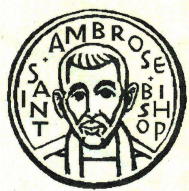


March
2024



The Ambrosian

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

In This Issue:

Message from Mother
Rebecca.....P 1

Layman's
Reflection.....P 4

Who was Saint
Ambrose?
.....P 5

Announcements.....P 6-7

Sea Breeze
School
News.....P 7-8

Editor's Corner.....P 8

Birthdays &
Anniversaries.....P 9

Editor
Nilda Chong



The Good News of Lent

Part of my daily morning routine is to sit in my favorite chair with a mug of steaming coffee in hand, and scroll through the news of the day. Lately, I have found this increasingly distressing. News of the unrelenting conflict in Gaza, the continuing bloodshed in Ukraine, leap out at me. Then there is the continued acrimony and lack of collaboration in our government leaders, to say nothing of the breakdown of respect for our Constitution and the rule of law. Politically and socially, we are more polarized than ever, divided along lines of political party, religious faith, economic class, and ethnicity. And rather than engaging in honest dialogue, seeking to understand the viewpoints of others, we retreat to our own camps, where we can feel smug in our righteousness, criticizing and dehumanizing those who are different from us.

And then there is the continuing epidemic of gun violence. One Valentine's Day, **Valentine's Day**, for pity's sake, we woke up to learn that at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory parade, which is supposed to be a time of fun, pride, and community celebration, 22 people were hit and 1 was killed in the latest mass shooting. A lot of the victims were children. A time of joy turned into a terrifying siege, in just a few short minutes. That really got to me. I began to feel this almost physical longing to read some good news, any tidbit, no matter how small. I wanted to desperately read some bit of cheer, some story of kindness. We have really lost our way, I thought. In the midst of all this pain, and fear, and suffering, where is some good news? Maybe there isn't any.

And then I started to look at the Gospel for today. Jesus had the audacity, the audacity to say, “the time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news.” Good news, where? And how absurd is it to say that the kingdom of God has come near, when all I can see is violence and division! What on earth is Jesus talking about? All I see around me is lots of really bad news!

And then as I continued reading, I realized the times Jesus lives were not all that different from our own. People experienced oppression, helplessness, and estrangement from God then, too. The people of Israel lived under the oppressive rule of Rome, as well as the crushing burden of the regime of their own religious authorities. War and conquest, then and now, were common. And in those days, those days of darkness, where people longed for some glimmer of light, the time of grace drew near. John the Baptist began to preach the need for repentance, and one day Jesus presented himself for baptism. And it was no ordinary baptism. For as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were torn apart like a curtain, and he saw the Spirit descending in the form of a dove. He heard a voice telling him “You are my son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased.”

After this, Jesus didn’t immediately go about telling everyone he was God’s Son and giving them rules for how to live. No, instead the Spirit drove him, herded him into the wilderness, the place of testing, and he met Stan there. Imagine the hunger, the thirst, the loneliness he must have suffered in the barren, harsh desert—tested, with no relief, for a long, long time. It is interesting to note that the people of Israel, under the leadership of Moses, had been tested in the wilderness many centuries before, and had been found wanting. Jesus, on the other hand, relied on the words of Scripture, and trust in his Abba, his Father, to be victorious over the enemy. He was able to resist the temptation to use his power in ways that would violate his relationship with God.

So Jesus identified with us in submitting to baptism, and going through the crucible of temptation and testing that is common to us all. He was triumphant, and in his humanity, he made a way forward for us. That is indeed good news!

And notice it was then, only then, after a time of testing, of deep prayer, and reflection, and suffering, and deep trust in the One who loved him, that he was ready to begin his public ministry. The story then tells us that after John’s arrest, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. He starts by saying the time is fulfilled. New the Greek word used here for time is Kairos, which means the opportune time, the proper time. This is different from chronos, or time that is measured in minutes and hours. Kairos is God’s tie, the time when all will come to fruition, the time of opportunity. Things are ready, we no longer have to wait, the time is now for a great change. The Kingdom of God, the reign of God’s gracious, saving activity in history has begun in a new and powerful way! Look up, your salvation has come near! Repent, turn away from going your own way, and return to the One who loves you! Believe in the good news of his appearing!

And what is this good news, this Gospel? Well, the good news is that God is not distant and far above us, but closer to us than we are to ourselves! God is active in human history, not in the sense of manipulating events, but through inspiring his people, walking with them, strengthening them to be bearers of love, grace and mercy in the world. He woos us, he lures us with longing and with love, to be in a living relationship with him. He longs for our love and our friendship so much that he willingly took on the limitations of our human flesh to teach us the ways of love, and mercy, and justice. And because we were alienated by sin, Jesus came to take on our separation, our brokenness, our wounds, so we could be reconciled with the Father who loved us from the beginning. Through his suffering, death, and resurrection, our infirmities, our sin, our separation and alienation from God are healed and we are restored to new and wonderful life!

The good news of the Gospel starts with the realization that in our own strength, we can't save ourselves. As the service of the Reconciliation of a Penitent in our Book of Common Prayer tells us, "we were clothed through the water of baptism with the shining garment of Jesus' righteousness, but we have squandered the inheritance of the saints, and wandered far in a land that is waste. We were created in the image of God, and God saw that it was very good, yet in our human nature, we have tendency to be our own gods, masters of our own destinies, and we end up in a mess! When we turn from God and go it alone, we soon come to the end of our own resources, and we are unable to walk in the loving, peaceful ways that God wants for us. The good news is that there is nowhere we can wander, no matter how far, where we are beyond the reach of God's love. God will relentlessly, lovingly, and persistently seek us out, call us by name, until we recognize the divine voice. The life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ shows us that God will stop at nothing to draw us into the divine life and transform us into the new creation we were meant to be from the beginning. This, friends, is indeed the great, good, good news of the Gospel! Let us rejoice!

So how might we enter into the story of the good news this Lent and let it refresh and renew our spirits? As the collect for the day tells us, we are assaulted by many temptations. We may not be tempted to turn stones into bread, or throw ourselves from a high place, as Jesus was. No, our temptations may be more subtle. Perhaps the thorns of preoccupation with power, or position, or money, or achievement are choking off the seed of God's work within us, or our spirits become barren or dry due to lack of attention to our inner life. Perhaps we are tempted to give up in despair in the time of testing. Whatever temptations we face, we can be assured that our God knows our weakness and is mighty to save, to enfold us in love and grace and strength, and bring about in us that new creation which is our destiny and glory.

This Lent, we can let the stories of Jesus' ministry, his hospitality, his welcome that he extends to everyone, be part of our story. Let the Gospel story be joined with your story and rejoice. Amen.

In God's love,

Rev. Rebecca+

Layman's Reflection



Dear St. Ambrose,

What a first weekend of March 2024!

While we will miss Mike Frisch, (Carole Frisch's husband) his joyful spirit was certainly among us celebrating his life. Jay Watan led us through a beautiful memorial service on Saturday. So much preparation, great food, so many people, full of love,

Sunday afternoon Amanda (our music director) and friends presented an afternoon of Mozart to be remembered for a long time to come. Our sanctuary was filled to capacity with seating spilling out into the Parish Hall. The reception afterwards was spectacular.

Ash Wednesday has passed and once again we are in the Lenten Season. Mother Rebecca will light our way with "Stations of the Cross" over the next few weeks leading into Holy Week. Thank you Mother Rebecca for blessing us with the Triduum: Maundy Thursday (3/29 7pm), Good Friday (3/30 7pm), Vigil (Saturday 7pm), then Easter Morning (3/31 10am) will bring us the Light of Christ.

Into the light.

Love,
Ham

Who was Saint Ambrose?



Ambrose was born in 339 in Augusta, now known as Trier in Germany. His father was the imperial viceroy of Gaul. He was raised by his widowed mother in Rome in a palace that was often visited by clergy. His sister Marcellina, a nun, also helped raise him.

He was named bishop of Milan by unexpected acclaim of the people of the city in 374 as a strategy to avoid a disputed election. As a compromise candidate, Ambrose went from an unbaptized layman to a bishop in eight days.

His sermons were considered masterpieces of Latin eloquence. He composed beautiful hymns, among them *Creator of the Earth and Sky* and *Maker of all things, God Most High*, that were believed to bewitch the populace. His most widely circulated sermon was the *Expositio Evangelii Secundum Lucam*, Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke. His most famous convert was Augustine, whom he baptized.

Ambrose promoted baptism, denounced social abuses, and sought pardon for condemned men. He only wished to be seen as a simple Christian bishop.

- Feast day: December 7
- Venerated by: Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox Churches, and Anglican Communion
- Patron of beekeepers

Edited by Nilda Chong

Announcements

Outreach – March 2024

Lenten Campaigns:

During Lent we ask parishioners to forego some activities that they may view as “luxuries” (lattes, desserts) and donate those funds to either or both of two worthy causes.

United Thank Offering is a major funding source for the Episcopal Church’s international missions. The missions not only spread the Good News but also provide basic needs to people in their local communities. We ask that if you are inclined to make a donation that you write a check to St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, mark it UTO in the memo section, and drop it in the offering plate.

RIP Medical Debt (ripmedicaldebt.org) buys medical debt for cents on the dollar. The debt is then cancelled, relieving families from financial burdens that many find overwhelming. Debt incurred to pay for hospitalization, medicines, and treatment of chronic conditions is one of the principal causes of personal bankruptcy in the U.S. RIP Medical Debt is a 501(c)(3) organization and is rated 4 out of 4 stars by Charity Navigator. St. Ambrose joins other Peninsula Episcopal churches in this campaign during Lent. Simply write a check to St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, mark it RIP Medical Debt, and place it in the offering plate.

Both Lenten campaigns will end on March 31st, Easter Sunday.

Sandwiches on Sunday – March 31st:

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. They will be distributed at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City on Sunday, March 31st, from 11:45 to 12:15 p.m. If you would like to help or have any questions, please contact Steve Yuen (cell 650-315-9662, steveyuen@aol.com).

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.

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](mailto:hfangster@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. In February we sent out 11 birthday, 2 anniversary, and 2 get well 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.

Sea Breeze School News

March is here and so is the crazy weather! I do hope all of you have been safe during the recent storms.

Things are moving right along here at Sea Breeze. As we await the arrival of the pesky Leprechaun (he always makes such a mess), the children are busy making the "best" leprechaun trap and are so excited to see if they can catch the green guy named Grady! There will be parties filled with green things, glitter all over and excited children around every corner.

We are, of course, preparing for Easter as well. Mrs. Irizarry has started sharing stories of Easter during our weekly chapels and the teachers are carrying messages back into the classrooms. We want the children to know that Easter is more than a silly bunny. I often wonder why a Bunny is associated with Easter and after many years, the wonder continues.

The staff have completed our Spring Assessments of the children and Progress reports have gone out. I am tasked with reading and approving each assessment and report and I always find it fulfilling to read how much the children have grown since the beginning of the year. We have children start with us in August, with no English skills, and to read that many of these children are now speaking full sentences in English is a credit to them, their families and the teachers. Our teachers work hard each day with each child to teach to their individual needs and it is so gratifying to see everything come together for these little people. Now that progress reports are out, we are looking forward to a much needed Spring Break. Our last day of school in March 28th and we will return to school on Monday, April 8th.

For those of you that are not aware, my office has been moved into what was previously the Rector's Office. I am here every day 7:30-5:00 and welcome a visit any time. We are always looking for "Mystery Readers" for our classrooms, so if you have a few extra minutes in your day and would like to get a "kid fix" please let us know and we will schedule you in. The children love having visitors.

As we come upon this Easter Season, I wish you all many Blessings.

Peace,
Jerelyn Weber, Principal

The Editor's Corner – by Nilda Chong



The other day, it occurred to me that I knew nothing about Saint Ambrose. I found three enigmatic faces of Saint Ambrose that hardly look like the same person so I became even more intrigued. In each picture he is depicted at various stages of his life and the facial expressions seem to convey totally different emotions. Now I was definitely very curious. Hence, the story about Saint Ambrose that appears in this issue.

March Birthdays

March 1	Elliott Dun
March 2	Cathy Rincon
March 6	Donna Avakoff
March 6	Hendri Tjandra
March 8	Shaiji Ajit
March 14	John Miller
March 14	Phoebe Venkat
March 16	Kenneth Nagar
March 18	Karen Nagar
March 18	Anders Zhou
March 22	Pearl Walker
March 24	Lyra Tanner
March 25	James Stephens
March 26	Grace Rawley
March 27	Lily Cate Moriarty

March Anniversaries

March 21	Shawn and Phoebe Venkat
March 30	Eunice & Kenny Chee