

February 5, 2021

## What's New? Was gibt's Neues? For the week of Week of January 31, 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,**

The recent stay-at-home order has ended. That is a relief (I really needed a haircut!). But that doesn't mean that we are out of the woods yet. The City and County of San Francisco (like the vast majority of counties in California) are still in the most restrictive 'Purple Tier'. Overall, infection numbers are moving in the right direction – but we still need to be patient and do our part to prevent the spread the virus. And I want to encourage you to get the vaccine (if and when you can – I know it's not easy).



At this point, there is no prediction as to when we will be able again to worship in our sanctuary in person. There are just too many variables. We just have to be patient. But that doesn't mean we have to be passive. We still can worship – either online or over the phone. We still can pray. We still can pick up the phone and call someone we have not checked in with for a while. We are still the body of Christ here and now. We are still community. We are still church.

I am looking forward to seeing you again whenever it is safe to do so. Until then: stay safe and healthy! May God bless you!

*Pr. Kerstin Weidmann*

**Spiritual Reflection** by *Pr. Kerstin Weidmann*

The LORD is good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul that seeks him.

It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD. *Lamentations 3: 25-26*

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. *Romans 12: 12*

Groundhog Day just passed. In case you don't know what this day is about: 'Groundhog Day is a popular North American tradition observed in the United States and Canada on February 2. It derives from the Pennsylvania Dutch superstition that if groundhog emerging from its burrow on this day sees its shadow due to clear weather, it will retreat to its den and winter will persist for six more weeks; but if it does not see its shadow because of cloudiness, spring will arrive early.'

(Source: Wikipedia)

Punxsutawney in western Pennsylvania is the best-known town to have festivities involving a real groundhog each year. But did you know that this lore goes back to Germany? In some areas of Germany, the badger ('Dachs') would predict the remaining length of winter...

In 1993, a romantic comedy made involving the festivities in Punxsutawney was made, aptly named 'Groundhog Day'. In this movie, the grumpy and selfish TV weatherman Phil Connor (played by Bill Murray) is sent to Punxsutawney to do a bit on the groundhog. It is not an assignment he enjoys. His report is snarky and cynical. Because of a blizzard, Phil has to spend the night in town – as he wakes up the next morning, he realizes that it is Groundhog Day all over again. And again. And again....

Phil is stuck in time. Whatever he tries, he can't escape Groundhog Day. But as he relives the same day over and over, he slowly changes his attitude: why not make the best of the situation (which also involves wooing his producer Rita, played by Andie MacDowell)? In the end, he is redeemed as his heart is changed, and he becomes a man truly devoted to the needs of others (and he gets the girl, too).

Since the pandemic and the restrictions around it started, I've had many a day when I felt like Phil in 'Groundhog Day'. One day seems like the other. Even Sundays and holidays are not as special as usual. Every day, I have a similar routine. And sometimes I am wondering: will there ever be a way out of this? I long to escape. I long for worship in person, for meeting people, for going to a restaurant or a show. Alas, a predictable end is not in sight. Health officials warn us that, even with the vaccine, we still need to be careful, since we still can catch (and pass on) the virus – though the vaccine prevents the worst symptoms (case in point: my stepson, who received the first dose of the vaccine as a frontline worker in New York City, got really sick with COVID about 10 days later). It seems we will be 'stuck' in this situation for a while.

But why not make the best of it – like Phil in the movie? There is so much to learn, so much to discover, so much to experience as we deal with this health crisis. I for one hope and pray that we, as a society, will take a good look at what is happening right now – what is working, and what isn't – and come out better for it. God is still to be discovered in all this. God is still with us. May God give us patience to weather this storm.

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

Even though some restrictions regarding the pandemic were lifted last week, we are still in the 'purple tier', which means that we still cannot hold any indoor worship services.

## **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.

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

## **Online Ash Wednesday Service on February 17th**

We will offer a prerecorded worship service on Ash Wednesday, which will be made available on our website and Facebook page by 11 a.m. on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **Congregational Meeting via Phone on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 11 a.m.**

Mark your calendars: on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 11 a.m., St. Matthew's will conduct its annual meeting **as a phone meeting**. Very shortly you should be receiving a notification what number to call in order to participate in this meeting.

We will keep the meeting brief. The main order of business will be to approve a budget for the year 2021. The annual report will be sent to voting members within the next few days.

## **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](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. You can reach Pr. Weidmann at any time: 915-330-2289 or [pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org](mailto: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](mailto:pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org)).

## **Registration Link for COVID Vaccine**

John Mcknight, the community partners group coordinator of the SF COVID Command Center, sent out this message this week to be distributed among the faith communities in San Francisco:

'Greetings all. This just came out. It is a link to a page where you can sign up for vaccination. Please know there is still a limited supply and only those eligible can sign up. Do register if you are eligible and I hope this helps.'

<https://sf.gov/get-vaccinated-against-covid-19>

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

3281 - 16th Street,

San Francisco, CA 94103-3323

Tel.: 415 863 6371

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

[www.stmatthews-sf.org](http://www.stmatthews-sf.org)

