

April 15, 2021

**What's New? Was gibt's Neues?  
For the of Week of Week of April 11, 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,**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed,  
alleluia!

I don't know about you, but to me *this*  
Easter season feels like a resurrection of  
sorts after a very long time of fasting  
from so many things that are important  
to me – like coming together as  
community. Things are finally looking  
up!



Thanks be to God for giving the scientists who developed the COVID vaccines! Thanks be to God that the end of the pandemic seems in sight now and that more and more people have reached immunity. I will get my second shot this week.

Because things have been much better in the San Francisco Bay Area, and because more and more people have been fully vaccinated, the St. Matthew's church council feels comfortable **reopening the sanctuary for in-person worship services on May 2nd** (in accordance with whatever the ordinances and guidelines will be then). For the time being, we will offer **one bilingual service at 11 a.m.** This service will most likely still not be what we have been used to. However, the greatest gift is that we can gather again to worship together physically. And I hope you will feel well and comfortable enough to come back soon.

Since we have reached people beyond our immediate worship community through our online worship services, we will continue to offer these in addition to our in-person worship services until further notice.

Have a blessed Easter season! Hope to see you soon!

*Pr. Kerstin Weidmann*

## **Spiritual Reflection for Holy Week** by Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

“Christ has arisen, alleluia! Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.

For our redeemer burst from the tomb, even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.

Death’s fearful sting he has come to destroy.

Our sin forgiving, alleluia! Jesus is living, alleluia!”

*Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia, ELW #364, verse 1*

This hymn from Africa has become one of my favorite Easter hymns. It captures what Easter is all about: abundant joy and praise because our sins are forgiven and we are offered a new life in God. And this new life leads beyond all the seemingly dead ends we run into all the time. Even death does not have the last word.

Now the thing about Easter is that even some Christians are done with it once the Easter egg hunt is over, and the ham is eaten. But what about the days following Easter Sunday? What about the season we are in right now (don’t forget: Easter lasts 49 days). Do we just get ‘back to normal’, putting the joy and the certain hope of Easter Sunday aside? Do we live as if we believed what we say and sing: that Christ has arisen, indeed, thus opening for us the door to everlasting life and making everything new? Or do we rather let our lives be ruled by worries and anxieties of not having or getting enough?

The big question is: How do we live as ‘Easter people’, touched by God’s promise of new life? The most obvious answer: by spreading the joy of Easter each and every day. That doesn’t mean we have to be cheerful and upbeat all the time, shouting ‘Alleluia’ wherever we go (although that’s one way to do it); no, often we spread joy in a more subtle way and in little doses. Sometimes a kind word, an open ear for listening, the encouraging squeeze of a hand, a hug, a prayer will do miracles. Imagine how you can be ‘good news’ to someone, by sharing the Easter hope and joy in your very unique way, in our very unique times with very unique challenges.

I wish you a happy and blessed Easter season!

Pastor Kerstin

## **Reopening of Our Sanctuary for In-Person Worship Services on May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Good news! St. Matthew's church council decided to open the sanctuary again for in-person worship services, starting on **May 2<sup>nd</sup>** (barring any detrimental developments regarding the pandemic). There will be just **one bilingual worship service at 11 a.m. on Sundays**. There will be no coffee hour for at least a few weeks after the reopening. Please be assured that we will hold any indoor worship services in accordance with the ordinances and guidelines of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (whatever they may be, come May). We will share more information with you as we get closer to opening day.

### **Sunday Online Worship Services**

Even after the reopening, 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') for the time being.

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).

### **Continuation of Phone Services on Thursdays**

Until in-person worship services at St. Matthew's resume, 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).

Regular office hours (Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) will resume the week of April 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **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)).

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