

January
2024



The Ambrosian

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

First January Sermon by Father Christian Lehrer



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Editor
Nilda Chong

Greetings People of St. Ambrose,
Together we have journeyed through Advent and finally come to the stable and like the Shepherds gaze in wonder at the coming of the Christ child. We heard the familiar story recounted in the infancy narrative in the Gospel of St. Luke. We walked through the twelve days of Christmas and gathered again on the first Sunday after Christmas to ponder the beautiful poetry and sacred mystery of the Prologue, the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John. John's Gospel is unique in that the followers of John believed the Words of Jesus led them and everyone who receives them to salvation in the name of our Lord and gave them a foretaste, in this life, of eternal life. They are the living water that never ceases and the bread that does not perish.

The Prologue of John is about the beginning of the story of Jesus, who, in fact, always existed with the Father, yet came among us to share our burden. The Prologue is also called, The Last Gospel. It has been used at the conclusion of the Roman Mass. And is proclaimed in many Episcopal Churches at the end of Midnight mass on Christmas Eve, as the first 14 verses are the Gospel for later on Christmas Day.

Friday January 5th is the twelfth day of Christmas and the Season ends with twelfth night and traditionally the Christmas tree and decorations are taken down. The next day, Saturday January 6th, is the Feast of the Epiphany and commemorates the visit of the three Magi, the wise men, the three kings, to the Holy Family. They brought the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh to the infant Jesus. The story is told to us in chapter two of the Gospel of St. Matthew. The Magi are warned not to return to King Herod, who was seeking news of the coming of the Messiah out of fear and jealousy. Herod sends his soldiers to Bethlehem, but Joseph takes Mary and the holy child, Jesus, and flees to Egypt. There is a beautiful Church in Cairo, Egypt, The Church of the Holy Family, that was built on the site the Holy Family sheltered in Egypt. The route from there to the Holy Land has been traveled by pilgrims for centuries.

Finally, on Sunday January 7th, we have the first Sunday after the Epiphany, the feast of the Baptism of our Lord. On this day every year, we hear the story of the Baptism of Jesus, now an adult, by St. John the Baptist. Each year of our three year cycle of Sunday readings we hear the story from a different Gospel. This year, year B, as we focus on St. Mark's Gospel, we hear Mark's account of the Baptism. Jesus is baptized and sees the heavens open, hears a voice, and the Holy Spirit rests on him. Jesus's work now begins and we celebrate one of the four Baptismal feasts of our Church. The other three being Easter, Pentecost, and All Saints. All Saints falling on a fixed date, November 1st, may also be celebrated on the Sunday that follows. Why? Because Baptism should always be celebrated when the community is present on Sunday. Baptism should be also celebrated on these special feast days as they tell the story of who we are as a people of faith and what we believe.

Our Church teaches the primacy of Baptism. Baptism is the way into the Christian life. In it we share in the Incarnation of Jesus. We go into the water and rise to new life. Historically, the altar would be situated at the east end of the Church so the people are facing east towards Jerusalem, awaiting the return of our Lord. The font, however, is placed at the west end of the Church, near the door. This symbolizing that Baptism, is literally, the way in to the Church and our lifetime of learning to follow Jesus as a disciple.

On this Sunday, The Baptism of our Lord, we remember and give thanks for our own Baptism. We again enter this New Year begin hearing the accounts of the adult ministry, the teaching, healing and sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In the weeks to come we will hear more of our sacred story, please come and join us!

Many Blessings, Father Christian Lehrer

Layman's Reflection



The story below has been echoing in my brain. It's from David Brooks' "How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen" It illustrates examples of people he refers to as "illuminators" who "shine the brightness of their care on people and make them feel bigger, deeper, respected, lit up."

Jenny Jerome (Churchill's mother) "dined with the British statesman William Gladstone and left thinking he was the cleverest person in England. Later she dined with Gladstone's great rival, Benjamin Disraeli, and left that dinner thinking she was the cleverest person in England. It's nice to be like Gladstone, but it's better to be like Disraeli."

Respectfully,
Ham

News and Updates

Altar Guild Bake Sale 2023



First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who baked, bought and participated in our bake sale this year. Valerie, Teresa, and I feel it was a great success and the money earned will pay for nearly 7 weeks of flowers.

The Altar guild bake sales started over 25 years ago under the direction of Marilyn Vosburg and Peggy Redmond. In the beginning we had 2 fundraisers a year, December and Mother's day. Over the years, it was reduced to December only; the moms wanted a "break". The past few years it has focused on Christmas cookies only, wrapped and ribboned plates of 16-18 cookies per plate.

This year we invited any and all St Ambrose bakers to contribute 2 kinds of cookies, 2 dozen each. On Saturday, the bakers dropped off their goodies and Valerie, Teresa, Nilda, Kyn, Hamilton and I assembled the containers and set up the baked goods. Our sale was such a success, within 30 min we were sold out.

Over the years our flowers have increased in price, esp. the past 5 years. "Dana's Flower Basket" was our previous florist, however Dana retired and sold her business, the new owners raised our rate, however the quality of the bouquets suffered and I was forced to look elsewhere. I interviewed 3 different florists and with guidance chose Blossoms and Botanicals at Hillsdale mall. Our flowers cost \$120 per week. This price was quoted to me by 2 of the florists, the 3rd would have charged more. I am very happy with the arrangements and have received very positive feedback when we switched to "B and B". I invite you to come up and look at them closely, They are so unique. Each week we take down the old arrangement and I create a new little bouquet for our side altar.

Flowers reflect Gods creation and beauty and love for us. If you wish to donate \$ towards our flowers any amount is appreciated, please contact Angeli our church Admin. If you have a special request regarding the arrangement, contact Marilyn Stephens cell (650-656-3050) Our success was made possible by Nilda, Kyn, April, Dorothy, Hamilton and the altar guild.

Contributed by Marilyn Stephens

Big Thank You to Brenda Matsuo



For preparing delicious confections for coffee hour every first Sunday of the month in 2023!

Great job well done!

We are looking for volunteers for coffee hour this year.

If you can help, please contact Hamilton at hfongster@gmail.com

Amanda Yuxin Dai Is Our New Music Director

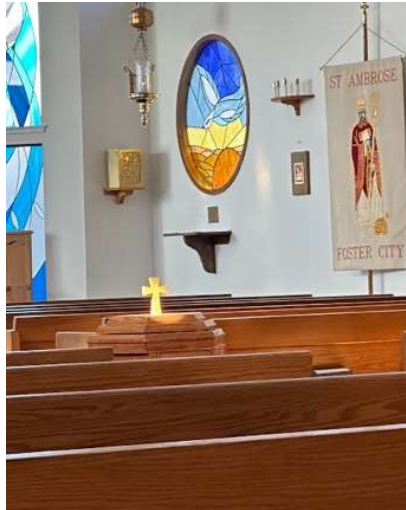


We are honored to have Amanda as our music director. She is a conductor and pianist who graduated from Northwestern University with a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting. She studied at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and at Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

When she sang in a choir during her first year of college in an award-winning choir, she was impressed by the choir's beautiful sound and by the manner in which a conductor's gestures could impact the expression of singers and instrumentalists alike, bringing unity to all.

Her background speaks for her dedication to music and her perseverance to succeed. Here's a quote from a translated interview on Sohu.com: *Yuxin was born in an artistic family. Her grandmother was a famous Peking Opera artist in Shanghai in the last century, and her father is a senior television director. Influenced by the family atmosphere, she began professional piano studies at the age of four and has always maintained a strong interest in music. Adhering to her dream and love for music, she was enrolled in to Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the top music school in China, where she received more comprehensive and rigorous training. "Life at the Conservatory of Music was very hard." Yuxin recalled: "We often run to the cafeteria for meals at noon and in the evening, just to save a bit of time for practice. Sometimes it was almost midnight when we left the practice room, and we even slept in the practice room before concerts and exams."*

Jesus at the Baptismal Font



A few months ago, our dear Senior Warden was taking a much needed quiet break in the Sanctuary. He was amazed to see the cross on the baptismal font lit up with sunlight. He took this picture and showed it to me. We both felt awe. I remember as a child sitting in church and looking all around for God, or a sign of God. I have to say I didn't notice anything. Now of course I notice friendly, helpful, loving kind people. When Hamilton showed me this photo, I thought what a blessing. Jesus is here and saying 'Hello! I am here!'

Contributed by Valerie Mersh

Sunday School



One of the most beautiful reasons to come to church is to meet these incredible little ones, with their big smiles, their playful eyes, their funny jokes, ... and to discover, to my admiration, how much God is already in their hearts. As a child, one of my favorite memories is when one of my Sunday school teachers told us that Jesus was our friend and would always be in our hearts. We sang very simple, still beautiful songs and had a lot of fun!

I think the beauty and the uniqueness of Sunday School is that we tell the children and, at the same time we remind ourselves, that Jesus is our friend, that He wants to establish a simple, true and direct relationship with each one of us - heart to heart - and that we can offer Him our trust.

He will then open our eyes to the world - how to share, how to help, how to admire the beauty around us, and what to do. When I prepare for the class, I read (try to!) the scriptures for the week (thank you, St. Ambrose for the bulletin) and I ask myself: What does it mean to me? What is the key concept that we need to share with the children? How can we share the joy of Jesus with them? These are both simple and difficult questions...

I am extremely happy to report that to help answer those both easy and difficult questions, and to lead the class, Teacher Kay - who is a long time Sunday School teacher at St. Ambrose (she taught my kids) - will be coming to help us. She is a great teacher. With God's help, we'd like to strengthen the current program and welcome more children. Please join us. All skills are welcome (from printing/distributing flyers to running the class and more!). Lots of fun and work to do. Just open your heart and be willing to receive with the joy of Jesus into your heart.

Contributed by Raphaele and Kay

Outreach – January, 2024

Sandwiches on Sunday – December 31st

On Saturday, December 30th, the volunteers on the assembly line were able to complete their task in 1½ hours. They filled 85 brown paper bags with ham-and-cheese and peanut-butter-and jelly sandwiches, apples, trail mix, and napkins.



Thanks go to our volunteers: Janis Horne, Valerie Mersh, David O'Brien, Solita O' Brien, Daniel Tate, and Steve Yuen

The bags were stored overnight in two refrigerators.

David, Solita, their grandson Tristan, and Steve distributed the lunches and bottled water at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City on Sunday.

It being New Years' weekend, we had a smaller group than usual—about 30 people—but there was no problem with leftover food. Some customers took two bags while others grabbed three. There was at least one for everyone.

Our next SOS will be on **March 31st, Easter Sunday**. We will again assemble the sandwiches and brown bags the day before, i.e., Saturday, March 30th, at the church from noon to 2 p.m. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please contact Steve Yuen (650-315-9662, stevebyuen@aol.com)

Announcements

Tuesday Bible Study

Meets on Tuesday at 1 pm 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

Fellowship Dinners

An opportunity to get better acquainted with other people from St. Ambrose!

Groups of 6 to 8 meet once a month, February through May, for potluck dinner or lunch in a group member's home.

Please call Nellie Wong (650-372-0728, wwong@nd.edu) for more information, and to let us know whether you are interested.

Watch for sign-up sheets in the foyer. A kickoff potluck dinner is planned for Saturday, January 27.

Contributed by Nellie Wong

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: hfongster@gmail.com (Questions are welcome).

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

Or use this QR Code:



Contributed by Hamilton Fong

Card Ministry

Every month our members receive birthday and anniversary cards and sometimes, when events happen, some also receive get well or sympathy cards.

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

Contributed by Kyn Dellinger

Sea Breeze School News – by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

Happy New Year! Things here at school are going well!

Folks have returned from their Winter break and have begun getting back into the regular routines. Funny how two weeks of vacation can erase four months of routine.

January is a very busy month for us here. We will host our Annual TK/K information night for families and our Annual Open House and Scholastic Book Fair on January 23rd. Re-registration starts for all of our current families on January 24th and for new families on January 29th. We will be having our Private Kindergarten during the 24-25 school year and we are excited to see that our afterschool program is beginning to welcome more and more children from the city schools, other than Foster City Elementary. The van that we purchased is beginning to pay for itself.

In addition to our enrollment work, the staff will also go through their CPR/First Aid training and Mandated Reporter training this month. Both of these trainings are done every two years and we always complete them as a large group.

With a very heavy heart, I share with you that Mike Frisch passed away peacefully, at Kaiser, on New Year's Eve. He was surrounded by his family and close friends. Mike was the husband of Carol Frisch, who has been with Sea Breeze for over 30 years. For many years, Mike volunteered his time at the school to repair things around campus and you could always find him behind the BBQ at our Annual Picnics at Boothbay Park. Mike will be very missed by his Sea Breeze Family. As a group we will all support Carol in any way that we can. I ask for your prayers of comfort for the family and the staff. His service will be held at St. Ambrose on March 2nd at 11am.

Hug your loved ones and be well!

Best, Jerelyn

The Editor's Corner – by Nilda Chong



This first 2024 issue of the Ambrosian differs slightly from the usual tone that our congregation is used to reading. I edited lightly and mostly for style because the submissions are precious in spontaneity and originality. For that, we must thank Father Lehrer, Hamilton, Marilyn, Steve, Raphaele, Kay, Warren, Nellie, Valerie, Kyn, and Jerelyn.

I dared not alter the messages in any manner because the contributions exude one collective sentiment: We are entering the new year with optimism and hope.

Looking forward to receiving feedback from our congregants.

January Birthdays

January 1	Diane Robertson
January 4	Lauryn Adolph
January 4	Edward Avakoff
January 5	Daniel Tate
January 14	Sandy Schowengerdt
January 15	Teresa Murakami
January 22	Jean Ozeki
January 26	Rev. Karen Swanson
January 30	George Gardiner
January 31	Ali LeBlanc

January Anniversary

January 21	Torrie & Jim McAllister-Miller
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