be the case remains to be seen. What we know is that, just like generations came before us, there will be generations following us. We, who are the faithful today, will become ancestors in the faith. No matter, what happens, we will leave a legacy, and we pass on the torch to new people. And we know that God's future is wide open. This is what we celebrate this year.

You are invited to celebrate with us! On Sunday, March 22nd, we will celebrate a festival service at 2 p.m. (no morning services that day), followed by a reception at Mission Dolores. Members of the 'Deutsche Musikverein' and several choirs, together with our fabulous organist Andrew Birling, will offer their musical talents during that service. Some former pastors of St. Matthew's will be able to join us that day, as well as Bp. Mark Holmerud and the dean of the San Francisco-Peninsula Conference and lead pastor of St. Mark's, Elizabeth Ekdale.

If you plan to attend, please let us know ASAP, so that we can plan accordingly.

Let's celebrate!

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann



Good bye, St Matthew's

One year at St. Matthew's. To me that was:

Getting to know wonderful people who sometimes seem harder from the outside than they turn out to be. Listening to your life's stories and learning from your experiences.

Being entirely language-confused at the end of a Sunday.
Being energized and super tired at the same time at the end of a Sunday.

Eating German cakes and German sandwiches at coffee hour.
Smelling a mixture of coffee and port wine in the sanctuary.

Sharing bible study and deep insights into our vulnerability.
Caring for each other, respectfully arguing with each other, valuing each other.

Digging deep into the history of St. Matthew's and understanding its present better.

Knowing that you keep me and my family in your prayers and holding you in mine. Sharing the excitement and exhaustion of not knowing what the future might bring. Sharing how God leads amidst the tumult of life.

On my last day, on Dec 25th, you all laid hands on me to receive God's blessing that is always transmitted through people. Faithful People like you. I was honored to be your pastor for a year and to serve you together with Pr Kerstin.

As most of you already know, my family and I really love living in the Bay Area. Our hopes and prayers were received and with God's help I am going to be the pastor at Christ the King in Fremont starting March 2nd. I hope to see many of you at my Installation there, the date is still to be decided.

Grace and peace to all you Saints of St. Matthew's,
sincerely, Pr. Tia!

Looking for wealth, security, freedom and future – Germans in San Francisco

Who are the people of St. Matthew's? In 2020 St. Matthew's will be celebrating its 125th anniversary. 125 years of people sharing lives with God and each other. 125 years of immigration and settlement and building homes and a future.

In preparation for 2020 we will continuously tell the story of Germans in San Francisco and St. Matthew's in our newsletter. Follow us on an adventurous trip throughout over 125 years of German-American dreams and realities.

Part IV: Golden times and times of change

In 1969 a second era of great blossom began for the people of St. Matthew's with the calling of Rev Kurt Adelsberger. Most members nowadays still remember this time as "the golden time". "Golden", because they were young and raised their kids. And "golden" because it was a time of congregational growth and continuity for 20 years after a time of decline. Many of the immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s found their way to St. Matthew's and raised their families within the church community.

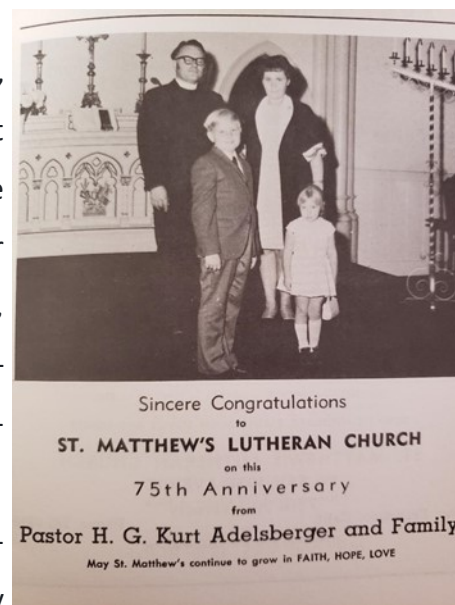
Kurt Adelsberger was born in Bärenfang, East Prussia on October 12th, 1930. Being a typical war-child, he was just too young to be a soldier, but old enough to witness the horror of a war. The deprivations during the occupation of Eastern Prussia by the Russians were so hard on his mother Meta that she soon died after 1945. Together with his father Hermann, Kurt came to West Germany, where he was treated as an immigrant. Adelsberger first wanted to become a deacon like his mother but then decided to study theology in Wuppertal-Barmen and Heidelberg, Germany.

In 1954 he and his wife Rosa, originally from Crimea, immigrated to Canada where he concluded his studies at the Lutheran College and Seminary

in Saskatoon. Five years later he was ordained and served three Canadian congregations for 10 years.

To immigrate twice, first from East Prussia to Germany, then from Germany to Overseas, is a story Adelsberger shared with many of the newly arrived Germans at St. Matthew's.

In 1969, Adelsberger received the call to San Francisco together with his family including the kids Alfred and Mary. He arrived just in time for the 75th anniversary, which was celebrated with three services and a booklet



with the church's history.

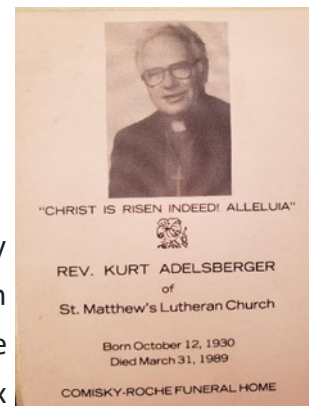


On October 18th, 1970 all the people who had been baptized and/ or confirmed at St. Matthew's were cordially invited and former pastor Lucas delivered the sermon. Within the 75 years of existence, 1440 children were baptized, 622 youths were confirmed, 830 couples were married and 1221 persons were buried.

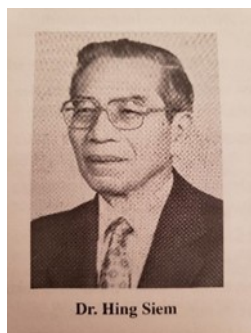
The festivities went on with even two services on November 1st. At 10.30 am during the bilingual service the president of the Pacific Southwest Synod, Carl Segerhammer, preached as well as former pastor Hans-Ludwig Wagner. And at 2 pm there was another

Civic Service in English, "a special service for all friends of the Christian Churches of San Francisco and Civic Leaders." Both days concluded with a lunch cooked and prepared by the church's ladies. The congregation stated joyfully: "We feel that the congregation is united and is striving with great enthusiasm to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in this fine city of San Francisco."

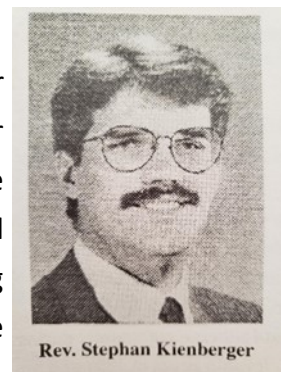
Even though people think of the 1970s as a thriving time, pastors back then already felt the changes. Pastor Waldo L. Ellickson from the Norwegian speaking Ascension Lutheran Church of San Francisco wrote to Adelsberger: "Your congregation, like ours, has ministered mainly to one language group. The adjustment in our complex society is not simple." Adelsberger died suddenly on March 31st, 1989 at the age of 59.



What followed was a time of several pastors working with the people of St. Matthew's. After Adelsberger's death Pastor Dr. Hing Siem, a member of St. Matthew's, stepped up as an Interim for a couple of months. He had ministered in West Berlin and therefor was familiar with the German heritage of the church.

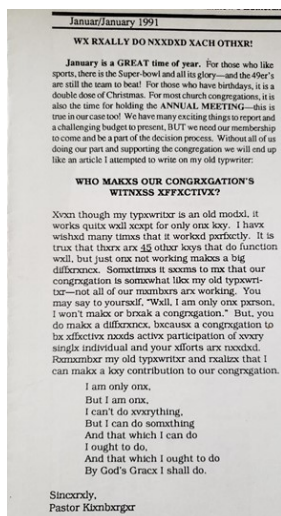


By February 1990 the congregation had extended a call to Pastor Stephan Kienberger. Born in the US to a German Lutheran pastor and a librarian, he was familiar both with the German and the American church. His paths led him to Germany where he lived and

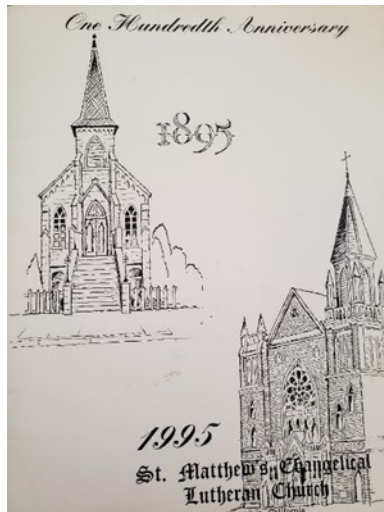


studied in Erlangen-Nürnberg and served as a vicar in Tuttlingen, Württemberg. During his pastorate closer ties with neighboring Lutheran churches were established and St. Matthew's was a founding member of the Mission United Lutheran Parish.

In the Good News of 1991, he tried to encourage all the members of St. Matthew's to become actively engaged in the congregation's life with a unique attempt. He simply showed what happens if one letter of a typewriter stopped working. The result: A text that can hardly be read. Due to one single letter. It was his way of saying: see how important everybody is in a congregation. See how much impact a single person can have.



In June 1991 he looks back to his first year with St. Matthew's and draws an honest picture of their relationship. He is very much compared to Adelsberger, who is still missed by many members at that time. While Kienberger felt like he adapted very much to the congregation, the people of St. Matthew's felt like he had



already changed a lot. He compared the relationship to “newlyweds who are faced to celebrating the holidays with one another for the first time.” Under his leadership St. Matthew's grew from 162 members in 1990 to 193 members in 1993. Every third Sunday there was an informal Family service and childcare was provided every Sunday. Kienberger emphasized on listening to his parishioners and to have them share what's dear to them.

A group of women wrote down their favorite recipes in a book called “Garden of Eatin’”. It's a large variety of German and American goodies, including some advice for a “preserved husband”.

He initiated a collection of Christmas memories and stories of the

people of St. Matthew's which he published for the congregation in 1993 as an advent devotional. It's a moving document of 26 dear childhood memories from a time of war or post-war.

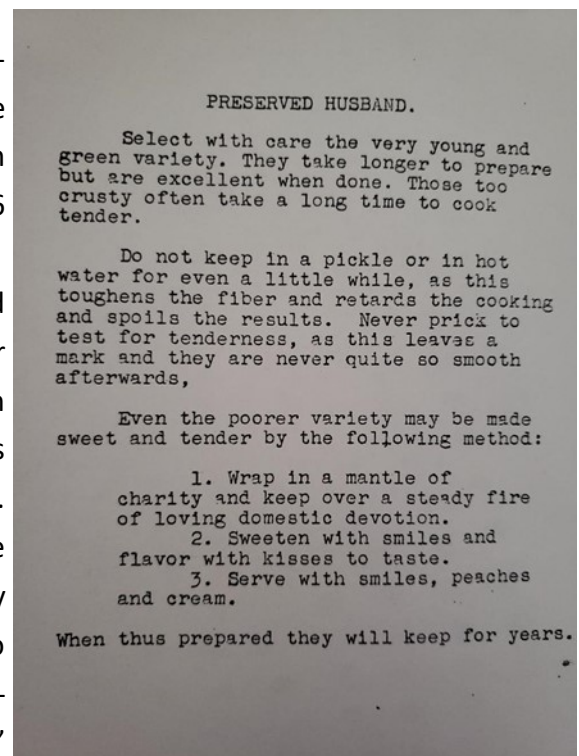
Mrs. Kehl remembers Christmas after the second world war had just ended. As a 15-year-old she was on her way back to her homeland Yugoslavia together with her mother and stayed with poor farmers. While her mom worked for the farmers, she was employed by a Jewish family. There was few food and few hope. Suddenly, on Christmas eve it knocked at their door. There were Russian soldiers, carrying a sloe-tree as a Christmas tree. “They wanted to show, that they were Christians and that they also missed their families and their home. We decorated that sloe-tree with popcorn and ribbons. We laughed and cried together.”

The Pressler-family summarized what is true for many German immigrants until today: “Christmas to me is ‘German’ – all of the traditions”.

The biggest worry of the church was its “survival in the inner city”. Together with their pastor the church wanted to develop and implement a plan for outreach to a changing multi-cultural neighborhood and increase and develop German worship services in the suburbs.

In 1994, Kienberger accepted a call the US Virgin Islands. He currently serves at First Lutheran Church in Astoria, Oregon.

***And if you want to know how the story continues,
visit us for the 125th anniversary celebration on March 22nd, 2020.***



Dear St. Matthew's,

Hello! My name is Michael Dickson and I am thrilled to be the ministry in context student at St. Matthew's Lutheran in 2020. I just started the M.Div program at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary this last fall, and I am eager to continue learning about the work of being a pastor and serving in communities of faith-filled people like yourselves.

I was born and raised in the Lutheran church in Raleigh, North Carolina. I graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2014. Since then I've spent a year serving the Arab Lutheran Church in Israel and Palestine and another three years working for a Lutheran church in El Paso, Texas on the U.S.-Mexico border. The rest of the time since graduation I've been filling by working in preschools.

Those experiences in Jerusalem and on the border have taught me the power of faith and the church to overcome barriers and boundaries in bringing people together and healing the wounds we inflict on each other. My experiences working in preschools (the hardest work I've had to do, if we're being honest) have taught me about the importance of communication and the need for joy, no matter what age we are.

All of these experiences form part of the journey that has led me to seminary and to St. Matthew's this year, and I am confident that getting to know and learn with and from all of you is another significant step in that journey.

Please feel free to reach out and ask me more about the people and places that have led me here. I also want to hear about your journeys and your experiences of faith, San Francisco, and St. Matthew's. I'm here to learn. Leider spreche ich kein Deutsch, aber ich verstehe ein bisschen.

Peace,

Michael Dickson



Liebe St. Matthäus-Gemeinde,

mein Name ist Susanna Haßel. Im März 2020 habe ich die Möglichkeit, vier Wochen lang Ihre Gemeinde kennenzulernen. Dafür mache ich mich von Erlangen in Deutschland rund 9300 km weit auf den Weg bis nach San Francisco.

Ursprünglich stamme ich aus Oberfranken in Bayern. Dort bin ich im wunderschönen Frankenwald, ganz im Norden Bayerns kurz vor der Thüringischen Grenze, gemeinsam mit meinen Eltern, meinem Bruder und unserer Katze aufgewachsen. In Erlangen wohne ich jedoch schon seit über fünf Jahren und studiere dort Theologie. Nach unserer Hochzeit vor etwas mehr als einem Jahr bin ich mit meinem Mann nach Bubenreuth, einer kleinen Ortschaft etwas außerhalb von Erlangen, gezogen.



Seit meiner Konfirmandenzeit bin sehr aktiv in verschiedenen Kirchengemeinden. Ich habe zu Hause viel Jugendarbeit gemacht, in Erlangen mehrere Jahre in der Studierendengemeinde mitgearbeitet und beschlossen, diese Leidenschaft zu meinem Beruf zu machen. Sobald ich mit meinem Theologie-Studium fertig bin, möchte ich gerne Pfarrerin werden. Gemeinsam Gottesdienst zu feiern, nach Gott zu fragen und dabei vielen unterschiedlichen Menschen zu begegnen, begeistert mich an diesem vielseitigen und herausfordernden Beruf.

Teil meines Studiums ist es, andere Gemeinden und kirchliche Arbeitsfelder kennenzulernen. Dass ich dafür die Möglichkeit habe, nach San Francisco zu reisen, ist wirklich ein großes Geschenk! Ich freue mich auf alle Begegnungen und Erfahrungen, die mich erwarten. Ich bin gespannt, Sie kennenzulernen.

Gottes Segen schickt Ihnen, Susanna Haßel

Dear People of St. Matthew's,

My name is Susanna Haßel. In March of 2020 I will have the opportunity to get to know your congregation. I look forward to this journey, which will take me roughly 6000 miles from Erlangen in Germany to San Francisco.

Originally I am from a region in Bavaria called 'Oberfranken'. I grew up with my parents, my brother and a cat in the beautiful Frankonian Forest near the border to the state of Thuringia. However, I've lived in the university town of Erlangen and its vicinity for the past 5 years and have been a student at the theological seminary. I got married a little over a year ago. Now my husband and I live in a small town town called Bubenreuth, just outside of Erlangen.

I've been active in church congregations since my days in confirmation class. In my hometown, I did a lot of volunteer work with youth. In Erlangen, I actively participated in campus ministry – and at some point, I decided to pursue professional ministry. I hope to become a pastor as soon as I am finished with my seminary education. I enjoy celebrating worship services, asking questions about God and encountering people of all walks of life and look forward to doing all these things as a pastor.

It is part of my seminary education to get to know different ministry settings. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to travel to San Francisco and gather experiences in your congregation! I look forward to all the encounters I experience in California. I can't wait to get to know you!

God's blessings,

Susanna Haßel

Past Events

‘Advent, Advent, ein Lichtlein brennt’: First of Advent – a lively Family-service where the children crafted beautiful advent wreaths.

On Sunday, December 1st, we celebrated another family service under the Motto, ‘Advent, Advent, one light is shining’. Together we reflected on what it means to wait and to anticipate. And ‘Ministry in Context’ student Monica Butler delivered her first sermon in a congregational setting!



Farewell to ‘Ministry in Context’ Student Monica Butler: After a wonderful year with Monica we had to say Goodbye to her. Monica will begin her year -long-interim in fall 2020 to proceed her path of becoming a pastor. We wish her God’s blessings and all the best. We will miss her!



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at St. Matthew’s - ‘Alle Jahre wieder’ – Christmas-Eve at St. Matthew’s

A crowded church full of laughter and joy, hymns and candles, and excited kids. When many little angels announce the birth of Jesus and the holy family has twins. When shepherds arrive and a single king arrives before everyone else. Old and young gustily sang along to favorite carols like ‘O du fröhliche’ and ‘Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht’. The mood during the bilingual service at 6 p.m. was more reflective – what does it mean for us that Christ, the Savior is born? That’s Christmas at our church. What a blessing.



Christmas-Day with the Freundschaft Liederkranz and Farewell to Pr. Tia Pelz

A festive service as always with the hymns we all love and kids talking about the presents they got. It has become a cherished tradition at St. Matthew's: 'alle Jahre wieder', the singers of 'Freundschaft Liederkranz' sing beloved German carols during the worship service on Christmas Day.

Pr. Tia Pelz delivered a moving sermon talking about how we, like the shepherds in the field, (can) spread the good news of Jesus' birth in word and deed. As Pr. Tia's time with us came to a close, she was sent off with a special blessing by the congregation. Pr. Tia has been called to be the pastor at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Fremont, starting by the beginning of March.



St. Matthew's 10th Annual Crab Feed

Our annual Crab feed was a blast as always! On January 25th, St. Matthew's held its 10th annual crab feed. Once more, the kitchen crew prepared a delicious meal for the roughly 60 people who attended. A good time was had by all. Special thanks to Ulrike, Robert and Christina Hodges, Ingrid Rudolph-Angelich and Steven, Eli and Ilse Angelich, Verena Trent-Braucher and Annett Wagner for cooking and serving, to Dorothy Praeger for table decorations, and Bill Bremer for helping wherever his help was needed!

St. Matthew's Annual Meeting

On Sunday, February 9th, members of St. Matthew's met for the annual meeting. Once a year, together as a congregation we have to take care of the business of the church. Church council president Bill Bremer, treasurer Jürgen Fehr and Pr. Kerstin Weidmann presented their reports. The budget for the coming year, which reflects an increase of roughly 3% over the budget from last year, was approved by the assembly. Steven Crabel, Steve Dobel and Philomena Joseph were elected to serve on council. Thanks to all who came, and thanks to all who offer their talents and resources for God's ministries in this place!

Upcoming Events

Rockin' Organ on February 23rd at 1pm

German Organist Friedemann Stihler is coming to St. Matthew's. Virtuoso organist, Friedemann Stihler, is on a brief tour of the Bay Area and will be gracing us and giving our organ a workout with what he does best—a great concert including tremendous classical organ works as well as “rockin’” ones.

Will he play his “Mozart in New Orleans”? Or “The Nutcracker Meets Santana”? Come,



Ash Wednesday Service at St. Mary and Martha's Wednesday, February 26th, 11:30 a.m.

Once more, St. Matthew's and St. Mary and Martha Lutheran Churches will offer joint worship services

during Lent. St. Mary and Martha is located on 1050 S. Van Ness Ave.

A delicious 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!).



Family Service – Sunday, March 1st, 11 a.m.

‘All God's Creatures Have a Place in the Choir’ Join us for a special family oriented worship service, during which we will celebrate all of God's beautiful creation. God's children of all ages are welcome!



Lenten Bible Study: ‘Bless now, o God, the Journey’ – Lenten Hymns and the Message of the Cross

Thursdays in Lent: March 5,12,19 and 26; April 2

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

For this year's Lenten study, we will sing and look at Lenten hymns from our German and American hymnals. How do they convey the message of the cross? And how does this message relate to our life? All are welcome!



Palm Sunday, April 4th

11 a.m. Bilingual Service with guest preacher Pr. Kathryn Gulbranson, Assistant to the Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod.



Good Friday, April 10th

12 noon – Worship Service at St. Matthew's

Before the service at 11 a.m.: Coffee Hour

This year, members of St. Mary and Martha Lutheran Church and St. Francis Lutheran Church will join us as we meditate on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.



Easter Sunday, April 12th

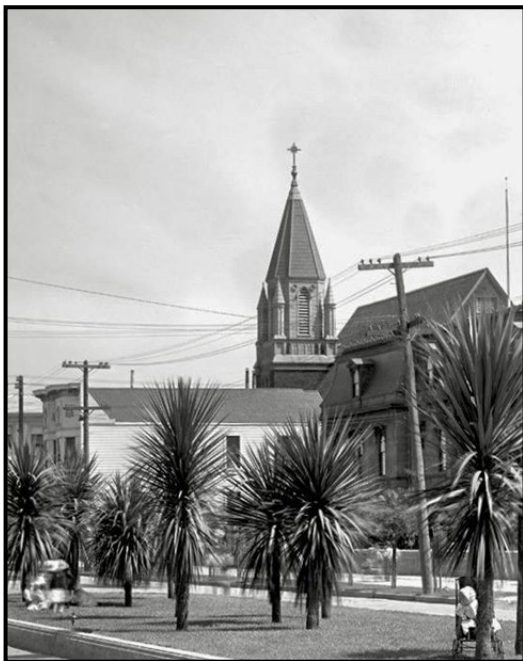
11 a.m. Bilingual Worship Service for the Entire Family

Easter Egg Hunt after the service

Hallelujah, Christ is risen! Come and celebrate God's victory over death and the grave with us!



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church **Evangelisch – Lutherische St. Matthäuskirche** **1895 – 2020**



Celebrate 125 years of ministry with us!

Sunday, March 22nd 2 p.m. Festival Worship Service

Reception Afterwards

RSVP by March 15th: 415-863-6371 or office@stmatthews-sf.org

Mark your Calendar

February 26th – Ash Wednesday

11:30 a.m. - Worship Service at St. Mary and Martha Church
1050 S. Van Ness Avenue

March 1st - First Sunday in Lent - Bilingual Service for the Young and Old

11:00 a.m. - Bilingual Service
Coffee Hour and Birthday Celebration
Council Meeting

March 8th – Second Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m. - English Service with Holy Communion
11:00 a.m. – German Service with Holy Communion

March 15th – Third Sunday in Lent

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

March 22nd – 125th Anniversary of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

2:00 pm - Festival Worship Service
Reception to follow

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

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