

Sept. 23, 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 am starting this newsletter on a sad note: Barbara Fehr, who was one of the strong pillars of our community of faith, passed away unexpectedly on September 11th. You find more information below. Please keep Jürgen and his family in your prayers as they mourn her loss.



These days, nothing is certain. We have to be flexible and roll with the punches. May God give us all patience, wisdom, and, above all, love to deal with all that is happening around us and in us.

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):

Cast all your anxiety on God, because he cares for you. *1 Peter 5:7, NRSV*

Alle eure Sorge werft auf Gott; denn er sorgt für euch. 1. Petr 5, 7, *Lutherbibel*

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

2020 will be remembered as quite a catastrophic year. There has been just one thing after the other – pandemic, political strife, civil unrest (for good reasons, but nonetheless), fires, hurricanes, you name it. More than once have I heard over the course of the last weeks that these times feel 'apocalyptic'.

When we think of the Apocalypse, we tend to imagine the 'Hollywood' version: fire and brimstone, relentless wars, destruction and violence, barren landscapes. The end is near.

However, the Greek word from which we derive ‘Apocalypse’ simply means ‘unveiling’ or ‘pulling the curtain away’. In other words, Revelation (which happens to be the name of the last book of our Bible). And, yes, many things, many issues, many abuses are being revealed right now – and at the core of all these is the human tendency to not give a hoot about everything and everyone God lovingly created. At the core of all these is what we like to call sin. Sin drives us and all of creation to death. And that’s depressing.

But Christ taught us to believe in life after death, to believe in new beginnings. During times like these, we can cast all our anxieties, our fears, our anger, our depression on God. God cares.

May our prayer be that God lead us out of the calamities of these days, shows us ways how to overcome divisions and destruction, and grants us patience as we heal the manifold wounds that are inflicted on societies and the earth. May God give us hope for the uncertain times ahead.

In Memoriam: Barbara Fehr (1935-2020)

On Friday, September 11th, Barbara passed away suddenly and unexpectedly, one month shy of her 85th birthday. A funeral was conducted with family and close friends at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland on September 18th.

Barbara was an essential part of St. Matthew’s. She served in many different capacities over the years. Among the things she did over the last years were counting and recording offerings and other income to the church, serving as a member on a lay committee accompanying ‘Ministry in Context’ students from the seminary in Berkeley, and organizing fellowship events. She will also be remembered for her delicious ‘Häppchen’ (German Style open-faced sandwiches) and delivering fruit to congregational members during the pandemic.



Her steady, honest, and loving presence will be missed. May God grant her rest eternal.

At this point, a remote celebration of her life (via Zoom) is tentatively scheduled for some time in October. More information will be shared once it is available.

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

“Blessing of the Animals” on Sunday, October 4th

On October 4th, we will celebrate ‘Erntedank’, the German thanksgiving for the harvest, which is traditionally observed on the first Sunday in October. On October 4th, we will also honor St. Francis, patron saint of our city AND all animals, by blessing our pets. Since we can only do it virtually this year, we ask you to send us a picture of your beloved pet(s) by October 1st, so that they can be included in the service (office@stmatthews-sf.org). Please let us know the name of your pet – and send us any other information about them you’d like to share.



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

The City of San Francisco is currently developing guidelines regarding the reopening of houses of worship for indoor services, which will be made public this coming week.

Once those guidelines are published, the ‘Reopening Task Force’ and the St. Matthew’s Council will determine how we will go about the return to in-person services. What we know for sure is that services won’t be as we are used to: they will be shorter (to minimize exposure to droplets and aerosols), there will be no singing and limited communal speaking, and face masks will be mandatory. In general, we will have to follow the guidelines and safety protocols prescribed by the City of San Francisco in order to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. We will keep you updated about further developments.

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 (even beyond the date we will continue with 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.

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 don't 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 or calling her on her cell phone: 925-330-2289.

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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