

October 10, 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,**

This past week was a whirlwind for me. For one, there was a lot of activity around the San Francisco Health Department moving to the 'orange' stage of reopening and allowing houses of worship to open for indoor gatherings again – albeit with many restrictions. I have been attending numerous virtual meetings with SF officials and colleagues on this subject. I have also immersed myself in the material spelling out what will be permitted – and what not. You can read more about that further down.



And while many are longing to gather for worship in person again, and we long for some normalcy, the news that the U.S. President, the First Lady, other White House officials and numerous staff have tested positive for the Coronavirus is a sobering reminder that the pandemic is far from being over. The U.S. is still one of the countries with the highest number of infections per capita. We mourn the deaths of more than 200,000 people in this country alone. As we pray for the President and his wife and as we continue to pray for all those affected by COVID-19, may our prayer also be for greater wisdom in handling the crisis – and common sense among all people regarding their behavior during these times.

Just a reminder that you can always reach me via my cell phone number (925-330-2289) or via email ([pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org](mailto:pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org)) with any questions or concerns – or if you just want to talk.

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):

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. *Psalm 145:15, NRSV*  
Aller Augen warten auf dich, und du gibst ihnen ihre Speise zur rechten Zeit. *Psalm 145, 15, Lutherbibel*

*A Brief Reflection on the ‘Word of the Week’ by Pr. Weidmann:*

This past Sunday we celebrated ‘Erntedank’, the German Thanksgiving for the Harvest. Harvest festivals have been celebrated since times immemorial by human communities all around the world. From the far reaches of Asia to the highlands of South America – people have given thanks to their respective deities for their daily bread (or rice, or corn, or...). And communities have celebrated – with great communal feasts, laughter and dance. Giving thanks for the harvest is one of the oldest indicators of human culture.

Most of us do not toil the earth anymore. We are not intimately connected to the mystery of planting and growth. The more important it is for us to remember to be thankful: thankful for our daily bread, thankful for our prosperity, but also to be thankful for all those who toil the land *for* us – and in the State of California, it is mostly migrant workers who work in the fields – to be thankful for all those who process the food we eat, to be thankful for those who transport and store and sell it so that it can be consumed by us. And we should be especially grateful during these times of the pandemic, for many of those working in the larger food industry work under less than stellar conditions and are more likely to catch the virus than most of us.

But most of all, we must not forget that there is the one to whom we look, and who gives us our food in due season – and so much more. That there is this gracious and generous power behind growth and harvest. Thanks be to God!

**‘Zoom’ Worship Service Celebrating the Life of Barbara on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.**

Due to the ongoing pandemic, a worship service celebrating the life of Barbara Fehr will be offered via the internet platform ‘Zoom’ on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, at 11 a.m. PST. You can either join from your computer or tablet, or dial in using your phone. Please contact the church office for information about accessing this worship service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in San Francisco (3281 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 94103) or The Nature Conservancy (4245 Fairfax Drive, Ste.100, Arlington, VA 22203).



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

The City of San Francisco has developed guidelines regarding the reopening of houses of worship for indoor services. As of now, gatherings indoors are permitted with a maximum of 100 people or 25% of room capacity (whichever number is lower). However, activities such as singing, communal speaking, and social gatherings are prohibited.

One key issue of indoor gatherings is ventilation. In rooms with no or poor ventilation (like the St. Matthew's sanctuary), the danger of aerosols lingering in the air and potential infection with viruses is much higher than outdoors or in well ventilated spaces. The St. Matthew's church council will discuss the possibility of reopening the church for in-person worship services at their next meeting on 10/11. You will be informed about the outcome. Please know that the safety and health of our worship community and the larger community is our main concern.

## **Sunday Online Worship Services**

St. Matthew's will continue to make recorded worship services available every Sunday by 10 a.m. on our website ([www.stmatthews-sf.org](http://www.stmatthews-sf.org)) and our Facebook page ('Matthew Lutheran') until further notice (even beyond the date when we resume in-person worship services).

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](mailto:office@stmatthews-sf.org).

## **Phone-In Services on Thursdays at 10 a.m.**

Pastor Weidmann offers phone-in services on Thursdays at 10 a.m. (ca. 30 minutes). You do not need to do anything – Pr. Weidmann will add you to a conference call. If you are interested, please let her know by either sending her an email at [pastorkerstin@stmatthews-sf.org](mailto:pastorkerstin@stmatthews-sf.org) or calling her on her cell phone: 925-330-2289.

## **Visits on Your Front Porch or in Your Backyard**

Since outdoor meetings in small groups (with masks and proper distance) are deemed to be safe by the CDC and other agencies, Pastor Weidmann would like to offer to visit you on your front porch or in your backyard. These would be strictly pastoral visits (check-in, prayer, Holy Communion, if so desired) – no hospitality is expected. If you would like to receive such a visit, please contact Pr. Weidmann at 925-330-2289 or [pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org](mailto:pastorweidmann@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.

## **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!

### **St. Matthew's Lutheran Church**

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