

August 27, 2020

What's New? Was gibt's Neues?

A Bi-Weekly Update about What's Going on at and around
St. Matthew's during the Pandemic

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

I can hardly believe that my 3 week stay in Germany is already coming to a close. So God willing and if everything goes according to plan, I should be landing in San Francisco on Friday, August 28th.

It has been good to see my mother during this time. Her cancer has been declared to be in remission now and she is recovering well. We even were able to explore our surroundings a bit! The picture you see is of my mom posing with a windmill at the 'Museumsdorf Cloppenburg', a museum village not far from my hometown of Delmenhorst.

In general, the last few weeks have been a time to connect with family and friends and enjoy the beauty northern Germany has to offer. I truly cherish this gift.

Starting Saturday, August 29th, you can reach me again in 'real time' via my cell phone number (925-330-2289) or via email (pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org).

Of course I've heard about all the horrible fires and the bad air quality in California. It has been covered on German news shows as well. Be assured that many people here are praying for the people affected by the fires – and for you!

Stay well! May God bless us all until we meet again!

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann



Word of the Week (as chosen by the Moravian Brethren – Herrnhuter Brüder):

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. *1st Peter 5:5, NRSV*

Gott widersteht den Hochmütigen, aber den Demütigen gibt er Gnade. *1. Petrus 5, 5, Lutherbibel*

A Brief Reflection on the 'Word of the Week' by Pr. Weidmann:

'Humility' is one of those words that isn't used much anymore these days – it almost sounds archaic. Humility is not necessarily a virtue we cherish anymore. We live in times when self-expression and the defense of personal freedoms rank much higher.

'Go big or go home', is a motto that permeates most areas in life, from sports to economics to politics. Especially during this election year, we don't see a shred of humility, but rather grandstanding and self-aggrandizing.

Where are the humble, those whom God gives grace? Well, we usually don't see them or hear about them because they are, well, humble. They don't brag about their accomplishments. They just share of themselves and their gifts in a quiet way and don't make a big deal out of it. Because they know: it is about others. It's about the larger picture. It's not about themselves.

Do you know where the word 'humility' comes from? It comes from the Latin 'humilis' and means low or lowly. 'Humilis', in turn, comes from 'humus', which is earth. Quite literally, those who are humble are those down to earth. Especially in the light of the second creation story, where Adam (whose name is very closely related to 'adamah', which is 'earth') is made from earth, this makes a lot of sense. This is how God created us: lowly, down to earth, in touch with the earth, all of creation, and our neighbors.

And this is the vision of the kingdom of God and the New Jerusalem: a realm where no one has a higher standing than the other, but all are humble beings in the gracious presence and the everlasting light of God.

We see what happens when hubris – which is the exact opposite of humility - takes over. We see it in the state of our country, the state of many places in this world, and in creation. Our communities and nature at large suffer from disasters brought on and amplified by human exploitation of the planet. In general, we move farther and farther away from the vision of God's peaceable kingdom. Instead we see destruction, mistrust and death.

It is not good that 'humility' isn't a high-ranking virtue anymore. God gives grace to the humble. And humility against God, against our fellow human beings, and God's good creation may be the ticket to experience life as God intends it for everything and everyone, life to the fullest – for all.

So, I commend all you humble siblings in Christ out there: carry on! Continue to let your light so shine before others in a gentle and non-blinding way. You, the ones down to earth, are the salt of the earth. May God give you grace, always.

God' Work – Our Hands Sunday, September 13th

As in previous years, we, together with our sister congregations in the ELCA, will observe 'God's Work – Our Hands' Sunday. Since this year it is very difficult to actually use our hands to help our communities or gather certain items, I would like to encourage you to support the ministries of 'Lutheran Disaster Response' (for more information, see <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response>). Lutheran Disaster Response helps wherever natural disasters like wildfires, tornadoes and hurricanes strike – but also those affected by COVID-19. As we know, the United States currently deals with many issues. Many people need help – our help. So I would like to encourage you to make a donation through the link mentioned above, or by making a contribution through St. Matthew's (please mark 'Disaster Relief' on your check or envelope, or in the Paypal subject line). God bless givers and gifts!

Update: In-Person Worship Services and Events at St. Matthew's

Because of the still high number of COVID-19 infections, the City and County of San Francisco still doesn't allow any indoor gatherings. **Until further notice all indoor meetings and events at St. Matthew's are suspended** (we currently expect that we will not be able to worship in person until at least the end of September).

Sunday Online Worship Services

Since the shelter-in-place order was instituted, St. Matthew's has offered recorded worship services which have been made available every Sunday by 10 a.m. on our website (www.stmatthews-sf.org) and our Facebook page ('Matthew Lutheran'). We will continue to offer these worship service until further notice.

If you'd like to receive a link to these worship services in your email inbox every Sunday, please let us know by sending a request to office@stmatthews-sf.org.

Irregular Office Hours

We continue to offer irregular office hours during the ongoing pandemic. Our office administrator, Angie Holt, usually is in the office on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Pastor will be in Germany through 8/28

If you need to contact Pr. Weidmann, please send her an email (pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org) or call her on her cell phone (925-330-2289). Please take into consideration that she will be in a different time zone (9 hours AHEAD – e.g., 10

a.m. in San Francisco is 7 p.m. in Bremen, Germany) through 8/28. Should any need for in-person pastoral care arise until 8/28, Pr. Weidmann will arrange for a colleague in the San Francisco Bay Area to be available.

Continued Financial Support of St. Matthew's Ministries

We want to thank everyone who has supported St. Matthew's financially during the past several months. Please continue to send in your contributions!

Looking Ahead: Singing at Dolores Park?

Pastor Kerstin is thinking about different ways to keep the St. Matthew's community connected. She would like to offer a 'hymn sing' at Dolores Park near the MUNI station off Church Street (with proper distancing and face masks!) starting in September – day of the week to be determined. If you are interested in participating, contact her.

If YOU have any ideas what to do to stay connected during the pandemic, please let Pr. Kerstin know, and we will figure out how to do it!

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