



St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Newsletter

What's New? Was gibt's Neues?

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
Psalm 27

Dear St. Matthew's community

As I write this reflection, we have entered the second week in Lent. Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, is a more somber, reflective, and prayerful season in the church's calendar. We journey with Christ towards the cross of Good Friday, and while Lent feels more "austere" than other seasons of the liturgical calendar, it has an important place in the life of the church.

Spiritual writer and priest Henri Nouwen puts it in his Lenten prayer like this:

"The Lenten season...is a time to be with you, Lord, in a special way, a time to pray, to fast, and thus to follow you on your way to Jerusalem, to Golgotha, and to the final victory over death..."

Lent becomes very real for me this year when I either watch the news or read the latest headlines on my smartphone. I am devastated by the war in Ukraine, the senseless destruction of homes and infrastructure and, worse, the killing of innocent children and adults. Some of you have shared with me that you feel similarly. It is hard to watch and my heart is heavy. The cross comes to mind and it is very present in these images of war.

While it is totally OK to feel anxious and disheartened when we see images of war and destruction,

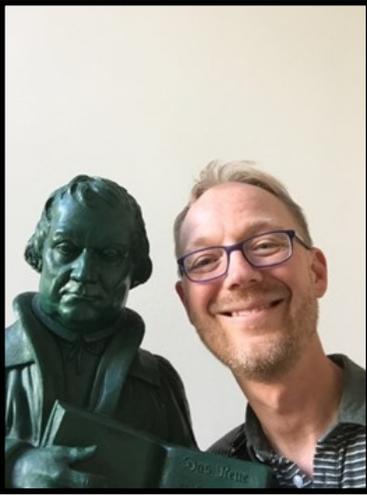
we also know to whom we can turn for protection and care. The psalmist writes, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1) I am reminded that I am not completely helpless—I can pray for peace and healing among nations and I can offer support through the church's various disaster relief organizations. This, too, is Lent: We journey towards the cross, and at the same time we know that death never has the last word with God, my light and salvation. The promise of Easter is looming, and I cling to the hope of my faith in Christ. I need that promise so I can weather the difficult parts of my life.

Lent is an invitation, as Henri Nouwen writes, to make additional time for worship and prayer, and journey with Christ to Golgotha. In these times it is good to know that we are not alone. St. Matthew's offers various worship and fellowship opportunities this Lent and Easter season. Bring a friend, neighbor, or family member; there is room and welcome in God's house for ALL who enter.

May it be well with you on your Lenten journey and always!

Christian Jennert, Vacancy Minister

A NOTE FROM ST. MATTHEW'S VACANCY MINISTER



My name is Christian Jennert and I have been filling in on Sunday mornings at St. Matthew's following Pr. Kerstin's departure. It has been a joy to worship with you and to get to know you a little bit in conversation over

coffee following the service. As of now my time with you has been primarily on Sunday mornings. Starting later this month, I will be with you more intentionally one additional day each week for prayer, conversation, spiritual care, and other aspects of congregational care and leadership. I am no stranger to St. Matthew's. When I came from Germany to study at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, St. Matthew's awarded me the *Adelsberger Scholarship* for bi-lingual ministry in 2000, which helped cover costs of my tuition and living expenses. I have been very grateful for this generous gift!

On a more personal note, I was born and raised north of Hanover, Germany, in *Elze*, a small town of less than 3000 people. I am the youngest of three siblings and the Lutheran church was an important part of my life growing up. Following graduation from my local high school and 15 months of service work, I discerned my desire to study theology. I completed my undergraduate studies at *Kirchliche Hochschule Bethel* (Bethel Church Divinity School) in Bielefeld and continued my graduate studies at the University of Tübingen where I also worked as a research assistant at the interdisciplinary Institute for Medical Ethics (part of Tübingen University Medical School). When I came to Berkeley in 1999 I decided to finish my theological studies in the United States and

graduated in 2003—following a year-long vicarage in Clackamas, Oregon.

In 2004 I was called and ordained to serve as Associate Pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco where I served until 2011. This was followed by a four-year pastorate at Holy Trinity in San Carlos, a brief call to St. Paul in Oakland and a hospital chaplain residency at John Muir Hospital in Concord. I left the ELCA clergy roster in 2018 to follow another passion of mine—travel and aviation. I am currently working as an Inflight Instructor for Southwest Airlines in Oakland. The work is fast-paced and exciting. I train our Oakland-based Flight Attendants to ensure they remain current and compliant with all safety and regulatory requirements of their job. My position with Southwest allows me to share my joy and passion for ministry at St. Matthew's on weekends and at least one additional day each week.

My spouse of 16 years, Dr. Chris Evans, and I live with our two rescue chihuahuas, Schoki and Spatz, in the Marina Bay neighborhood of Richmond. In my free time I enjoy hiking our Bay Area trails, roadtrips to the redwoods (and other California destinations), watching German murder mysteries (*Krimis*), a nice cup of coffee, and occasionally making music (for church & home use only!). I look forward to being with you and getting to know you better in this time of vacancy as, together, we explore where God is calling us here in the heart of the Mission.

Lenten blessings,
Christian Jennert

Playing the flute during the 3-13-22 worship service.



JOIN ST. MATTHEW'S FOR LENT & EASTER

Sunday, March 20 Third Sunday in Lent

11:00 a.m. Bilingual Service with the Distribution of Holy Communion

Sunday, March 27 Fourth Sunday in Lent

11:00 a.m. Bilingual Service of the Word

Sunday, April 3 Fifth Sunday in Lent

11:00 a.m. Bilingual Service with the Distribution of Holy Communion



HOLY WEEK

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10

11:00 a.m. Bilingual Service of the Word

Good Friday, April 15 -

11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour

12 noon Bilingual Liturgy of Good Friday

Easter Sunday, April 17

11:00 a.m. Festival Bilingual Service with the Distribution of Holy Communion

12:15 a.m. Festive Coffee & Fellowship Hour

St. Matthew's recorded services will be returning this Easter season—*stay tuned!!!*

Christian Jennert is available for prayer, spiritual care and conversation

St. Matthew's Vacancy Minister Christian Jennert is available for prayer, spiritual care and conversation. The best way to contact him is via email at jennert@stmatthews-sf.org or by calling the church office at 415. 863.6371. In an urgent situation or emergency, please call his cell at 510.717.3221.

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

As we are now well into the Lenten season and rapidly approaching Easter, we are **hopefully** nearing the end of one world disaster, the COVID-19 pandemic, but regrettably we are now finding ourselves entering yet another one, the horrible Russian war against Ukraine. We are living in a dangerous and uncertain time with an unknown outcome... very sad indeed.

Fortunately here at St. Matthew's, events are progressing on a more hopeful and positive course. Christian Jennert has enthusiastically been serving as our vacancy minister since the beginning of the year and is planning some innovative events. The Council continues to support him and work with him (along with the Synod) in securing a permanent pastor on a part-time basis. With the recent easing of pandemic restrictions, we are now again able to attend worship services without wearing a mask, **IF** you are fully vaccinated and 'boosted'. Nearly all of our groups are back with us. The future is beginning to look brighter. For now, weekly bilingual services at 11:00 AM will be continued and bimonthly online services will be resumed when we have the resources available to do so. We hope to see you in a church service during this important season.

William H. Bremer, M.D., Council President

Mark your Calendar

"Journeys in Faith" | New Member Gathering **Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10 – 12:15 p.m.**

Lent has historically been a season when people new to the Christian faith prepared for their baptism and first communion on Easter. Why would anyone want to "join" a congregation in the 21st century? At this gathering we will explore how we look at the Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition, how we understand the Scriptures, and how we live our faith in daily life. Anyone curious to explore what it means to be a follower of Christ in our beautiful city is invited to attend if interested. Those who attend have a choice to be received as members on the *Second Sunday of Easter*, April 24. Please email Christian Jennert with any questions or to RSVP at jennert@stmatthews-sf.org or call the church office at 415.863.6371.



We are looking forward to seeing you there!



"Promises of New Life"

Saturday, May 14 Church Retreat in the Easter Season 10:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m. @ St. Matthew's

Sometimes it is good to "get away" from our daily routines and make time for a mid-morning retreat. This Easter season join Vacancy Minister Christian Jennert for a time of rest, renewal, sharing of stories and listening to God's presence in our (and the church's) lives.

Come as you are! *More information as we get closer to the date.*

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