

What's New? Was gibt's Neues? For the of Month of October

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

Can you believe we have entered the season of autumn once more? For me as a pastor, October marks the time on the church calendar when the long 'ordinary time' slowly comes to an end. At the end of the month, we will commemorate Reformation Sunday. Come November, we enter a rather sober time of remembering those who have gone before us – and to reflect on our own death.



Fall is my favorite season – I like this season of reflection, this season when nature prepares to rest before new life springs forth once more.

Every Wednesday in October, I would like to honor the memory of Martin Luther and the Reformation by offering a study series on 'Women of the Reformation'. Yes, we will talk about Katie Luther – but there were some other women who helped transform and reform the church in the 16th century. For more information, please see below.

I would also like to invite you to celebrate Reformation Day at St. Matthew's with a festive service. I heard rumors that Katie Luther herself will be gracing us with her presence again that day...

I hope to see you again soon at St. Matthew's. God bless,

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Spiritual Reflection by *Pr. Kerstin Weidmann*

'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' *Psalm 46, NRSV*

'A mighty fortress is our God,

A bulwark never failing.' *Martin Luther, 'A Mighty Fortress'*

As my husband Fred and I were travelling in Germany, Luxemburg and France, we came across several ancient castles – or castle ruins. Those can be found in many places along the Rhine and the Moselle Rivers. The castle ruin you see in the picture towers over the town of Bernkastel-Kues on the Moselle.

Now ancient castles or castle ruins may stir up romantic notions in us, and evoke images of long-gone days of chivalry, knights in shining armor, fair maidens, and troubadours. But we are also reminded that times were often hard in the medieval ages – castles were strong fortresses, often situated in strategic places with good views of land and waterways. And these fortresses would serve as a stronghold and shelter for people and livestock whenever a hostile force or marauders would attack. Fortresses were built to protect – and more often than not were able to withstand an attack.



Now warfare changed over the centuries. Gun powder and cannons replaced swords, pikes, bows and arrows. Even mighty fortresses became vulnerable to the destructive power of new weapons. Fortresses became obsolete. Not surprisingly, many castle fortresses were abandoned, starting in the 17th century. And many of those fortresses fell into ruins – but still look impressive and imposing today. There still is a certain kind of magic around castle ruins – I guess that’s why they remain tourist magnets.

Martin Luther grew up in the principality of Thuringia in what today is Germany. Thuringia still today is known as the ‘Land of Fortresses’. Martin Luther even spent some time in one of these fortresses – as he had to hide away from the authorities after he was declared a heretic and an outlaw at the Diet of Worms in 1521. He spent 300 days at the Wartburg near Eisenach. Luther knew firsthand about the safety and security a fortress would provide. Sometime between 1527 and 1528, he penned the famous hymn, ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God’, which is based on Psalm 46.

Luther had, to put it mildly, quite a tumultuous life. After 1521, he couldn’t be certain that he wouldn’t be caught by imperial forces and put to death (interesting fact: at first he even didn’t want to get married because was afraid he wouldn’t live long enough to be a good husband and father). But he put his trust in God, who was to him like a place of safe refuge.

The lyrics of ‘A Mighty Fortress’ may sound archaic or even belligerent to our post-modern ears. But to Luther, the example of a fortress was the utmost expression of his trust that God will protect us from all harm – just as a fortress in its heyday protected the people from danger.

As my husband and I visited several castle ruins, we gained a new appreciation for Luther’s faith and trust in God, who is with us through time and eternity, in good times and in challenging times. God indeed is our refuge and strength, a very present help during trouble.

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

In-Person Worship Services at St. Matthew’s

Bilingual Worship Services are offered **every Sunday at 11 a.m.**, followed by coffee hour. Please note that current guidelines mandate that everyone who would like to come to coffee hour needs to be fully vaccinated or needs to show a negative COVID-19 test result that cannot be older than 72 hours. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Pr. Kerstin Weidmann.

Sunday Online Worship Services

St. Matthew’s continues to make recorded worship services available every Sunday by 2 p.m. on its website (www.stmatthews-sf.org) and its Facebook page (‘Matthew Lutheran’).

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

In Memoriam: Brigitte Pfau

Longtime member and ‘pillar of the congregation’ Brigitte Pfau passed away in her home on Sunday, August 22nd.

Mrs. Dorothy Praeger remembers her:

Mrs. Brigitte Pfau was a faithful member of St. Matthew’s and also a member of the Finance Committee and the Church Council. She was a dedicated worker quietly seeing to the Church’s needs. For example, for 4 months while the Church survived on supply pastors from around the Bay Area to come and preach two sermons on Sunday, Brigitte was there early to welcome them, pay them, and assist them as they prepared to serve in an entirely new situation. She was truly a “Martha” in her love for Jesus.



Her family, friends, and the St. Matthew’s community said farewell to her in a memorial service on Sunday, September 26th. She will be dearly missed.

St. Matthew’s has established a fund in memory of Brigitte Pfau. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send us a check or donate via PayPal.

Pr. Kienberger’ Visit on Sunday, August 22nd



Pr. Stephan Kienberger, who was pastor at St. Matthew’s in the early 1990’s, visited St. Matthew’s on Sunday, August 22nd. He enjoyed reconnecting with St. Matthew’s members and getting to know people who have recently become part of this worshipping community. Pr. Kienberger currently serves Peace First Lutheran Church in Astoria, Oregon.

Pr. Christian Jennert & Pr. Stephan Kienberger

October Study: Women of the Reformation

Every Wednesday in October (10/6, 10/13, 10/20, and 10/27) from 2:30 – 4 p.m., Pr. Weidmann will offer a study session about ‘Women of the Reformation’ in St. Matthew’s fellowship hall. Come and learn about some remarkable women!

Reformation Day Service on Sunday, October 31st

On October 31st at 11 a.m., St. Matthew’s will offer a festive worship service commemorating the Reformation. Katie Luther has announced she will be back!

Visitation

Since Pr. Weidmann is now fully vaccinated (and most of you are, too), she feels comfortable making home visits again. If you’d like to arrange a visit, please contact her at (925) 330-2289 or pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org.



Office Hours

We are offering regular office hours again (Wednesdays and 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 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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