E

In this Issue:

*Reflections (cont) …...P 2*

*Announcements …..P 2-7*

*Outreach Report .....P 8-9*

*“Kids Listen”..…….P 9-10*

*Sea Breeze School*

*News ……....….…... P 11*

**Interim Editor:**

*CD & S. Rowsell*



The Ambrosian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

900 Edgewater Blvd, Foster City, California 94404

December

2016

Edition

***Individual Highlights:***

Inside Story 2

Inside Story 3

Inside Story 4

Inside Story 5

Inside Story 6

Inside Story 7

Last Story 8

***Special Interest Articles:***

• Add a highlight or your point of interest here.

• Add a highlight or your point of interest here.

• Add a highlight or your point of interest here.

Dear Members and Friends of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

Aloha! As I write this letter to you I am filled with a profound feeling of thanksgiving as I am on my way to Dallas, Texas to attend the Episcopal Church’s Conference called “Evangelism Matters,” and at the same time I am anticipating my hip replacement surgery and the subsequent period of recovery afterwards.

I am thankful because we are part of the Episcopal Church that seeks to restore all people to unity with God and one another, the ministry of reconciliation. I realize how privileged I am to be able to attend a conference such as this whose aim is to proclaim the Good News we have in Jesus the Christ in deed and word. Our hope is that there will be reconciliation between humanity and God, between one another and between humanity and God’s creation. My personal hope is for racial reconciliation. The Episcopal Church can be a loving community of faith for reconciliation in a divided world, and St. Ambrose has a part to play in this ministry of reconciliation.

Of course, I am anticipating both the surgery and the recovery period before I can return to my regular duties as your Rector. However, I am confident that under the leadership of Charles Saunders, Senior Ward, and April Cherrington, Junior Warden, with the assistance of Margie Lee, Administrative Assistant, the regular administrative functions of the parish will be handled well. I am also confident that Father Jay Watan will be able to fill in terms of pastoral care. And I am grateful that the Vestry has approved to have my wife, the Rev. Karen Swanson, fill in as a supply priest for our Saturday and Sunday worship services. God willing, I hope to be to return to my duties in January.

By the time you receive this letter we will be in the midst of the Season of Advent which looks forward to the coming of Christ in our lives which we celebrate during the Season of Christmas. The Christian liturgical calendar is cyclical, moving from Advent which anticipates what God will do, to Christmas and the Day of the Epiphany surprising us with the joy we experience that God chooses to dwell among us, to the Season after the Epiphany when we notice how God chose to be made manifest in our lives, to the Season of Lent and Holy Week when we contemplate our waywardness from following God’s way which leads us to the Cross, to the Season of Easter and the Day of Pentecost when God surprises us

# Reflections from our Rector

## Rector’s reflections continued…



that death is not the end, but only a new beginning in the power of the Spirit, until we go through the long Season after Pentecost in which we strive to follow the ways of Jesus the Christ ourselves, until we once again look to see how things will end and anticipate what God will do next in our lives.

Our book study on the “Hidden Power of the Gospels” by Alexander Shaia is finally finished. Like the Christian liturgical calendar, we are reminded how the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, John and Luke give us another cycle of the life of spiritual transformation. Matthew teaches us that we begin to recognize that our lives as we have known them has ended, which sends us on a journey to seek a new identity. Mark teaches us that the journey towards a new identity is a struggle and involves loss of what was known and cherished. John teaches us that despite the struggle and perhaps because we are willing to do the difficult work of letting go of our ego, we will come to a place of joy realizing our new reality as beloved of God. Finally, Luke teaches us to risk our joyful peace so we can be on a mission of love and service in our new-found identity, until we come to realize that our identity needs to change again based on circumstances in our lives which bring us a new awareness.

Both the Christian liturgical calendar and the Hidden Power of the Gospels invite us into the journey of spiritual transformation. As we enter more fully into the Season of Advent I invite you to remain faithful to your own spiritual transformation where you may be in the cycle of life that God gives you.

Yours,

David Y. Ota, Rector

**Thanks**

* Thanks to George Gardiner, Eva Kwong, Shelley Keefe, Liva Neyroud and David Ota for serving as the Stewardship Dinner Planning Committee this year.
* Thanks to Nilda Chong, chair; April Cherrington, John Miller, Teresa Murakami, David Ota and Marilyn Stephens for serving as the Disaster Planning Committee. They have completed a disaster preparedness plan for St. Ambrose which they hope to implement in 2017.
* Thanks to everyone who performed for the Stewardship Dinner: Frank Saunders on the piano, the Bradford and Rawley band; William Bradford on piano, Mary Bradford dancing a hula, Mathias Gerber and Aurelia Gerber on piano respectively, Rowan Watan playing the piano, Danielle Richards on the harp, Manuel Morales from El Buen Pastor singing while playing the guitar, the Ajit and Thampi families singing a South Indian song of faith accompanied by Frank Saunders, the Children’s Choir and the St. Ambrose Choir both singing under the direction of Maureen Fromme and Sal Censoprano and his band “Red Vinyl” playing for our dance.
* Thanks to Rami Amireh for donating the table wine and craft beers.
* Thanks to Jill Schwab, the Disaster Preparedness Committee, Nellie Wong, and Clara Padilla for donating the raffle gifts for the Stewardship Dinner.
* Thanks to Charles Saunders, April Cherrington and David Ota for organizing the Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 13th.
* Thanks to Don Gundry who is serving as the new Chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee.
* Thanks to everyone who donated food items for Call Primrose’s Fill a Box, Feed a Family program, and especially to Steve Yuen who organized this project.
* Thanks to the Altar Guild for cleaning the chapel on Saturday, November 19th in preparation for Advent and Christmas.
* Thanks to Maureen Fromme and the Children’s Choir who sang “Thank you, God” by Austin Lovelace at the 10 a.m. service of Holy Eucharist on Sunday, November 20th.
* Thanks to Rose Umeda, our senior high school student, who preached on “Thanksgiving Sunday” on November 20th.

**Welcome Karen!**

We welcome the Rev. Karen Swanson as our supply priest during the absence of the Rector. Although she already knows many of you, please make the effort to introduce yourself to her and welcome her among us.

**Update on the 2016 Pledge Campaign: A Community of Sharing, a Community of Giving**

To date we have received 73 pledges totaling $140,064. We have also received 38 pledges of time and talent. We also received 15 pledges for Altar Flowers. The 2016 pledge total was 79 pledges for $149,170. Thanks to everyone who has turned in a pledge for 2017.

Keith and Charlene Adolph Donna Avakoff Bill and Charlotte Bradford

Christina Brockman & Stan Hui Bill and Bonnie Cagno Marilyn Canon

Anthony and Darlene Caponera Angela Carducci Sal and Linda Censoprano

Honkai Chang & Milda Beh Eunice Chee Grant and April Cherrington

Nilda Chong Bettie Davis Reena Davis

Kyn Dellinger Jeanne DeTorre-Ozeki Elliott Dun & Teresa Murakami

Maureen H. Fromme George & Janet Gardiner Leda V. Girardi

Don Gundry Demian & Lorraine Harvill Caroline Helmuth

Eugene Hetzer Kay Huffman Tippy Irwin

Shelley Keefe Ray Kelley Joanne Kerseg

Brian and Lizz Klammer June Kudzia Dulce and Michael Lord

Judy Marshall Dorothy Matsuo Kirk & Brenda Matsuo

David McIntyre & Cathy Rincon Valerie Mersh John Miller & Eva Kwong

Barbara Milligan Kirk & Jessica Morales Wilfredo and Oliva Nagar

Jim Neubert David Ota & Karen Swanson Clara Padilla

Karin Patterson Don & Elizabeth Peter Ajit Philip and Shaiji Ajit

Elmer and Alie Pong Jimmy and Poppy Rawley Peggy Redmond

Anita and Rob Richards Diane Robertson Julio and Ngoc Rodriguez

C.D. & Siew Rowsell Charles Saunders Frank & Barbara Saunders

Sandy Schowengerdt Jill and Jerry Schwab Dilip Selvaraj & Teresa Rajaratnam Yvonne Sidell George & Merle Silverman Matt & Meltem Tanner

Andy Walker Jay and Lilian Watan Pedro and Dolores Watan

Deborah White Warren & Nellie Wong Steve & Belinda Yuen

If you would like to make a pledge, you still can do so. Pledge envelopes are in the foyer. The Vestry will be reviewing the final draft of the 2017 Budget at its **December 20th** meeting. Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2017 Pledge campaign.

**The Children’s Choir**

Maureen Fromme teaches the children to sing new songs which will be used for Sunday worship. All children are invited to join in for 15 minutes of practice immediately following the end of the 10 am service. If you are interested in having your child join, please contact Maureen at [mhfromme@yahoo.com](mailto:mhfromme@yahoo.com) or by calling her at 415 990-5658.

**The Christmas Pageant**

The annual Christmas Pageant will be held during the Christmas Eve Family Holy Eucharist on **Saturday, December 24th from 4:00 p.m.** The organizing meeting for the Christmas Pageant will begin on **Sunday, November 27th** from **11:30 a.m.** in the Chapel. If you are interested in having your children participate please let Lizz Klammer, Coordinator of Children and Family Ministry know. The rehearsals will be held on **Sundays, December 4th, 11th and 18th from 11:45** a.m. in the chapel.

**Movie Night at St. Ambrose**

**What:** Let’s enjoy the holiday season together with a fun-filled animated movie **'The SECRET LIFE of PETS'**on**Friday - December 9th, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.** over **potluck dinner at 6.30 p.m.**

Spread the message to all you know as this movie is a real entertainer for all ages.



**Plot Summary of 'The SECRET LIFE of PETS' :**

Max is a spoiled terrier who enjoys a comfortable life in a New York building until his owner adopts Duke, a giant and unruly canine. During their walk outside, they encounter a group of ferocious alley cats and wind up in a truck that's bound for the pound. Luckily, a rebellious bunny named Snowball swoops in to save the doggy duo from captivity. In exchange, Snowball demands that Max and Duke join his gang of abandoned pets on a mission against the humans who've done them wrong.

**When:** **Friday - December 9th, 2016**

**Dinner Start Time:** **6:30 p.m.**

**Movie Start Time:** **7:00 p.m.**

**Where:**St. Ambrose Parish Hall

Signup sheet for food potluck will be available in the parish, so please pen down the tasty food you wanna share with all.

**Study Groups in December**

The Tuesday Evening Study group usually meets on the **second and fourth Tuesdays** of the month from **7:00 p.m.** in the Wong’s home, however the December meeting still needs to be scheduled. They are reading a book called “Breaking Bread, the spiritual significance of food” by Sara Covin Juengst.

The Monday and Wednesday Bible Study groups will be taking a break in December while the Rector recovers from surgery.

Each of the study groups is open and newcomers are invited to join.

**Saturday Evening Worship in December**

The next Saturday Evening Worship service will be on **Saturday, December 10th** from **5:30 p.m.** in the chapel. This service will be led by the Rev. Karen Swanson.

This year **Christmas Eve,** **December 24th**, is on a **Saturday**. Thus, the Family Christmas Eve Eucharist with Pageant will be held from **4:00 p.m.** Father Jay will preach, and the Rev. Karen Swanson will celebrate.

The Christmas Eve St. Ambrose Choral Concert will be held at **10:00 p.m.** in the chapel.

The Candlelight Choral Eucharist will be held at **10:30 p.m.** The Rev. Karen Swanson will preach and the Rev. Jay Watan will celebrate.

**Worship on Christmas Day**

This year **Christmas Day, December 25th** is on a Sunday. We will continue our Christmas Day practice by having only one service at **10 a.m.** The Rev. Karen Swanson will both preach and celebrate.

**The Special Congregational Meeting**

On Sunday, November 13th, about 35 to 40 members of St. Ambrose participated in a Congregational conversation about the implications an inevitable retirement of the Rector will have. The meeting was facilitated by Davey Gerhard, Development Officer for the Diocese of California, and Christina Mathis, a consultant for the diocese’s capital campaign.

The Rector explained the genesis for the meeting. As he is now 62 and half years old, he obviously has been contemplating retirement. While thinking about this he began to worry about what the congregation would do since it does not own a rectory. Although a date for his retirement has not been established, the Rector could retire as early as July 2020. Considering the cost of housing in Foster City and the peninsula in general, the Rector wanted to inform the congregation of the probable increase in cost of housing a new Rector. The difference between what the Rector pays for housing versus what the existing rental market is would amount to $30,000 per year more.

Davey and Christina facilitated the conversation by dividing those present into two groups. Each group had an opportunity to dream about the future of St. Ambrose’s mission and ministry, and each group had an opportunity to consider the financial realities involved.

Afterwards all the information generated was highlighted. It was noted that much of what the members hope for could be done with their time and talent, especially in discerning the needs of the wider community and supporting these ministry initiatives. It was noted that St. Ambrose has many options to address the need for offering future housing to the next Rector. A final note was the hope for a future Rector to be able to live in Foster City as it would provide the best opportunity for a ministry of presence.

A special task force was appointed by the Rector to begin investigating the options for future housing. Don Gundry, Shelley Keefe and Cathy Rincon all volunteered and were appointed. Charles Saunders and April Cherrington who serve on the Vestry’s Future Committee will also serve. The first meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 4th from 11:30 a.m.** in the kitchen.

**Rector’s Reflections on the “Evangelism Matters” Conference**

Evangelism is not what many believe it is. There are so many examples of people talking at others, telling them what they have to do to be saved, and that Jesus the Christ can do it. Although we believe that God has saved us from living for ourselves alone through faith in Jesus the Christ, most Episcopalians believe that talking at people is not very effective, nor very respectful. Talking about our faith is very personal and special, and it requires a relationship of love, trust and safety to share such personal matters. When people talk at others, it presumes to know what is happening in people’s lives before one actually knows them.

But what if God is already acting in the lives of all people, and that evangelism is naming what God in Jesus the Christ has done and is doing in the Spirit?

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry says that he has taken on the role of Chief Evangelism Officer of the Episcopal Church, a branch of the world-wide Jesus movement. The good news we have to proclaim and live into is of a loving, liberating and life-giving God which is truly good news. The hope of evangelism is based in God’s love for the world as expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The purpose of evangelism is to help all people find their way home to God as God’s own beloved ones, and to care for God’s beloved creation. The ultimate end of evangelism is to see a transformed people and world, a new heaven and a new earth that God is creating. Evangelism is not about growing the church, although that may happen.

Episcopalians don’t have to be afraid of this kind of evangelism. We are not called to convert people to become Episcopalians. We are called to be loving, liberating and life-giving people who love God and our neighbors. We are called to notice the godly ways our neighbors’ lives, and to thank them. We are called to be with them in a ministry of presence by listening and caring about their hurts, struggles and challenges to be whole human beings. And when they ask, and only when they ask us about how our faith in Jesus the Christ has helped us with our own difficulties, we need to be ready to humbly and compassionately share the hope we have through our own personal stories.

This way of understanding evangelism is a return to the evangelism of Jesus the Christ of the gospels. If you read the gospel accounts, Jesus the Christ often noticed people who were overlooked. They would often cry out to him for healing or a word of comfort. He would respond and restore them to wholeness and relationship with their neighbors and family. He looked compassionately on people who were estranged from themselves, others and God and returned them to community and communion with their neighbors. He did so in such a loving, liberating and life-giving way that he threatened those in power. When accused of subterfuge and rebellion, he remained silent, but continued to act in his radically loving ways.

We who have given our lives to God in Jesus the Christ are called to emulate our Lord. We are to live in such a way that we reflect the love of God found in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. If we emulate Jesus the Christ as individuals and as a congregation, then our lives and life together will be filled with loving actions, humility and compassion, and we will witness what God is doing to bring forth a new heaven and a new earth.

**Mark Your Calendars:**

Giving Tree for Children: **Sunday, November 27th to December 18th,** Parish Hall

Children’s Choir Practice: **Sunday, December 4th, 11:15 a.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Pageant Practice: **Sunday, December 4th, 11:30 a.m.,** Chapel

Movie Night: **Friday, December 9th, 6:30 p.m.,** Potluck Dinner; **7:00 p.m.,** The Secret Life of Pets, Parish Hall

Task Force Meeting on Future Housing: **Sunday, December 4th, 11:30 a.m.,** Kitchen

Outreach Committee Meeting: **Sunday, December 4th, 11:45 a.m.,** Room 1

Home and Hope: **Tuesday, December 6th and Thursday, December 8th, 6:00 p.m.,** Hope Lutheran Church, San Mateo

Christmas Stocking Stuffers: **Tuesday, December 8th, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.,** 3 Plaza View Lane, Foster City

Saturday Evening Worship: **Saturday, December 10th, 5:30 p.m.,** Chapel

Children’s Choir Practice: **Sunday, December 11th, 11:15 a.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Pageant Practice: **Sunday, December 11th, 11:30 a.m.,** Chapel

Prayer Group: **Sunday, December 11th, 11:30 a.m.,** Room 1

St. Ambrose Sea Breeze School Board Meeting: **Tuesday, December 13th, 7:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Tuesday Study Group: **Tuesday, date to be determined, 7:00 p.m.,** Warren & Nellie Wong’s home

Children’s Choir Practice: **Sunday, December 18th, 11:15 a.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Pageant Practice: **Sunday, December 18th, 11:30 a.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Eve Family Eucharist and Pageant: **Saturday, December 24th, 4 p.m.,** Chapel

St. Ambrose Christmas Eve Choral Concert: **Saturday, December 24th, 10 p.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Eve Candlelight Choral Holy Eucharist: **Saturday, December 24th, 10:30 p.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist with Christmas Hymns: **Sunday, December 25th, 10 a.m.,** Chapel

Christmas Eve Family Holy Eucharist: **Saturday, December 24th, 4 p.m.,** chapel

Christmas Choral Concert: **Saturday, December 24th, 10 p.m.,** chapel

Candlelight Choral Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist: **Saturday, December 24th, 10:30 p.m.,** chapel

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist: **Sunday, December 25th, 10 a.m. (only),** chapel

Rector out for Medical Leave: **until January 2, 2017**

## Outreach Report - by Steve Yuen

**Sandwiches on Sunday (SOS)**: The Grand Scheduler was kind this year. October 30th was our last Sandwiches on Sunday for 2016, and we would not be due to serve lunch at the Fair Oaks Community Center until 2017. (In most years we would be assigned to Thanksgiving weekend or the weekend between Christmas and New Year’s Day---not that there’s anything wrong with that!)

Our cooks prepared a lunch of baked chicken and rice, salad, doughnuts, and bread. There were 30 people waiting in line at the opening, and the count eventually grew to 50. We had prepared enough food for 80-100 diners but did not come home with any leftovers. Lunch-goers helped themselves to second and third helpings and took home the rest in plastic containers (black with clear tops) that Susan Yates had saved from restaurants and grocery stores.

For over 13 years St. Ambrose has made a hot lunch for whoever shows up at the community center in Redwood City. (The lead sponsor, St. Pius Catholic Church, makes up bag lunches for diners to take home--hence the name *Sandwiches on Sunday*.)  
  
Thanks go to our cooks and 10 servers: The Yates (4), McIntyres (2), and Richards (2) families, Clara Padilla and Steve Yuen. The next SOS is on **January 29th, 2017**, when we’ll be serving salad and lasagna. If you can prepare a dish and/or help with serving and cleanup, please sign up on the sheet that will be posted in January in the Parish Hall. Please contact Rob Richards (rob.richards@tensorlabs.com, 577-8924) if you have any questions.

**CALL Primrose**:  St. Ambrose had signed up to fill four (4) food boxes for CALL Primrose’ Peninsula clients. Our members were so enthusiastic that we actually filled **five**, along with extra foodstuffs that CALL Primrose used to complete other sets. We also purchased a $20 Safeway gift card for each of the five boxes, which were delivered on November 16th.

CALL Primrose (http://www.callprimrose.org) is a Burlingame outreach venture founded by the Presbyterian and United Methodist churches.  St. Ambrose has participated in CALL Primrose’ “fill a box, feed a family” program since 2011.

*Our five boxes were set on a table in the back*

**Upcoming Events: Stocking Stuffers:** Jill and Jerry may have left the Bay Area, but Jill Schwab is again leading the effort to prepare “stocking stuffers” for seniors, veterans, and homeless people on the Peninsula. The date is **Thursday, December 8th**, from **10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.,** and the place is **3 Plaza View Lane**, Foster City.  This is a community room at an apartment complex right next to Pizza Hut and Taco Bell. There should be plenty of parking across the street in a vacant lot.

**Family Sharing**: This Christmas season we have adopted three (3) Samaritan House clients: two San Mateo families who have 2-3 children and one senior couple. We are trying to collect at least $800, which will enable us to buy presents and gift cards. The deadline is **Sunday, December 11th**; the gifts will be delivered later that week. All donations should be made to St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, designated "Family Sharing", and deposited in the offering plate or mailed to the church office. Thank you for spreading holiday cheer to members of our community.

# “**Kids Listen**”- by Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan

Have you ever wondered if your kids are ever paying attention to the things adults do? I have a story. Right before the Thanksgiving weekend I picked up my 11 year old son, Rowan, from school and on our way home we had a conversation about God and the Church. He said to me, “Your sermons pretty much say the same thing dad.” *Oh my*… I was surprised he was listening to them, but I wondered what he meant so I asked, “What do you mean?” He said to me, “You say the same things all the time… just in different ways. God loves us… you love Jesus… and with the Holy Spirit we can be God’s love in the world.” *For the most part he’s right. It’s definitely is a formula that works* when it comes to sharing the Good News. Relationship is how I’ve come to understand God. And this sort of Divine connection, I believe, makes us stronger. God’s love empowers us to live into love and to be God’s love in a world the needs love. But if the notion of love sounds too Kumbaya or naïve for you, consider what the world would be like without love.

*Not a place I want to be.*

The results of this year’s presidential election, with Donald Trump set to become the next President of the United States, have been greeted with both joy and relief from some and anxiousness and resistance from others. We’re entering a time of great uncertainty and offers an opportunity to recognize the deep brokenness in this nation and in the world. Like with Barak Obama’s election in 2008 and reelection in 2012, I believe people voted for one who they felt would give them a hope for a better future. And working class of the swing states who voted for the Obama ironically voted for Trump. Yet there’s no denying that the political rhetoric of hate, mistrust, fallacies and fear seemingly won the presidency.

I grew up with the understanding that the words the come out of my mouth is a reflection of my heart. I do have a problem with the bullying words used by the president-elect and his advocates because if reflect values bankrupt with hate, fear, and all the is easy. I remember listening to Van Jones, an activist for social justice and political commentator on CNN, say on the night of the election, “*You tell your kids, don’t be a bully. You tell your kids, don’t be a bigot. You tell your kids, do your homework and be prepared. Then you have this outcome."* What I heard later in the week was not comforting. I listened to children in our afterschool Chapel service, some in near tears, others who were children of immigrants, say things like, “Trump hates women and minorities” and “My family’s scared because he wants to deport all immigrants.” It was clear to me that the kids were paying attention to what Trump was saying. Our words hold the power of our intention. It’s not just locker room talk to laugh about or to minimize. When children are afraid of our own elected leaders, we have a problem!

Perception is reality. Our children are paying attention, even at the youngest age. Therefore, what we share about what’s in our heart makes a difference. So, what happens when we envision a hopeful future? Or of the God that loves unconditionally? We can shape their today so there is a future to look forward to. With our kids, I feel even more resolved to share with them the empowering gift of a faith grounded in God’s love and a tomorrow we have the power to shape because of what we do today.

From these experiences, I believe more than ever that the sustainable answers we seek to better our world will not be found in the politics we profess, but in the spiritual solutions we offer together. Spirituality however isn’t passive or simply a personal quest. The Spirituality offered in Jesus Christ is one the can transform hearts and unites people to do amazing things together.

The Bible is ripe with stories of people encountering Jesus and being changed in mind, body and spirit. God’s love truly is the greatest force in the universe. Just check out the story of Paul of Tarsus in the Book of Acts. Originally going by the name Saul, he was a man hardened of heart who hunted down the early Disciples of Christ. One day on his way to *do his job* he encountered the resurrected Christ and as temporary blinded so the eyes of his heart could see. With the power of the Holy Spirit this man named Saul became Paul. And his heart was transformed to live into a love that continues to warm up hearts even today. Paul writes in his 1st letter to the Corinthians, *“If I have all the faith… but do not have love, I am nothing.”* Love give us greater purpose. And we are stronger together when we live into love.

There are so many questions about the future face together. *Will the inequity between of have and have nots grow even wider? Will the historically disenfranchised become even more marginalized by the powerful and ignored by the privileged? Will fear dominate the choices we make? Can the American dream still be a reality or is it just a nightmare? Or can we take courage to find a better way together?*  Perhaps there will be a greater resolve to creating communities that honor one another and reflect the beauty of God’s inclusive heart. Maybe will we see a greater distribution of wealth and our generations inspired to answer the call for justice, service, creativity and wholeness? There is a reason the phrase “Don’t be afraid” appears so often in the Bible. Love is greater than fear. As people of faith, the Good Lord invites to hold the tension of those we may disagree with, to honor the stories of the other, and to be present in the tender sports of the world because we can be transformed by seeing the *Living Christ* in someone else.

We are stronger together. As we enter the season of Advent in preparation of the Birth of Jesus and the Christmas season, I offer you the words: ***KEEP the FAITH*** *&* ***LIVE into LOVE***. Remember our kids are listening and observing everything we do. My son also offered me some other words to believe in… ***“I know God likes ice cream ‘cause it’s GOOD.”***

***Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas!***

Sea Breeze School News

With Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas before us, the children and the teachers have been working very hard practicing for the Christmas programs they will put on for their families. Many songs are being taught and it is very cute to hear the stories that are being told. The programs are certain to entertain all that attend. Family conferences are complete and the teachers are ready for a well-deserved Christmas break.

Our Annual See’s Candy fundraiser is underway and will run through December 2. If you or anyone you know is interested in supporting this fundraiser, please contact us in the office. We are happy to take your orders and have them ready for pick-up before December 16 at the church. Each year we have fundraising goals so that we can enhance the programs for the children, and one of our goals this year is to upgrade the existing playground equipment.

The children in the After-School Program spent most of November preparing for the Annual International Dinner and Performance. Each year this group comes together to celebrate the different culture of each child and family as they are invited to dress in Cultural attire and participate in a fashion show; followed by an International Potluck provided by the families. The children perform dances and songs from around the world. Our dinner was on 11/18 this year and was well attended.

The school will be closed from December 19-January 2 for our Winter break. Classes will resume on January 3 for the preschool children and on January 9 for the children in the Afterschool program.

Many wishes for a Happy and Blessed Christmas Season!

Jerelyn Weber, Principal



