

October 24, 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,

Later this week, my husband Fred and I will get away for a couple of days. I look forward to this break. Since we will be out of cellphone and internet range, I won't feel the urge to constantly look at my smart phone. We will have a television but have pledged to not turn it on.

Especially as we are headed into a very contentious and even vicious election, it will be good to take a break – from news that just makes you shake your head in disbelief, from hair raising opinions spouted by so many, and from lies that are fed to us each and every day (for whatever is repeated often enough will prevail over the truth).

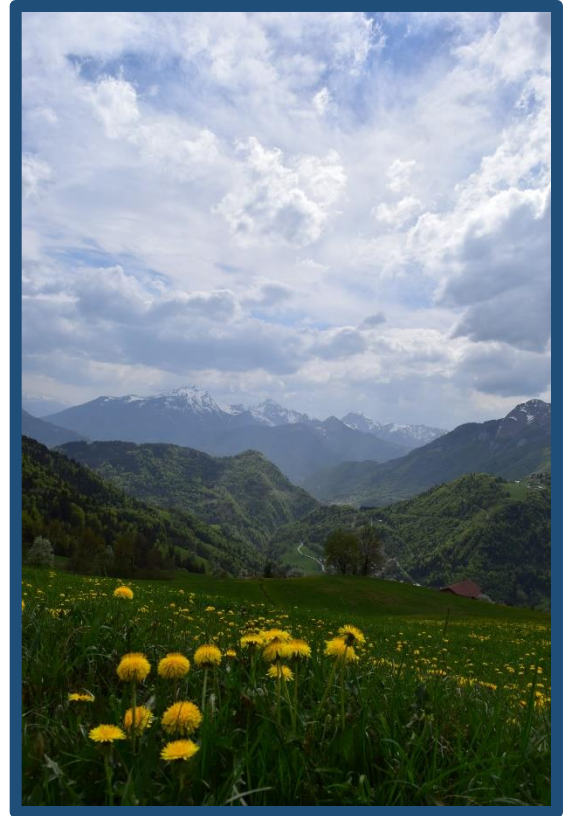
We all need breaks – and not only during times like these. When God created the world, God also allowed for a day of rest: the Sabbath Day. I think it is important that we not only rest from physical work on a certain day or special times during the week – but also give our thoughts and emotions a rest now and then. Even Jesus took a 'time out' once in a while to spend in prayer and to renew and refresh his spirit before then continuing with his ministry.

I encourage you to take a 'time out' once in a while in the coming weeks – turn off the TV, don't follow social media, don't let yourself despair over the political situation in this country. Resist the temptation to engage in contentious, or hurtful, or even hateful discussions. Take a breath. Pray. And then go back into this world to do what Christ commanded us to do: love our neighbor - and our enemy - in word and deed.

Just a reminder that you can always reach me via my cell phone number (925-330-2289) or via email (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):

Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved. *Jeremiah 17:14, NRS*

Heile du mich, Herr, so werde ich heil. Hilf du mir, so ist mir geholfen. *Jeremia 17, 14, Lutherbibel*

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

The prophet Jeremiah suffered a lot for telling the truth – God’s truth – in very difficult political circumstances. The kingdom of Judah was a highly contested territory. For centuries, superpowers to the southwest (Egypt) and to the northeast (first the Assyrians, later the Babylonians) had sought to gain control over this strategically important territory located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa.

In the days of Jeremiah, the king of Judah tried to play a dangerous game. As Egypt and Babylonia were fighting for supremacy in the Near East, he threw in his lot with Egypt, but at the same time paid lip service to Babylonia. God asked Jeremiah to prophesy to the king to turn from Egypt and seek an alliance with Babylonia. However, the king dismissed Jeremiah’s message and punished him severely several times as Jeremiah just would not shut up.

Jeremiah consequently prophesied doom over Judah. But, since nothing bad happened at first, Jeremiah was ridiculed (and worse) for his message. The words in the verse of the week, ‘Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved,’ is uttered by Jeremiah in this context. Jeremiah holds fast to God and to his call, despite all obstacles and hardships. He knows that only God can give healing and hope and peace – and that he has to follow God, even though ‘the world’ tries to convince him to choose a different way.

By the way, Jeremiah’s prophecies eventually came to pass: as a Babylonian attack was imminent, the king of Judah was counting on military relief from Egypt – which never came. Judah with its capitol Jerusalem was conquered, sacked, and the upper class taken into the famous Babylonian Exile.

May Jeremiah be an example for us – an example of putting all our hope in God instead of entities like political leaders and the idol of a free-market economy. May Jeremiah be an example for us to hold on to the teachings of Christ, which speak of love, justice and peace for all, instead of falling into the temptation of mainly acting in our own interest.

Pastor Weidmann's Vacation

Pastor Weidmann will be out of town and out of cellphone range from Thursday, 10/22, through Saturday, 10/24. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pr. Monique Ortiz at St. Mary and Martha Lutheran Church in San Francisco. You can reach her at 415-647-2717 or moniqueortiz777@sbcglobal.net.

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

Even though the San Francisco Department of Public Health has permitted houses of worship to open again for indoor worship services (under strict guidelines), the members of the St. Matthew's council decided during their meeting on 10/11 to not open our sanctuary immediately for worship. We need to make improvements regarding the ventilation in the sanctuary before we can safely open again.

The council set a tentative date for reopening later this year – however, the date will not be announced yet, pending further developments regarding COVID-19 cases in San Francisco. You receive more information after the next council meeting on 11/8.

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) and our Facebook page ('Matthew Lutheran') 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.

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.

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. You can reach Pr. Weidmann at any time: 925-330-2289 or pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org.

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

3281 - 16th Street,

San Francisco, CA 94103-3323

Tel.: 415 863 6371

office@stmatthews-sf.org

www.stmatthews-sf.org

