

March 30, 2021

**What's New? Was gibt's Neues?
For the of Week of Week of March 28th, 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,

A year ago, I was so convinced that the COVID-19 pandemic wouldn't last very long, and that we'd be able to worship in person again in May or June of 2020. How naïve I was! We have been dealing with this pandemic for more than a year now. There might be yet another wave of COVID cases, brought on by new variants and the over-eagerness of people to gather without any restrictions again. I cannot tell you how tired I am of being so careful in all my interactions – and how much I long to get back to some sense of normalcy. But we have to be patient and mindful of our neighbors' needs just a little longer.

At St. Matthew's, we won't be returning to in-person worship services quite yet (more information below). But I invite you to participate in the mystery of Holy Week by attending the online worship services we will be offering at St. Matthew's: on Good Friday, April 2nd, a bilingual service will be available on our website and Facebook page by 12 noon. On Easter Sunday, April 4th, a bilingual service will be available by 10 a.m.

I hope you can celebrate with us! I wish you a profound and blessed Holy Week and a happy Easter!

Pr. Kerstin Weidmann

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

“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Matthew 16: 21, NRSV

“We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams.
World-losers and world-forsakers,
Upon whom the pale moon gleams;



Yet we are the movers and shakers,
Of the world forever, it seems.”

Arthur O’Shaughnessy, ‘We Are the Music-Makers’

This is the week that, in Christian tradition, is called ‘Holy Week’. This is the week that begins with the commemoration of Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem and ends with the silence of Jesus in the tomb. During this week, everything changes for Jesus and those who follow him. The days of preaching, teaching, and healing are over. Jesus now has to experience the torment of betrayal, derision, humiliation, torture, and death. His death on the cross will become the most important demonstration of God’s love for the world.

Then we move on to Easter. Nothing is as it seems. Death doesn’t have the last word. Jesus rises from the dead. The stubborn life force we find in God turns everything upside down. Jesus’ death and resurrection are game changers and life changers for us all. Yes, we all have to deal with suffering, disappointment, fear, and grief in our lifetime. Even Jesus, fully human, was not immune to that. However, the events of Easter morning point us to a reality that transcends our existence and experiences; we can have hope, and joyfully and defiantly join in the great dance of life, fostering and promoting life wherever we are.

For me, this is what O’ Shaughnessy captures so beautifully in the poem ‘We Are the Music-Makers’. As Easter people, we are those who hope against all hope, those who defiantly love and forgive. We are the ‘world-losers and world-forsakers’ O’ Shaughnessy talks about, who yet are the ones who have the power to change the world in God-subversive ways. We are called, not to endorse the status quo, but to let growth happen and to foster it. We are those who should never stop sowing the proverbial mustard seed of God’s kingdom of love, peace, and justice. After all, ‘we are the movers and shakers of the world forever’, moved and shaken by God who God-self didn’t shy away from suffering, death, and radical renewal.

I invite you to participate in the mystery of Holy Week by attending the online worship services we will be offering at St. Matthew’s: on Good Friday, April 2nd, the service will be available on our website and Facebook page by 12 noon. On Easter Sunday, April 4th, a bilingual service will be available by 10 a.m.

Since we will not offer any in-person worship services at this point, I want to encourage you to maybe visit another church in person on Easter Sunday (but please come back to St. Matthew’s once we are open again!).

May your journey to the cross and beyond be blessed.

Pastor Kerstin

In Memoriam: Margarete Schlachter

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Margarete Schlachter, who was a member of St. Matthew’s for many years. She passed away on March 11th. There are currently no services planned.

Update: In-Person Worship Services and Events at St. Matthew’s

St. Matthew’s church council will again discuss the reopening of the church for in-person worship services during their next meeting on 4/11. Since things haven’t been looking up (and Pr. Weidmann received her first vaccine dose), a reopening may happen in the not-too-distant future. Please stay tuned!

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) and our Facebook page ('Matthew Lutheran') for the time being.

We will also offer an online worship service for Good Friday, which will be made available on Friday, April 2nd, before 12 noon.

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.

Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly 2021 – Looking for a Female Lay Voting Member!

This year's Sierra Pacific Assembly will be held from Thursday, May 6th, through Saturday, May 8th, ONLINE via Zoom. St. Matthew's is entitled to 'send' two lay voting members to the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly. Since we already found a lay male voting member (thank you, Steve Crabiel!), we are still looking for a female lay person who might be interested in participating. This year's assembly will be quite interesting, since we will be electing a new bishop – Mark Holmerud, who served in the capacity of bishop for the last 13 years, will be retiring.

Requirements for participating as a voting member are: access to a computer, tablet, or smartphone, willingness to download the video conferencing program 'Zoom' on the device, and a stable internet connection. **Registration deadline is April 1st, so if you are interested, please let Pr. Weidmann know ASAP** pastorweidmann@stmatthews-sf.org.

Even if you can't or don't want to be a voting member, you can still follow the synod assembly at your own leisure online. It will be live streamed via YouTube (more information to come).

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.

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: 925-330-2289 or 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).

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