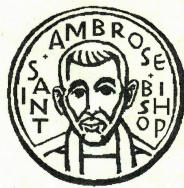


December
2023



The Ambrosian

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

Message from Father Christian Lehrer

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Welcome to Advent at St. Ambrose, Foster City!

Dear People of St. Ambrose, It is my great pleasure to serve St. Ambrose Parish as Supply priest for a few weeks during this festive season. Last Sunday, Dec 3rd we celebrated the first Sunday of a new Church year and the first Sunday of Advent. Each year we take a journey together through the seasons of the Church year beginning with Advent. During this time we also walk through the pages of Holy Scripture that are appointed for each Sunday. Believe it or not, neither the priest or even the Bishop decides on the lessons! In the Episcopal Church we use a Common Lectionary that is used by every Episcopal Church and is also used by many other Christian Churches. Our use of a Common Lectionary is, in itself, an expression of community. With this new year, we begin year B, the second year of our three year Sunday lectionary. Year B focuses on the Gospel of Mark. Given that Mark's Gospel is shorter than Matthew and Luke, we also will also hear more of the Gospel of John. In this little season of Advent, just four Sundays, we start with Mark's Gospel and we will also hear from John and Luke as we prepare for Christmas. The four candles of the Advent wreath represent the four Sundays. The one Rose Candle is lit on the third Sunday. On Christmas Eve we will light a white candle in the center of the four for the Christ child in the manger.

Advent is indeed a time of preparation. It is a solemn time where we prepare for the coming of the Christ child at Christmas. It is not a penitential season, yet it has a penitential tone. The classic themes of Advent focus on "The Last Things", death, judgment, heaven and hell. In these we ponder the mystery of God's presence in our lives. Yet, it is also a season of Hope. We are called to use our God-given gifts, especially those gifts given in our Baptism, to make God present to all people. St. Paul talks of these in his letter to the Galatians 5:22-23, the fruits of the Spirit. These are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, generosity and self-control. We all have these and we can use them to help each other through this season. It is a joyful time for many, but it is also a challenging time for some.

As much as we may enjoy holiday classic movies and Hallmark Christmas films, life can be tough during the holiday season. Some people are dealing with loss, loneliness or an uncertain future. Problems do not magically melt away. Yet, each of us can reach out and help in so many ways. Simply by remembering those who may be alone, checking in with them and sharing Season's Greetings can go a long way. In many small acts of kindness we can make this Advent a Holy Season and prepare a place in our hearts and minds for the little child who will soon come, yet again and always, to grace our lives. Wishing you all the Blessings of Advent!

Father Christian Lehrer

Layman's Reflections

In the beginning there was a void. No coffee hour. Everybody came to church, read through the bulletin, went through the motions. We had to stay in our pews all masked up, no physical contact. It was only a handful of people; happy to be back in church at least. Greeting each other from afar with a peace gesture.

How did I become Sr. Warden? What does a Sr. Warden do? What do I know? I know coffee. I had to get to church early, it was a struggle since I'm not a morning person. Ask the pickleball crew.

So it started with making a pot of coffee. I had to pick up a cake on the way to church and make sure there's creamer in the fridge. The parish hall fills with the aroma of coffee.

Sure, then the murmur of "whoever heard of a Sr. Warden in charge of coffee hour?" This only deepened my resolve. I didn't care about the set up and clean up as long as I'm physically able.

It didn't take long for St. Ambrose to take flight again. I don't take this community for granted. This place is you. I see you deeply, hear you deeply. You are here deep in my heart.

Humbly,
Ham

Announcements

Tuesday Bible Study

Every Tuesday at 1 pm a group meets over Zoom to study the scriptures for the following Sunday's service. There is good discussion, usually lasting about an hour.

For information and Zoom link, contact Warren Wong at wwong@nd.edu

Music Director's Report

Frank Saunders - - - > Amanda Dai

It feels so eminently right to begin the transition to our new Music Director, Amanda Dai, on the first Sunday of Advent, at the beginning of the church year, with the election of a new Bishop, and the start of a new period of growth for St. Ambrose.

We welcome her arrival and look forward to the gifts she brings in choral conducting and in musicianship.

Submitted by Frank Saunders

Editor's Note:

Barbara Saunders shared this tidbit about Frank: He started piano lessons at age 4 and played a Mozart Concerto with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra at 13 years old in early high school at Choate. He graduated from Juilliard with a degree in solo piano and from Columbia with a degree in psychology and eventually from Indiana University with a PhD in Clinical Psychology. So we have been blessed to have a bright and talented musician as our music director at St. Ambrose for the last 23 years! Our hearts are filled with gratitude!

St. Ambrose Choir

We have a new Music Director. Her name is Amanda Yuxin Dai. She has a wealth of experience working with adult and children's choirs. We are all very excited to start our rehearsals with her and are most grateful that Frank is helping her learn our traditions. Our practices are on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm -- new members are always welcome.

Submitted by April Cherrington

Announcements (continued)

Contemplative Meditation Group

Welcome to our "Contemplative Meditation" Zoom group. Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. That's right! We find the week kicks into gear...before you know it, we are two hectic days into it. Enjoy a 40 minute respite of mindful breaths, compassionate, and contemplative community. Be heard should you choose to share. If you wish, an email-list reminder can arrive in your inbox Tuesday nights -- write to: hfonster@gmail.com (Questions are welcome).

[Click this link on Wednesday's 10am to join Zoom.](#)

Or use this QR code:



*Thank you!
Hamilton*

Sunday School is back!

Teacher Raphaele will conduct the class outdoors every week for children Pre-K and up. Class will offer story time, songs, and lots of fun! We are looking forward to seeing your kids, with their big smiles!

To support this program, we would like to engage our community. We are calling for helpers as we will need one helper every week (no special skills required). Please reach to saintambrosesundayschool@gmail.com for more information.

Outreach Report - October-December, 2023

Blessing of the Animals

On October 1st we had our annual celebration of the Feast of Saint Francis --officially October 4th on the Church calendar--by blessing pets and their owners, first at church in the morning, then at the Foster City Dog Park in the afternoon. The weather was bright and cool, as it usually is for the Blessing of the Animals.

Several Sea Breeze families showed up, as well as Angeli Labrador from the church office, with their animal companions.



Father Jason administered special prayers of healing to those afflicted with ailments; whether the sufferers were two- or four-legged, all were welcome.

By two o'clock we were done. A total of thirty (30) dogs had been blessed.

Father Jason would go on his planned medical leave the next day, and he said he wouldn't have missed this event for the world.

Sandwiches on Sunday

In October we had our fourth Sandwiches on Sunday of 2023.

Thanks go to our volunteers who assembled the 80 brown bag lunches on October 28th at the Parish Hall: Valerie Mersh, Teresa Murakami, David O'Brien, Solita O'Brien, and Steve Yuen.

The assembly took 2½ hours, an hour longer than usual, because two new volunteers insisted on preparing the sandwiches with loving care as opposed to slapping them together quickly, which is how Steve likes to do things.

The brown bags and bottles of water went quickly the next day at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City, with all comers receiving at least one lunch.



The next Sandwiches on Sunday is **December 31st**, and we will be making the sandwiches at the Parish Hall on **December 30th**. Please contact Steve Yuen (stevebyuen@aol.com, 650 315-9662) if you have any questions.

News and Updates from El Buen Pastor

The past few months have seen Rev. Pamela Stevens installed as the new Rector at El Buen Pastor. She has transitioned smoothly into a strong leader for this congregation that attracts Latinx congregants from various parts of the mid-peninsula to their present home at Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Belmont.

Rev. Stevens attended our last Stewardship Dinner (in Classroom One & the Parish Hall), when Fr. Jason had just started with us. She continues the leadership, advocacy and representation that Mother Anna Lange-Soto once provided for this haven church for the Latinx community of the peninsula.

If you are a Facebook user, you can always find their services broadcast on Facebook Live at about 1 PM on Sundays.

In other news, St. Ambrose recently donated two turkeys at Thanksgiving from our church to El Buen Pastor. It was decided that they would freeze them and save them as the centerpiece dish for a congregation-wide barbecue during their Christmas season. Surely, potluck side dishes will complete the rest of the feast. We always want to be looking for ways to find connection and community with our Episcopalian neighbors at El Buen Pastor.

Thank you for reading!
Jim Neubert

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers for coffee hour, summer days and stewardship dinner. If you are interested, please contact me at [hfongster@gmail.com!](mailto:hfongster@gmail.com) *Thank you!*

Intercession Prayers

The apostle James tells us to “pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16).

If you would like the St. Ambrose community to pray with you, please write your intercession in the Blessing book placed in the Narthex or send your request to stambrosefc@att.net. Your prayer will be included at the following mass service. Please leave your name and contact information in the booklet, in case clarifications are needed.

Thank you!

Raphael

Card Ministry

Every month we send birthday and anniversary cards to our members and sometimes, when events happen, our members also receive get well and sympathy cards.

If you become aware of a member’s illness or a family loss, please let Kyn Dellinger know at (650) 291-6208 or email her at bonanzalady@gmail.com.

The 174th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of California

As the Deanery Delegate for St. Ambrose, I attended the 174th Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of California at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, back in October. This was Bishop Marc’s last convention, as he is retiring. He gave a lovely sermon, Rabbi Jonathan Singer of Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco gave a nice speech, and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, made a presentation to Bishop Marc after lunch.

The following resolutions were debated and passed:

1. Amend Canons II & III. This requires that, beginning in 2024, delegates to the Convention will need to complete Anti-Racism Training.
2. Resolution #1: Migration with Dignity, which is pretty self-explanatory.
3. Resolution #2: Addressing Gun Violence to Safeguard our Youth. Encouraging people to store guns properly – there was some debate trying to enlarge the scope of the resolution.
4. Resolution #3: Legislative Themes for the 81st General Convention. These are themes that the Diocese’s delegates to the General Convention would advocate for:
 - a. Racial Justice & Reconciliation: build on Beloved Community training to address micro-aggressions; support more racial equity in hiring, discernment processes, and racial justice ministries;
 - b. LGBTQ Advocacy: bear witness as Christians against anti-trans rhetoric and legislation impacting our trans and non-binary beloveds; affirming and supporting

- trans and non-binary youth and their families, both within our congregations and in the wider world;
- c. Gender Justice: support efforts to address domestic violence and sexual harassment and exploitation, including in the Church; educate about gender bias and how it intersects with other biases, including those caused by racism, ageism, and classism; work to remove barriers to women's health care, including reproductive care;
 - d. Ageism Justice: empower senior rights and equity in the ministries of the Church, calling for the creation of a task force on ageism;
 - e. Climate Justice: advance climate solutions including environmentally sustainable practices, biodiversity, sustainable transportation and utilities infrastructure, and support of the Communion Forest;
 - f. Disability Justice: support and advocate for disabled members of the Church in all ways of participation in the Church and the Beloved Community as it helps understand ableism and the intersectionality of disability and other marginalized groups;
 - g. Economic Justice: support those engaged in this ministry and advocate for these initiatives;
 - h. Church Vitality: seek and support innovative ideas for being Church in changing times, including consideration of how we fund congregations and dioceses, best use of existing resources, defining and communicating the unique gifts of The Episcopal Church, cultivating intergenerational ministries that support the shifting configurations of families and contemporary challenges of family life, and engaging in the Church's mission to love and serve others in both spiritual and practical ways;
 - i. Congregational Development: provide support and training to foster congregational vitality, redevelopment, church planting, evangelism, improved communications, financial sustainability and encourage spiritual development, health, and wellness;
 - j. Create New Pathways for Ministry Collaboration: foster and facilitate resource sharing and team ministries among congregations, neighboring dioceses, and provincially, with an emphasis on support for small congregations;
 - k. Funding the Church of the Future: invest in developing new ways to understand and cultivate the abundance of untapped resources in our congregations;
 - l. Lay Formation: cultivate future members through lay leadership development, and training of newly elected representatives;
 - m. Theological Education: engage with the changing landscape of theological education, specifically the role of congregations as sites of theological education and formation, both in collaboration with seminaries and in their own right;
 - n. Liturgy & Music: create a foundation for Prayer Book revision by passing the 2nd reading of Article X (Of The Book of Common Prayer) in the Constitution of the General Convention and requisite canonical changes, as a goal for the next convention; and
5. Resolution #4: Add Howard W. Thurman to the Episcopal Church Calendar.
 6. Resolution #5: Access to Prison Ministries. Some prison ministries are organized through a group that was requiring people working in this ministry to sign a pledge with homophobic language, and this resolution was trying to correct that.

On December 2, 2023, I again traveled to Grace Cathedral to participate in the election of the Ninth Bishop of the Diocese of California, due to the retirement of the Right Reverend Bishop Marc Handley Andrus. This is the culmination of an extensive process.

- Fall 2021 – Bishop Marc consulted with the Standing Committee regarding his retirement plans.
- April 7, 2022 – Bishop Marc informed the Standing Committee of his retirement.
- July 22, 2022 – Bishop Marc announced his retirement to the Diocese.
- August / September 2022 – Applications to the Search & Transition Committee.
- October 19, 2022 – Members of the Search & Transition Committee are named.
- November / December 2022 – Diocesan Listening Sessions (learning what the Diocese is seeking in a new Bishop).
- April 17, 2023 – Diocesan Profile & Application published.
- May 31, 2023 – Application Deadline
- September 22, 2023 – Slate of Nominees Published, as well as applications by petition.
- October 18, 2023 – Final Slate announced.
- November 2 – 5, 2023 – Meet and greets throughout the Diocese.
- December 2, 2023 – Election

At the convention, there were three ballots cast. After the first ballot, there was no winner, and so we went to the second ballot. As soon as the second ballot was cast, one of the nominees withdrew, so we immediately went to the third ballot, where a new Bishop was elected.

The nominees were:

- The Rev. Canon Augusta Anne Anderson. Canon to the Ordinary & Chief of Staff. Diocese of Western North Carolina. Her father Reverend Rowe started St. Ambrose.
- The Rev. Phil Brochard. Rector, All Souls Parish, Berkeley. Diocese of California. Author of: Vital Christian Community: 12 Characteristics of Healthy Congregations, with Alissa Newton.
- The Rev. Austin K. Rios. Rector, St. Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church, Rome, Italy. The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

The winner, and our new Bishop, is the Reverend Austin K. Rios, who will become the first Latino Bishop of the Diocese of California. More information about Bishop Coadjutor Rios can be found at <https://diocalbishopsearch.org/bishop-elect/>.

The timeline going forward is:

- December 7, 2023 to March 20, 2024 – The Standing Committees and Bishops with jurisdiction in The Episcopal Church have this period to consent to California's episcopal election.
- May 4, 2024 – Consecration of the Bishop Coadjutor to succeed Bishop Marc as the Ninth Bishop of California
- July 24, 2024 - Bishop Marc retires. The Bishop Coadjutor becomes the Ninth Bishop of California.

Submitted by David McIntyre for Cathy Rincon, Deanery Delegate for St. Ambrose

Sea Breeze School News – by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

As I look back, it looks like it has been a few months since I last communicated with you about your Sea Breeze School.

School started for us on 8/21 and things have been very busy, fun and sometimes chaotic. Welcoming new students and families each year is always fun. This year we had members of the School Board join us on the first day to be a presence and part of the welcoming committee. We welcomed a total of 64 new children and their families to Sea Breeze, giving us a total enrollment 169 children. I am pleased to report that we have only 2 preschool openings at this time.

Once School started, the School Board and Vestry provided a very yummy back to school lunch for the teachers. This was a very thoughtful thing to do and the staff enjoyed the conversations and community building with the members. I love to watch the relationships grow between the School and the Church.

During Covid we shut off all of the water fountains around campus and made the decision to not turn them back on when we returned. All children bring water bottles from home and each class has a "filling station" with a pitcher of filtered water for the children to refill their bottles during the day. There is also a pitcher of filtered water and small cups for the children in the outside refrigerator. We have been doing some research on water bottle filling stations(similar to those in airports) and learned that they were super expensive and not really made to withstand the weather outside. So, we continued our research and found water coolers that would provide cold and filtered water and could live outside. We had Don (our handyman) make little house for these and installed one on the courtyard and one on the playground. These are connected to the building water supply and the children have become very accustomed to using them.

In my last communication I mentioned that we installed a Flag pole in the courtyard and, being a veteran, this is super exciting for me. The children say the Pledge of Allegiance in their classrooms each day and once a month we come together as a community around our new flag pole for the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of a patriotic song , celebration of birthdays and any special announcements. This month we lowered the flag the half-staff in honor of Rosalynn Carter. Coincidentally, the day to rise the flag to full staff was the day of our flag salute and I was able to explain why we do what we do with the flag. Lots of questions were asked and answered. Love taking advantage of teachable moments with the children.

With the Holidays upon us we have started the annual food drive and for Thanksgiving we were able to donate 25 boxes along with a variety of odd food items. For Christmas we decided to host a Toys for Tots drive, in place of the food drive and our boxes are getting very full. If you would like to contribute to the drive, please place any new and unwrapped toys in the bin in the Narthex.

I wish you all a safe and Blessed Christmas season. For those of you traveling please be safe. Our last day of School is 12/15 and I will see you all in 2024.

The Editor's Corner – by Nilda Chong



I volunteered to edit the December Ambrosian because it just seems right to close the year sharing with our members the work that keeps the candle of St. Ambrose lighted all year round.

This issue of the Ambrosian represents a labor of love. It materialized because Father Lehrer, Hamilton, Steve, Warren, Frank and Barbara, Jim, April, David and Cathy McIntyre, and Jerelyn responded enthusiastically when asked to contribute. Raphaele replied from France and Yvonne Sidell, our past editor, was quick to offer guidance and suggestions from the other side of the country where she is caring for her mother.

Our congregation is a welcoming and vibrant community. We worship together, we cherish sermons, we enjoy food, we visit with each other during coffee hour and we deliver soups when someone is under the weather. With gratitude, we also share our many blessings with other communities.

There is no theme for this issue, just the nurturing love that binds us together. May all our members experience the spirit of Christmas!

December Birthdays

Frank Saunders	4
Father Jason Lucas-Green	5
Hamilton Fong	13
Nelly Wong	16
Lydia McIntyre	18
Grant Cherrington	19
Rose Umeda	21
Yvonne Sidell	25
Father Shane Scott-Hamblen	28
Dorothy Matsuo	28
Reena Davis	29
Jacques Gerber	30



There are no Anniversaries this month.