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Edition



The Ambrosian

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

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Editor Pro tempore
David Ota

Reflections from our Rector

Dear Members and Friends of St. Ambrose Church,

Aloha! I hope and pray that you are well as we live into the third week of the Shelter-in-Place directive with the intent of slowing down the spread of the Novel Coronavirus. Much has changed in our lives which we normally take for granted. We are not able to gather in person and greet our neighbors, co-workers, friends and family who does not live with us. For those of us who live with others, at least we can have another human being to touch and to converse with face to face. For those of us who live alone, we spend our days physically isolated.

It is amazing to me how quickly the directives regarding the response to the Coronavirus evolved. On Sunday, March 1st, we gathered for worship, but were instructed not to use home baked bread for communion nor to intinct in the common cup. On Sunday, March 8th, we gathered for worship, but were instructed not to offer the common cup. And on Sunday, March 15th we cancelled worship-in-person. On Sundays, March 22nd and 29th we created a virtual live-streaming Liturgy of the Word service at 10 a.m. through You Tube Live-Streaming. The link is:

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

The worship bulletin is posted on the church website at www.stambrosefostercity.org.

This year, due to how life has changed for us all, we will have a **Virtual Good Friday service on Friday, April 10th at 12:10 p.m.** We will also have a **Virtual Easter Sunday service on Sunday, April 12th at 10 a.m.** Sadly, this year we will not have a Maundy Thursday Liturgy or an Easter Vigil Liturgy with Holy Baptism. (See Mark Your Calendars for online options.)

On a positive note, we have continued to communicate with one another through Zoom meetings. We have been able to have Youth Group meetings, Sunday School classes, Bible studies, as well as the meetings of the School Board, the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Vestry. Members and friends have also been in contact with one another, checking up with each other.

Reflections from our Rector (continued)

I am grateful to everyone who has helped us adapt to the new circumstances of our lives. In an ironic way, our ministry is now more accessible to people who for reason of distance or inability to come to our church facility are now able to participate in worship and meetings in ways they did not before. On the other hand, for some of us who are not as technologically connected, we will need to find ways to stay in contact with one another.

Also, I ask you to continue to financially support our ministry together and to send in your offerings as you are able. Some of us may have had their finances affected by the need to Shelter-In-Place. Some people have been laid off. Some who own their own businesses will have a loss in income. For those of us who can continue to make our offerings or a portion of them, I encourage you to do so.

Finally, as we live into Holy Week and Easter this year struggling with the Coronavirus and the suffering it is causing, I invite you to be steadfast in your faith, trusting in God's love for us all, as we follow our Lord Jesus Christ to bear the burdens we must for the sake of loving God and our neighbor. I wish you all a blessed Holy Week and Easter.

Yours,

David Y. Ota, Rector

Announcements

Study Groups in April

The Monday Evening Zoom Study Group will meet this month on **Mondays, April 13 and 27 at 7:00 p.m.** They are studying the upcoming Sunday lessons. They are meeting through Zoom Meetings.

The Tuesday Zoom Bible Study Group meets on **April 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.** They are meeting through Zoom Meetings. They are currently reading the Letter to James.

If you would like to participate in either of the Zoom Bible Study groups, you will need to be sent an invitation. To be invited to the Monday Evening Zoom Study Group please contact Warren Wong at wwong@nd.edu. To be invited to the Tuesday Zoom Bible Study Group please contact the Rev. David Ota at dyota@mindspring.com. Everyone is invited to join.

Announcements (continued)

Mark Your Calendars

- Virtual Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday: April 5, 10 am,
You Tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1li-yYov5kMpvDg>
 - Zoom Sunday School Meeting, Preschool to 2nd Grade, Sundays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26, 10 am; To be invited please contact Fe Balamiento at valentin_fe@yahoo.com.
 - Zoom Sunday School Meeting: Sundays, April 5, 19 and 26, 11 am; To be invited please contact Fe Balamiento at valentin_fe@yahoo.com.
 - Zoom Youth Group Meeting: Sundays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26, 4:00 pm; To be invited please contact the Rev. Karen Swanson at karen.2.swanson@gmail.com.
 - Tuesday Zoom Bible Study Group: Tuesdays, April 7, 14, 21 and 28, 1:00 pm; To be invited please contact David Ota at dyota@mindspring.com
 - Virtual Maundy Thursday Liturgy at the Washington National Cathedral: April 9, 4:30 pm,
<https://cathedral.org/event/online-holy-eucharist-with-stripping-of-the-altar/>
 - Virtual Good Friday Liturgy: April 10, 12:10 pm
You Tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1li-yYov5kMpvDg>
 - Great Vigil Online Live Stream from Grace Cathedral: Saturday, April 11, 9 pm,
<https://gracecathedral.org/events/the-great-vigil-online-live-stream-3/>
 - Virtual Easter Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: April 12, 10 am,
You Tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1li-yYov5kMpvDg>
 - Virtual Easter Egg Hunt: April 12, 11 am. For more information contact Fe Balamiento at valentin_fe@yahoo.com.
 - Monday Zoom Bible Study Group: Mondays, April 13 and 27, 7 pm; To be invited please contact Warren Wong at wwong@nd.edu.
 - Virtual Sunday Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II: April 19 and 26, 10 am,
You Tube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1li-yYov5kMpvDg>
 - Bishop Marc Andrus' Visitation to St. Ambrose: Sunday, June 21, 8 am and 10 am
 - Diocesan Convention: Friday, October 23, 2 pm to 8:30 pm, Saturday, 9 am to 3:30 pm,
Grace Cathedral
-

The Desk of Rev. Karen Swanson

St. Ambrose Youth News

Our Awesome Youth

I would like to commend our youth who, with the help of their families, are responding to the COVID-19 virus with the restraint it takes to do school work online and to stay at home. For youth, who like nothing better than gathering with one another, this is a daunting task with a huge payoff not only for them, but for all the rest of us. Thank you, youth, for looking beyond your own desires to the greater good of us all.

Among our youth, I would like to mention two of whose acts of service I am aware. I am sure there are others as well. Thank you to senior Lydia McIntyre who, in partnership with her father David and with the support of her mother Cathy, has made it possible for us to livestream the worship service. She has technology skills that some of us older leaders do not.

Ben Tjandra left the Bay Area a year ago when he graduated from high school; he is now finishing up his first year at University of Chicago from home. A shout out to Ben as well, who is helping the youth minister gain confidence in the use of ZOOM for meeting with the youth. Ben is supported by his brother Daniel and his parents Suzanne and Hendri in this effort. The family is also actively looking for other ways to help out from a safe distance in the East Bay. Thank you, Ben and Lydia, and your supportive casts, for your important work in helping us to connect with one another virtually.

Youth ZOOM Meetings

St. Ambrose Youth can stay in touch with one another, their friends, and with the church, by joining ZOOM meetings set up especially for them. Most meetings include a check in about highs and lows each week, a reflection on where faith intersects with teen life, and a fun virtual game. For now, the meetings will be offered on Sunday evening, usually between 4 and 5:30 p.m. Please direct feedback about the time of the meetings to Rev. Karen.

The next “gathering” will be on April 5 beginning at 4 p.m. This particular meeting is scheduled for two hours to allow more playing time for the Minecraft enthusiasts who want to participate in the final activity of the meeting. Friends of our youth are welcome at the St. Ambrose Youth meetings. Please send or have them send their e-mail to karen.2.swanson@gmail.com to receive an invitation. Please also let Karen (650-200-8449) know if you are having trouble joining the meeting. She will either help you or, more likely, refer you to someone else who can.

The Desk of Ms. Maureen H. Fromme, Choir Director

HYMNS THAT ENCOURAGE

“Surely It Is God Who Saves Me”- 1982 Hymnal # 679

The Rev. Dr. Carl P. Daw chose words from the book of Isaiah for this hymn. Rev. Daw is the retired professor and curator of Hymnological Collections at Boston University. He served as a consultant to the text committee for the 1982 Hymnal. There are 11 hymns for which he wrote texts in this hymnal.

Working with him by composing the music is Ray Urwin, who is currently Minister of Music at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Corona Del Mar.

The hymn tune name is 'Thomas Merton'. In doing some research as to why the tune is given that name, I found that Thomas Merton was a bit of an interesting character who lived earlier in the 1900's.

His family moved to and from various countries when he was growing up. Much of their time was spent in England, where Thomas was a bit of a rebel and trouble-maker, even spending some time in jail.

In his younger years he had attended church and was somewhat familiar with the Bible. He came to the point where he was rather desperate and was trying to decide what to do with his life. He decided to become a priest, but what kind? He opened a Latin Bible and randomly came to the verse Luke 1:22: “Behold, you shall be silent.” So-- on to a Trappist monastery. He became a prolific reader and writer. At times, he would leave his state of silence and become a social activist.

His way of life and copious writings have been an inspiration to many, including the writer of the text in this hymn, hence Mr. Urwin selects “Thomas Merton” as the name for his tune.

If you would like to listen to a version of it on You Tube here is a link:

<https://youtu.be/fhbPhGlv-SU>

April Outreach Report – by Steve Yuen

In one short month the world has become much worse, yet there are silver linings.

Sheltering in place is an opportunity to spend extended lengths of time with the people in our lives, either in person under the same roof or through communicating with the phone or new methods like Zoom, Skype, and Facetime. Perhaps we will also finally work through what we find irritating in our loved ones—and they with us!

Our current circumstances afford a marvelous opportunity to learn something new. The range of subjects is infinite--a new language, cooking, building or repairing anything—and many colleges offer some courses online, free to non-students.

This is also an opportunity for us to do a deep dive into the contemplative side of Lent. Seriously engaging in prayer, fasting, and repentance is difficult in the world “out there”. Staying within four walls keeps out distractions. We may well find that much of what we thought was important really isn't. Reassessment of priorities is often a result of Lent, if taken seriously.

Our prayers go out to those who are suffering from COVID-19, working on the frontlines battling the disease, and staving off financial disaster from losing a job or a business. To them silver linings seem irrelevant. We who are on the sidelines are struggling to find ways to help, but we haven't received much guidance except for buying take-out from small restaurants, staying home as much as we can, and writing checks to charities, which by the way are also grappling to serve their clients in a world of physical distancing.

The Outreach activities that St. Ambrose normally engages in are on hold.

Home and Hope, which provides temporary shelter to families using Peninsula church facilities, is housing the families in motels through April. St. Ambrose is scheduled to provide meals during the week of May 17th, and we will remain in touch with them about changes.

Sandwiches on Sunday (SOS): We were supposed to serve a hot lunch on March 29th to 70 people at the Fair Oaks Community Center, but Redwood City officials have shut down SOS until further notice. Sandwiches on Sunday has been an Outreach activity of St. Ambrose since 2002. Below is a photo of our volunteers from 10 years ago.



Sea Breeze School News – by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

March was a very short month on campus for us this year. March 12th was our last day on campus with the children and on March 13th the teachers participated in CPR/1st aid training and then we closed things down in preparation for the shelter in place.

These are very different and scary times for sure. One of the most important things we do at Sea Breeze is build strong and respectful relationships with our children and their families and for this reason it was important that we maintain those relationships during the closure. On Monday March 16th Renee Sheldon, the Preschool Director, and I met with a group of 4 staff members and together we learned how to implement the ZOOM platform to communicate with our students. On Tuesday we met with and trained all of the teachers and by Wednesday March 18th the teachers were all meeting with their students via ZOOM. I was in on all of those calls and they were amazing! The teachers did a fantastic job of facilitating the calls. The children were all very excited to see and hear from us and their friends and the families were all very forgiving of the stumbles that were made as everyone got used to the platform. Calls are now scheduled twice a day with each class and PJ story time is happening each night for the preschool and kindergarten classes. I am hosting staff meetings each Friday via zoom to stay connected with the team and they are proving very beneficial for support, problem solving and team building. In addition to connection with our children and the teachers, we held our first zoom parent meeting on March 30th and over 120 parents attended. The families expressed their gratitude for all we are doing to stay connected to their children during these times and they acknowledged the difficulty that we are all experiencing. Their support of the school and the work being done is amazing.

The school continues to follow the shelter in place and the school closure that is in place. We are not aware of any cases or exposures to our Sea Breeze children or families. We pray that everyone continues to stay safe and well.

Continued Blessings,

Jerelyn Weber, Principal
