

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

What's New? Was gibt's Neues? For the of Month of December 2021

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

It's time to say farewell. At the end of the month, I will be leaving St. Matthew's. Come January, my husband Fred and I will move to New York City, where new ministries await us.

I want to thank you for all that you have shared with me these past seven and a half years. It's been an honor and a blessing to be your pastor.

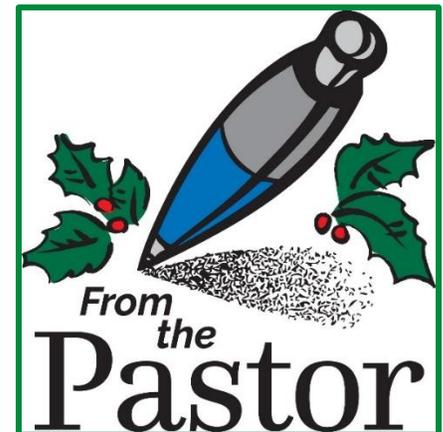
Now many have asked me, 'What's next? Who is going to be our next pastor?' At this point, I don't know. But I want to assure you that you will be well taken care of once I have left.

The leadership of St. Matthew's has been working with the Synod office regarding the future of pastoral leadership in this community of faith. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our church council president, Dr. Bill Bremer, or any other church council member.

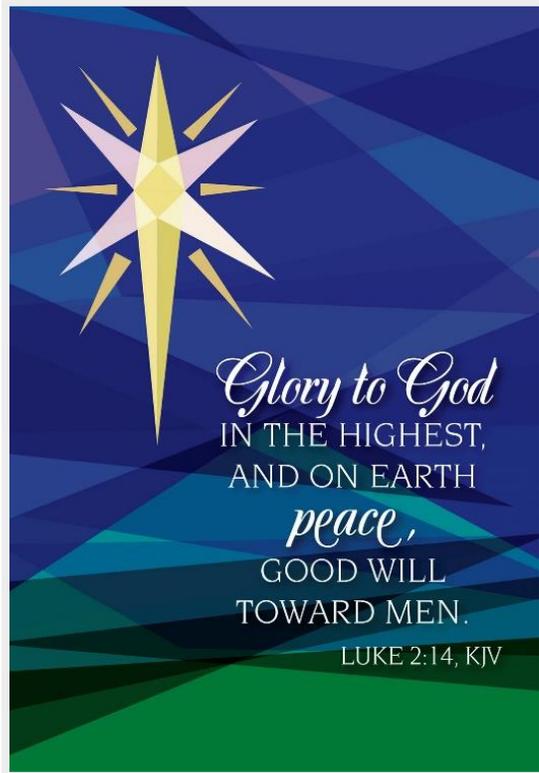
I am looking forward to celebrating Christmas one more time with you. A child is born to us – new life enters this troubled world. With God, there are always new beginnings. With God, there is always hope.

Blessings,

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann



Spiritual Reflection by Pr. Kerstin Weidmann



‘But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.’ Luke 2:19

Probably most of us can recite how the Christmas story according to Luke begins: ‘In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered...’ And this decree sets in motion a chain of events that we are so familiar with: a very pregnant Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem to be registered, but there is no room for them at the inn. Then they find shelter in a manger, where Jesus is born. Meanwhile, shepherds in the field are terrified by angels who sing loudly and proclaim the birth of the savior to the world. And the shepherds go and find what the angels proclaimed – a babe in a manger, swaddled in cloth.

This is the beloved and oh so familiar story, full of sights and sounds, full of (divine) action.

But then, as the angels have gone back to heaven and the shepherds are on their way to proclaim what news has been revealed to them, the holy family has a chance to rest - and Mary has a chance to reflect on all the wondrous things that have happened that night: she ‘treasures all these words and ponders them in her heart.’





During the Advent and Christmas season, it is easy to get swept up in action and events. Covid is still keeping us from going all out, but we carefully resume activities that are dear to us: go to concerts, attend parties and gatherings, carefully select gifts for our loved ones. We prepare to receive guests for the holidays, or we prepare to travel. We write Christmas cards. Even Christmas Eve and Christmas Day tend to be eventful as we joyfully celebrate the birth of Christ at church and in the home. But what happens when all the busy-ness is over? What do we do with the good news of God entering our reality as the babe in the manger? How do we proclaim this good news in and through our lives?

Mary ponders all these things in her heart. She knows that the birth of her son – God’s son – is just the beginning of a much longer and much more complicated story. And my hope and prayer is that, as much as we marvel in the excitement and busy-ness and joy of the season, we also take our time pondering – and treasuring the gift of the child in the manger and the man on the cross every day of our lives. God comes to us. God is with us. God shares in our experience and has mercy on us.

This Advent season, the verse about Mary reflecting on all the events surrounding the birth of her child speaks to me like never before. As my time as the pastor of St. Matthew’s comes to a close, I have been thinking and pondering a lot about the past 7+ years as pastor of this wonderful community of faith. So much has happened. So many stories were shared. I have been able to walk with you through joy and sorrow – and everything in between. All the while, I felt God’s Holy Spirit among us and working through us. I will cherish the memories of ministry in (and beyond) this place. I will treasure the memory of the amazing people of the St. Matthew’s community. And I will carry the experiences you allowed me to have to the next place God calls me.



May God bless you this Advent and Christmas season – and beyond!

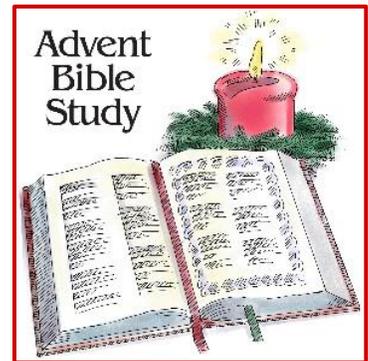
Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

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.

Advent Bible Study

St. Matthew's will offer an Advent Bible study on the following Tuesdays in December: 11/30, 12/7, and 12/14. The time will be 2:30 – 4 p.m. On 12/14, we will also have a celebration of the season with songs, stories, and poems. If you have any questions, please contact Pr. Kerstin.



Christmas Season Worship Services



Friday, December 24th: Christmas Eve

4 p.m. German Worship Service

6 p.m. English Worship Service

In addition, we will offer online worship services (English and German), which will be made available by 2 p.m. on December 24th.

NO Worship Service on Christmas Day (December 25th)

Sunday, December 26th: 2nd Day of Christmas

11 a.m. Bilingual Worship Service with Holy Communion, followed by a farewell reception for Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

Sunday Online Worship Services in December

In December, St. Matthew's will offer the following online worship services:

December 12th, 3rd Sunday in Advent

December 24th, Christmas Eve (one worship service in German, one worship service in English)

These online worship services will be made available on aforementioned days by 2 p.m. on St. Matthew's website (www.stmatthews-sf.org) and Facebook page ('Matthew Lutheran').

If you'd like to receive a link to St. Matthew's worship services in your email inbox, please let us know by sending a request to office@stmatthews-sf.org.



Farewell Reception for Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

We hope you can join us as we say farewell to Pr. Kerstin during and after the 11 a.m. worship service on **December 26th**. You can take this opportunity to express your personal good wishes and thanks for all the dedicated service she has provided to our congregation over the past 7 years. A light lunch and dessert will be served.

Celebration of Alois and Thea Scholz's 58th Wedding Anniversary



On Tuesday, November 23rd, Thea and Alois Scholz celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary surrounded by family and friends. Pr. Kerstin brought greetings and good wishes on behalf of St. Matthew's. God bless Alois and Thea as they continue to walk through life together!





Celebration of Baptism

On Sunday, November 28th, Matthew E.M. was baptized at St. Matthew's. We welcome this new member of God's family! May God bless him and his family.

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 until December 31st, 2021 via her cell phone (925-330-2289) or via email (pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org). Starting on January 1st, 2022, please send all inquiries to office@stmatthews-sf.org or call the church office at 415-863-6371.



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