



Terra Sancta Guild

# St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

*"A Caring Community United Through Worship"*

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The Rev'd Dr. Shane Scott-Hamblen

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November 12, 2020

Dearest Parishioners,

As you know, we are in the midst of our annual Stewardship Campaign and this year's is probably the most challenging St Ambrose's may have ever experienced. Being in a time of transition between Rectors would be challenging enough on its own. Add a global pandemic, and all the challenges of adapting to virtual community during shelter-in-place, and social distancing, and the challenges can seem daunting. Yet, our community has risen to the ever-changing challenges with good humor, love, creativity, and a willingness to roll up our sleeves and keep the vital work we do going.

We need your help more than ever. Stewardship campaigns always struggle to make it more than just an appeal for more money, but in all honesty we need more money. The Sea Breeze School is doing an amazing job keeping the school open and running but at a great cost – paying toy-cleaners, new equipment to ensure health, extra staff for smaller classes, etc. To help the school, St Ambrose's needed to reduce the school rent of our buildings. That means a certain 'domino-effect' for us.

As you can imagine, the pledge and plate offerings are significantly lower with a mere nine in-person worshippers per Sunday. The vestry has made the wise decision to invest a significant amount of money in online streaming equipment – the benefits of which I hope you will soon notice. However this pandemic plays out, it seems certain that online streaming will continue simultaneously with in-person attendance for the foreseeable future. Our on-line attendance includes many new people from beyond Foster City whom we now reach and we don't want to lose them. I urge you all prayerfully to consider contributing whatever you can to helping us meet these new challenges because I know how much good we are doing for people's lives, far and wide.

However (I say with the proverbial tin cup extended!), the campaign *is* about more than mere money. There are so many new and creative ways everyone can contribute non-financially as well: altar guild service, technological help, taking part in our Divine Liturgies, outreach to those in need, music contributions, praying for St Ambrose's, and inviting new people to join our virtual throng.

‘Sacrifice’ has an unfortunate modern connotation of being deprived of something dear to us; something cut off or destroyed. I believe that is the wrong connotation. ‘Sacrifice’ means ‘making something sacred/holy’, giving something treasured as a gift to Someone we love deeply, heart, soul, and mind – something consecrated for God’s use. When we give a treasured gift to someone we love, we don’t look at it as a loss to us – we see it as a gift freely given to someone as an expression of our love of them. In this case, that ‘Someone’ we love is God, knowing God will use our gift-made-sacred to help our community, our ‘neighbor’, the many Children of God – a community which needs to be ever-growing and thriving rather than ever-shrinking.

We can only do that with your continued help. May God be pleased with the sacrifices we offer with loving hearts! Many, many thanks for all you continue to do!

Devotedly,

Fr Shane

### **2021 Pledge Cards**

This year we have two pledge cards enclosed. The blue Estimate of Giving for 2021 asks for you to make a financial pledge to our common ministry here at St. Ambrose Church. Each of us has our own financial responsibilities and must consider our pledge in light of them. Our financial pledge is not merely a financial decision; it is a statement of how we value our common life as a Christian congregation and the ministry we share. Please consider the importance of faith in your life and to ask if your pledge reflects how much you value God in Jesus Christ and this congregation.

The yellow pledge card is for Altar Flower Memorials for 2021. The Altar Flowers are paid for by members throughout the year. If you would like to remember a loved one, occasion, or holiday, please write the name on the card and the dates for remembrance. Typically, the cost for flowers each week is \$65, but you can contribute any amount.