

January 21, 2021

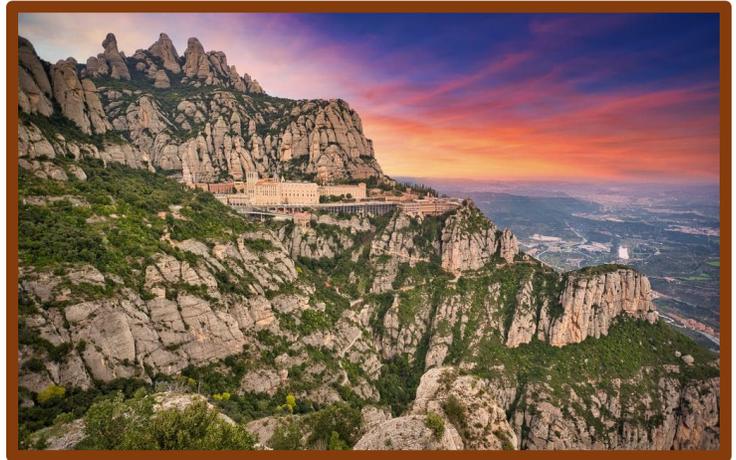
What's New? Was gibt's Neues?

For the week of Week of January 17, 2021

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,

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, things have changed dramatically. The use of technology has become much more important for work and school. Even churches have had to rely much more on technology as usual: at St. Matthew's, we have been offering recorded worship services online. The church council has been meeting via the internet and telephone. Confirmation class has been conducted 'virtually'. And I cannot



emphasize enough what a blessing the technology that we have at our disposal has been.

With meeting restrictions regarding the pandemic still in place, we will not be able to have our annual meeting as usual this year. Since we cannot just skip a meeting and need to make some decisions as a congregation for the coming year, we will meet over the phone on Sunday, February 21st at 11 a.m. If you have a phone, you can participate: you will have to call a certain number (which will be sent to you in due time) and then will automatically be added to the meeting. The St. Matthew's church council hopes that you are able to participate. An annual report will be sent to all voting members prior to the meeting. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to either contact me or one of the church council members.

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Spiritual Reflection by Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

“Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.” Psalm 146, 3-4

“We must obey God rather than any human authority.” Acts 5: 29b

Can a Christian – can someone who follows Christ – be apolitical? I doubt it. Unless someone chooses to live as an absolute recluse, they are part of society – what the ancient Greeks called the ‘polis’. As part of a ‘polis’, we are political by default. Even indifference to a certain system is a political act.

This country has had a transfer of power this week. The United States has a new president and a newly configured Congress. Now we all know that there are those who still contest the results of the last election, basing their refusal to accept the outcome on lies and misinformation. As I am writing this, I hope and pray that there will not be any violence on Inauguration Day – the kind of violence we saw so blatantly committed on January 6th. We all know that this country is deeply divided politically.

There are many who are dismayed that the man they thought would single-handedly solve many issues in this country has not been reelected. There are many who are relieved that there is new leadership. Some of the latter fall into the trap to think that President Biden will be the savior of this country (just as many of the former fell into the trap to think that former President Trump is a Messiah-like figure).

The Bible warns us of trusting worldly leaders to the point that they are seen as Messianic figures, as saviors. God knows human beings are fallible. This also applies to political leaders. As citizens, we still bear the responsibility of making society – of making the ‘polis’ – work. To do our part by being responsible and caring so that society works – preferably for everyone.

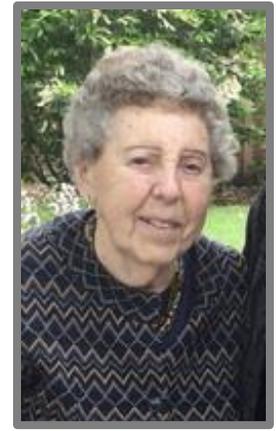
As followers of Christ, we have an additional responsibility: to make sure that God’s reign of love, peace, and justice for all creation – a reign which goes far above and beyond any political system in this world - is experienced through what we say and do. Our first allegiance is to Christ – and not some particular flag, or, worse, some particular political party.

We have to discern daily if what happens in society around us is in line with Christ’s command to love neighbor (and foe), and to take care of the weak and vulnerable in we encounter around us and around the world. It is our call to give those around us a glimpse of what God’s kingdom – a kingdom *beyond* this world with all its political systems – entails.

In this spirit, let us pray for all elected officials in this country. May God give them wisdom and humility to truly serve their people – all of them. May God give them the courage to admit mistakes and change their ways, if necessary. And may God give all of us the courage to do what is right and good in God’s eyes, regardless of who is in (worldly) power.

Zoom Memorial Service for Marianne Kress

A Zoom Memorial service for Marianne Kress has been scheduled for **Sunday, January 31st at 11 a.m. PST**. This service can be accessed either through your computer or your phone. For more information or to receive a link, please contact me: pastorkerstin@stmatthews-sf.org or 925-330-2289.



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

All in-person worship services at St. Matthew's have been canceled until further notice.

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 St. Matthew's worship services in your email inbox every Sunday, please let us know by sending a request to office@stmatthews-sf.org.

Congregational Meeting via Phone on Sunday, February 21st at 11 a.m.

Mark your calendars: on Sunday, February 21st at 11 a.m., St. Matthew's will conduct its annual meeting **as a phone meeting**. In due time, you will receive a notification with what number to call in order to participate in this meeting.

We will keep the meeting short. The main order of business will be to approve a budget for the year 2021. The annual report will be sent to you ahead of the meeting.

Continuation of Phone Services on Thursdays

Since we will not be able to worship in our sanctuary in the foreseeable future, Pr. Weidmann will continue to offer brief worship services with communion over the phone on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Please contact her if you would like to participate. 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: 915-330-2289 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 months. Please continue to send in your contributions!

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann's Contact Information

You can reach Pr. Weidmann via her cell phone (925-330-2289) or via email (pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org).

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