

September

2020
Edition



The Ambrosian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church
900 Edgewater Boulevard, Foster City, California 94404

Reflections from the Interim Rector

Ambrosian Sept 2020

Dearest Ambrosians,

I can honestly say this is the weirdest pastoral relationship I have yet known! Usually, I appreciate the ‘weird’ and ‘unusual’ and I love challenges and puzzles, but the pieces of this puzzle are so completely alien: a group of parishioners I cannot meet in community; a deadly pandemic; wildfires all around us; marches and protests for racial equality; the run-up to the craziest general election ever; a few hurricanes (because there wasn’t enough going on); and the threat of another Great Depression – to name but a few!

2020 started with me quite happily working at our Episcopal Cathedral in Paris. I felt blessed. Some part of me believes God was giving me a ‘treat’ knowing what was coming. And yet, when I look at our parish, a larger part of me knows I’m still being blessed. Of the few people I’ve had the privilege of meeting in person or on Zoom, I’ve found you all to be so incredibly kind, loving, welcoming, and very hard working.

A wise colleague gave me advice about being your interim priest when he said “Don’t make any immediate changes”. How I wish I could have followed his advice! Rather, it became obvious within days of starting at St Ambrose that we had to start totally reimagining how we can continue to worship both online and (eventually) in-person. When the pandemic surprised us, St Ambrose’s was quick to meet the challenge as best as possible. Now, we realize that we have the luxury of a little bit more time to plan for a hybrid means (online/in-person) for the near future. To be honest, I am thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and creatively work together.

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment...

As Christians, our first priority is always God followed closely by each other. So, as a priest, my first task is to ensure that we can worship God in the liturgy, offer our gratitude, and find new ways for us to pray for a world in so much need.

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Editor
Yvonne Sidell

.....*And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

Now that the hard work of expanding a hybrid liturgy is underway, my attention turns to *how can I meet people here?* Let me start by telling you just how much I crave meeting you and getting to know you – and especially figuring out how I can serve and be of use. As some of you know, I sat down the other day and decided to call everyone in our phone directory. So far I've made it through the A's, B's, and C's – but I have a way to go before I finish the alphabet! Not knowing what each person's comfort level of social distancing adds a certain awkwardness in proposing ways. I leave this up to you, but I am willing to meet in whatever way is comfortable to you. Some options for you to consider: 1) We can meet with masks and distance either at the church, or outside, or at your homes. 2) We can meet via Zoom or Facetime. 3) We can use the old-fashioned phone call method, or texts, or emails.

My phone number is 845-240-4516 and my email is (now) rector_stambrosefc@att.net.

In the meantime, please know that you are very much in my thoughts and prayers and that I look forward to getting to know you better. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do for you. God's blessings have continued by sending me to St Ambrose's and I am truly delighted!

Devotedly in Christ,

Fr Shane

Announcements

Mark Your Calendars

Virtual Sunday Liturgys

[The Rev'd Canon Shane Scott-Hamblen](#);

You Tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1li-yYov5kMpvDg>

Zoom Altar Guild Meeting, Wednesday, September 2, 5:00 pm

Zoom Building and Grounds Meeting, September 2, 7:00 pm

Virtual Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: Sunday, September 6, 10 am, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Zoom Coffee Hour, Sunday, September 6, 11:30 am. To be invited contact Shelley Keefe at onyourtoz@gmail.com or 650 787-7614

Zoom Youth Group Meeting, Sunday September 6, 4:00-5:00 pm To be invited contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Virtual Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: Sunday, September 13 10 am, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Zoom Coffee Hour, Sunday, September 13, 11:30 am. To be invited contact Shelley Keefe at onyourtoz@gmail.com or 650 787-7614

Zoom Youth Group Meeting, Sunday September 13, 4:00-5:00 pm To be invited contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Virtual Zoom Bible Study Meeting: Mondays, September 14 1:00 p.m. To be invited, contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

School Board Meeting, Tuesday, September 15 7:00 pm

Vestry Meeting, Wednesday, September 23 7:00 pm

Virtual Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: Sunday, September 20 10 am, Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Zoom Coffee Hour, Sunday, September 20, 11:30 am. To be invited contact Shelley Keefe at onyourtoz@gmail.com or 650 787-7614

Zoom Youth Group Meeting, Sunday September 20, 4:00-5:00 pm To be invited contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Virtual Zoom Bible Study Meeting Mondays, September 21 1:00 p.m. To be invited, contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Virtual Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: Sunday, September 27 10 am, Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Zoom Coffee Hour, Sunday, September 27, 11:30 am. To be invited contact Shelley Keefe at onyourtoz@gmail.com or 650 787-7614

Zoom Youth Group Meeting, Sunday September 27, 4:00-5:00 pm To be invited contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Virtual Zoom Bible Study Meeting Mondays, September 28 1:00 p.m. To be invited, contact Daniel Tate at ym_stambrosefc@att.net or 650-799-7084

Diocesan Convention: Friday, October 16, 2 pm to 8:30 pm, Saturday, October 17, 9 am to 3:30 pm, Grace Cathedral

Reflections from our Junior Warden – by Shelley Keefe

Goodbyes and Welcomes

After a rousing farewell event for Fr. David we, sadly, had a few more goodbyes to say this month. On Sunday, August 9, we honored and said goodbye to the Rev. Karen Swanson, Sandy Schowengerdt and Fe Balamiento.

Rev. Karen has led our Youth, Children's and Family Ministry for the past three years and found her way into the hearts of our young people and their families. Her mentoring skills have encouraged many of our youth to take on an active role in leading VBS, special events for church and school, outreach programs and fund-raising activities.

I think back on the Mothers' Day brunches, Halloween celebrations and Christmas Pageants with a huge appreciation of the dedicated work that went on behind the scenes to make the events successful. Most recently, we heard expressions of faith from Elliott Dun, Jr., Michael Chang and Oliver Moriarty, who are the most recent graduates from the Youth Inquirers class that the Rev. Karen held. We thank her for helping many people to speak openly and thoughtfully about their faith journey. Both St. Ambrose and Sea Breeze School will miss her presence and her gentle way with the children.



Sandy Schowengerdt has been involved in the Sunday School both as a teacher and superintendent for well over 30 years. That's an amazing record and, through her steadfast teaching and leadership, she has influenced the lives of hundreds of Sunday School students. For many years, our major celebrations were made memorable by Sandy's organization of the Christmas Pageant and Easter Egg Hunt. After so many years of busy Sundays, we hope Sandy has many relaxing Sundays in her future.



Reflections from our Junior Warden (continued)

Fe Balamiento has been part of St. Ambrose and Sea Breeze School in different capacities for 10 years. Fe brought fresh ideas and creativity to our Sunday School and an inspiring way of sharing her faith with the youth and children by speaking about her own experiences and being open to listening to theirs. Through years of Sunday School teaching, leading VBS and mission trips, Fe has been an integral part of our community.



To all three of these wonderful women, we say our most sincere thank you. We wish you all God speed and blessings for your future endeavors.

You can catch the thank yous at the end of the Livestream from Sunday, August 9, which is posted to the church website.

In August, we welcomed the Rev. Canon Shane Scott-Hamblen as Interim Rector and Daniel Tate as Associate for Youth and Family Ministry. We are fortunate to have had such a seamless transition. We look forward to integrating Fr. Shane and Daniel into our St. Ambrose family and watching their incredible gifts unfold among us.

Respectfully,

Shelley

Youth Ministry – by Daniel Tate

St. Ambrose Youth Group News

St. Ambrose Youth Group has a ZOOM meeting every Sunday from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. College, high school, and middle school youth, including those who have just completed the fifth grade are all welcome. Friends are welcome too! Please contact Daniel Tate by e-mail at ym_stambrosefc@att.net if you or a friend would like to join in and have not yet received a link.

Eight or nine youth generally participate in each meeting. Each group meeting includes talking about the highs and lows that we've had during the past week, reflection on scripture, and an activity or game. Additionally, this month we will also be thinking about what service projects we might like to work on during the next few months. Please join us!

Congratulations again to our Inquirers' Class graduates: Michael Chang, Elliott Dun, Jr., and Oliver Moriarty. They each spoke during the Sunday, August 9 service about their faith stories that included:

- >What led them to become Christians
- >What they like about the Episcopal Church
- >How they use their gifts and talents to serve God.

It was inspiring to hear their stories and to work with them during the six weekly sessions Mother Karen Swanson, Alison LeBlanc, and I had with them. Because of the pandemic, the graduates will need to wait to be confirmed until the re-opening and re-gathering processes are further along.

We will miss Mother Karen but our memory of her, the good times, and her generous leadership will always be with us. I know that she is keeping us all in her prayers. Alison LeBlanc and I are very much looking forward to the new school year and where God will lead us.

Thank you,

Daniel

Hymns for September – by Maureen Fromme

“I Am the Bread of Life” (The Hymnal 1982 #335)

There are many wonderful, meaningful hymns in our hymnals at church. In The Hymnal 1982, many of them were written in the 1700-1800s, one even coming from the Year 340 (by Ambrose!).

The hymn for this month is unusual in that the same person wrote the text and the music, that she is still alive, and that she lives 10 miles away from our church! The hymn is “I Am the Bread of Life”, Hymn 335 (this hymn information was requested by one of our members).

The lady I am referring to is Sr. Suzanne Toolan, who is at Sisters of Mercy in Burlingame. Because of that, I have had some correspondence with her to see if she would share with us some background about this hymn, which she has gladly done. She has a number of degrees in music and has directed choirs for many years, including the choirs at Mercy High School. Here is what she mentioned about the writing of this hymn, based on John 6:

“I was teaching high school and I had a free period. There was an archdiocesan event coming up and my kids were going to sing for it. It was some sort of Eucharistic event so when I sat down at the piano in my classroom I opened the scriptures to John 6. I just began to write down what I was playing and singing. Pretty soon the bell rang for class to begin. I tossed the manuscript in the waste paper basket because I thought, “This is not it!” On my way to my class, I passed by the Infirmary (where often the kids who didn’t want to take tests or who were otherwise not prepared for class, would take refuge.) A little blond freshman came out of that infirmary and stopped me. She said, “What was that? It was beautiful.” I did a ninety degree turn and headed back to my classroom. I found some scotch tape, retrieved the manuscript which was actually a scrap of paper – and put it together. That little scrap of paper has had a life of its own ever since.”

Hence the hymn that we have now came close to being destroyed. Fortunately, it was not and now we can enjoy singing it.

Sometimes we may do or write things that we do not think are important or worth remembering, but it can be interesting to see what positive effect it might have on someone else. By the way, when COVID-19 is past, Sr. Suzanne has indicated an interest to come visit a service. This Fall will be her 93rd birthday and we can be glad for the music and ministry that she has shared with people throughout her life.

A recording:

https://youtu.be/xedoUE4_D2U

Thank you,

Maureen

September Outreach Report – by Steve Yuen



Volunteers Lydia McIntyre, Cathy Rincon, and David McIntyre distributed lunches on August 30.

One could say that Sandwiches on Sunday has returned to its roots.

It began in 2002 by passing out free sandwiches in Redwood City, and then expanded to a community event where one could receive a hot meal at the Fair Oaks Community Center. For 17 years, St. Ambrose has made salad and baked chicken or lasagna for everyone who showed up at noon on fifth Sundays of the month. When the diners exited the outdoor picnic area, they were handed a brown bag lunch prepared by St. Pius Catholic Church, which originated the program.

The coronavirus resulted in drastic changes in all aspects of life, including the activities of non-profit organizations. Sandwiches on Sunday was canceled for March and April, but after online discussions, Redwood City and participating churches agreed that SOS was a valuable activity that should continue.

However, no longer would cafeteria-style hot lunches be served and only brown bags and bottled water could be handed out (actually, left on tables to minimize in-person contact). In addition, Redwood City staff would be present to hand out masks and set up tables outside the building entrance -- the gates to the picnic garden are locked indefinitely.

Individual churches have been making the sandwiches, usually on Sunday mornings in the kitchen of St. Vincent de Paul in San Mateo. Maryann Barry and David Philpott of St. Pius graciously offered to make the brown bag lunches for St. Ambrose, so all we had to do was go to St. Pius to pick them up.

We served lunches to 40 people, about half the pre-COVID-19 number. We had a dozen bags left over and took them to the Catholic Workers House on Cassia Street in Redwood City.

St. Ambrose' next and final SOS is November 29. We are hoping to make the sandwiches ourselves so as not to impose on the good people of St. Pius. Please contact Steve Yuen (steveyuen@aol.com) if you have any questions.



SOS five years ago, August 30, 2015 had more volunteers, food, and diners.

Sea Breeze School News – by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

Summer is over and school has started!

We successfully held eight weeks of summer camp with 80 students on campus and I am happy to say we had zero sick children or staff! While it is a daunting task to keep things clean and sanitized throughout the day, the staff dedicated to doing whatever is necessary to keep the children safe and learning. From taking temperatures at drop off and throughout the day, to disinfecting toys and faucet handles, we do it all!

In addition to the 80 students we had on campus, we also had 30 children enrolled in our virtual summer camp. These children were logged into the computer for different sessions throughout the day totaling three hours each day. There were art, music and science sessions, as well as story time and math sessions. The children and families seemed to enjoy their time together and attendance was close to 100% all summer.

The 2020-2021 school year started on August 19 and it is going well. We started with 92 children on campus and 32 children in our virtual program. Clearly this is much smaller than our typical school year and this is partly because of the changes that we have had to make to our physical building for licensing reasons. To adhere to new licensing regulations, we have had to divide all of our classrooms to serve small groups of no more than 12 children each. We also had to divide our playground in the same way. Each classroom now must have three teachers for proper coverage throughout the day, the teachers and children must be together all day and they cannot share common space.

Although the new guidelines are challenging, the teachers and the children have adjusted and are doing great. The small groups opened many new opportunities for everyone to build strong relationships and to teach in new and exciting ways.

We are excited to welcome Father Shane to our team this year. He joined us on our first day of school, jumped in and welcomed our students at the health check tables by taking temperatures! It was a nice way for him to see the families and the children. Once things around campus begin to settle, I look forward to working with him to schedule chapels for the children and to discuss other ways to build a strong relationship between the school and the church.

In these crazy times, I wish you and those closest to you well.

Respectfully,

Jerelyn

The Editor's Corner—by Yvonne Sidell



“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.”

—Hebrews 11:13

I've been thinking about asterisks lately: Those clever little literary symbols (*) that tell us there's more to the story than meets the eye. And I've been thinking about how they often apply to spiritual issues, particularly to how we view particular passages of Scripture.

When it comes to looking at God's promise to the Israelites to lead them out of slavery from Egypt to a beautiful land of their own, "The Promised Land," I think an asterisk is necessary. God indeed led His people to the Promised Land, but consider the following:

- It took 40 years from the time they left Egypt to arrive in the Promised Land (a distance of only about 200 miles).
- All of the men over the age of twenty at the time they left Egypt (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) died before Israel entered the Promised Land.
- Entering the Promised Land included much warfare, and many Israelites were killed in battle before they had the chance to get settled in the new land.

As Christ-followers today, we too have the hope of entering a Promised Land. We are on a journey, seeing Christ's kingdom expand in our lives and in the world. We also look forward to eternity in Heaven. This sounds wonderful, even triumphant. But I think too often we speak of overcoming, of victory, and of bliss as the norm for the Christian life in the here and now, while the reality for many (even most?) of us is far from the ideal. This is where our asterisk comes into play.

For many, the Christian journey is a difficult road. Just recently, I received a note from a friend whose job was lost, severely threatening the family's finances. The person had done nothing wrong and was questioning what spiritual deficiency exists for God to allow this to happen. To me, this individual's story more readily represents the average Christian's experience, rather than stories of how life's circumstances have gotten so much easier since meeting Jesus.

God's goal is to conform each one of us into the image of His Son. He is working in each believer to accomplish the task. So, yes, He is leading us to the Promised Land. But, nowhere has God promised that the life circumstances of the here and now will always be bright and sunny. In fact, our road to the Promised Land is likely to be a long journey that includes wandering, difficulty, and a fair share of spiritual warfare.

The important question is this: Will we allow God to shape us along the journey or will we close ourselves off to God's work and allow life's circumstances to sow the destructive seeds of anger and bitterness? The choice is ours.

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

William Bradford	1
Jessica Morale	2
Kay Umeda	7
Shaiji Ajit	8
Bill Bradford	9
Michael Chan	10
Mary Bradford	14
Charlene Adolph	15
Dulce Lord	15
Christina Rodriguez	17
Hugo Franco	20
Karin Patterson	20
April Cherrington	21
Kirk Morales	22
Yunfei (Jenny) Huang	29
Peggy Redmond	29
Eunice Chee	30



Anniversaries

Ajiit Philip & Shaiji Ajit	10
Scott Chang & Judy Chen	17
Raphaelle & Jacques Gerber	30