In this Issue:

*Reflections (cont.) ...P 2*

*Announcements …..P 2-5*

*Outreach Report ....P 5-6*

*“The Laundry” ...….P 6-7*

*Sea Breeze*

*Registration School*

*Year 2017-2018…..…P 7*

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The Ambrosian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

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January

2017

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.

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Dear Members and Friends of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church,

Aloha and Happy New! As we enter year 2017 of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I want to share with you a hope I have for you and me. I hope our lives will be filled with what song writer, musician and singer James Taylor has called “empty time.” I was watching him being interviewed by Norah O’Donnell as he was awarded a Kennedy Center Honor for 2016 and has come out with a new album of songs. She asked him how he goes about writing his songs. And he responded by saying it comes when he has “empty time.” And when she asked what he meant by that he replied, “Empty time is what we used to call boredom.” By this I understand James Taylor to be saying that when our lives are constantly filled with stimulation, there is little room in our souls to know the depth of our souls. And unless we are in touch with the depth of our souls, we will be unable to live creatively. But when we are “bored” and our time is “empty”, space is created within our souls to be in touch with the depths of our being, and to respond out of the depths of our souls. Creativity is a response to living out of our depths.

How do we create “empty time” in our busy lives? When we live through our day, instead of turning on the television, radio or iPod, let’s give ourselves the gift of “empty time.” Let us allow ourselves to go through our chores, our routines, our jobs without external stimulation so we may become more aware of what is stirring in our souls. I believe that memories, feelings, urges and thoughts will arise from our souls, so we may creatively respond to what God is calling us to do in our lives.

Actually our preparation and experience of worship is very much like “empty time.” As we prepare for worship, we quiet ourselves through silence, so when we rise to sing, or sit to listen to the scripture being proclaimed or reflect upon the scripture our souls will be prepared to receive deeply the messages and rhythms of our faith.

What I hope for us all is a practice of living deeply into our lives. The practice of FAITH5 (Faith Acts in The Home) that I shared with you last year will be deepened by a practice of empty time. When we allow ourselves empty time, we will have more to share from the depth of our souls with our loved ones. And the more we share our “highs” and “lows,” the more we will understand one another and be bound by the practices

# Reflections from our Rector

## Rector’s reflections continued…



of sharing highs and lows, reading scripture together, talking about how the scripture is connected to our lives, praying for one another and then blessing one another.

Next, I want to highlight the importance of our Annual Meeting of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church this year. The meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 29th, 2017** from **11:30 a.m.** in the chapel. We will be electing a majority of the members of the Vestry this year, as some members had moved or needed to resign for personal reasons. I hope as many members of the congregation will attend as possible.

Finally, I wish you all a blessed New Year so you will continue to be a blessing to those who you meet in your daily lives.

Yours,

David Y. Ota, Rector

**Thanks**

* Thanks to Reena Davis and Tarunpreet Ubhi who organized the movie night on December 9th.
* Thanks to everyone who donated gifts for the children of Baby Basics in East Palo Alto through the Giving Tree Program. Thanks to Lizz Klammer for organizing this effort.
* Thanks to Father Jay and all the carolers who sang at the two nursing homes in Foster City on December 18th.
* Thanks to the Altar Guild who decorated the chapel and prepared the altar for worship during Advent and Christmas.
* Thanks to Lizz Klammer, the parents and children who organized and participated in the Christmas Pageant this Christmas Eve.
* Thanks to Maureen Fromme and the children who sang in the Children’s Choir on Christmas Eve.
* Thanks to Maureen Fromme, Frank Saunders and to Choir members April Cherrington, Michelle Jessen, Shelley Keefe, Valerie Mersh, David Ota, Clara Padilla and Barbara Saunders who presented the Christmas Eve Choral Concert and led our singing at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Choral Holy Eucharist.
* Thanks to the Rev. Jay Watan who preached at the Family Christmas Eve service, and to the Rev. Karen Swanson who preached on Christmas Day.

**Update on the 2017 Pledge Campaign: Where is God Calling Us?**

To date we have received 80 pledges totaling $145,000. 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 & Charlene Adolph Rami & Linda Amireh Donna Avakoff

Bill & Charlotte Bradford Christina Brockman & Stan Hui Bill & Bonnie Cagno

Marilyn Canon Anthony and Darlene Caponera Angela Carducci

Sal & Linda Censoprano Honkai Chang & Milda Beh Eunice Chee

Grant & April Cherrington Nilda Chong Bettie Davis

Reena Davis Kyn Dellinger Jeanne DeTorre-Ozeki

Elliott Dun & Teresa Murakami Maureen H. Fromme George & Janet Gardiner

Jacques & Raphaele Gerber Leda V. Girardi Don Gundry

Demian & Lorraine Harvill Caroline Helmuth Eugene Hetzer

Kay Huffman Jennifer Huang Tippy Irwin

Hani & Gwen Juha Shelley Keefe Ray Kelley

Joanne Kerseg Brian and Lizz Klammer June Kudzia

Dulce & Michael Lord Judy Marshall Dorothy Matsuo

Kirk & Brenda Matsuo David McIntyre & Cathy Rincon Valerie Mersh

Jim Miller & Torrie McAllister John Miller & Eva Kwong Barbara Milligan

Kirk & Jessica Morales Kenneth & Karen Nagar Wilfredo & Oliva Nagar

Jim Neubert Liva & Alain Neyroud David Ota & Karen Swanson

Clara Padilla Karin Patterson Don & Elizabeth Peter

Ajit Philip & Shaiji Ajit Elmer & Alie Pong Jimmy & Poppy Rawley

Peggy Redmond Anita & Rob Richards Diane Robertson

Julio & Ngoc Rodriguez C.D. & Siew Rowsell Charles Saunders

Frank & Barbara Saunders Sandy Schowengerdt Jill & Jerry Schwab

Dilip Selvaraj & Teresa Rajaratnam Yvonne Sidell George & Merle Silverman

Irene Stead Jon & Marilyn Stephens Matt & Meltem Tanner

Wilson & Lois Thampi Kay Umeda Andy Walker

Jay & Lilian Watan Pedro & Dolores Watan Deborah White

Warren & Nellie Wong Steve & Belinda Yuen

**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

10am 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.

**Study Groups in January 2017**

The Monday Bible Study group will meet on **January 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th from 12:45** **p.m.** in the foyer. This study group is led by the Rector.

The Tuesday Evening Study group usually meets on the **second and fourth Tuesdays** of the month from **7 p.m.** in the Wong’s home, however the December meeting still needs to be scheduled.

The Wednesday Bible Study group be meeting on **January 11th** and **25th** from **7:30 p.m.** in the foyer.

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

**Saturday Evening Worship in January**

The next Saturday Evening Worship services will be on **Saturday, January 14th and 28th** from **5:30 p.m.** in the chapel.

**Fellowship Dinners 2017**

**Take the opportunity to get to know other people from St. Ambrose**

FELLOWSHIP DINNERS consist of groups of about 6 to 8 people. Each group will meet once a month, February through May, for **potluck dinner** in a home.

There will be a kick-off Pot-Luck Dinner on **Saturday, January 21st, at 6:00 p.m.,** at St. Ambrose. Here your group will be revealed to you.

**Sign-up forms** are in the **foyer** and in the **parish hall**.

**Deadline** to sign up for Fellowship Dinners is **Sunday, January 15th**.

Call Nellie Wong (650-372-0728, wwong@nd.edu) or April Cherrington (650-574-7449, aprilcherr@aol.com) if you have any questions.

**Chili-Cook-off**

Jessica Morales is organizing another Chili “Cook-off” on **Sunday, January 22nd from 11:20 a.m.** in the Parish Hall.It has become an annual favorite. If you have a special chili recipe and would like to participate, get in touch with Jessica. Please contact her at [jesmorales@gmail.com](mailto:jesmorales@gmail.com).

**Annual Meeting of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church**

Join members of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church for its Annual Meeting on **Sunday, January 29th** from **11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** in the chapel. A light lunch will be provided.

Leaders of ministries are asked to turn in their reports to the Rector by **January 22nd**.

The six members rotating off the Vestry who will serve as the Nominating Committee along with the Rector are: Charles Saunders, April Cherrington, Keith Adolph and Tippy Irwin all completing three year terms, Karin Patterson, completing a two-year term, and Nilda Chong who for family reasons needed to resign from the Vestry.

It is important that we have a strong Vestry that provides oversight for our common mission and ministry, as well as to have delegates to represent St. Ambrose at the quarterly Deanery of the Peninsula meetings and the annual Diocesan Convention to be held on **Friday, October 27th and Saturday, October 28th 2017** at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco.

According to the By-Laws of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, the qualifications for serving on the Vestry are explained in Section 4.2. Qualification for Nomination to the Vestry – All members of the Vestry must be members in good standing in this Parish for at least 6 months to the date of their election to the Vestry, and regular contributors to the support of this Parish by currently stated pledge.

**Mark Your Calendars**

Office Closed: **Monday, January 2nd, 2017,** New Year’s Day transferred

Bible Study: **Monday, January 2nd, 9th, 23rd, & 30th, 2017,** **12:45 a.m.,** Foyer

Choir Practice: **Thurs.,** **January 5th, 12nd, 19th, 26nd, 2017, 7:30 p.m.,** Chapel

Intercessory Prayer Group: **Sundays, January 8th and 22nd, 11:30 a.m.,** Room 1

Tuesday Evening Bible Study: **Tuesdays, January 10th and 24th, 7:00 p.m.,** Wong’s home

Wednesday Evening Bible Study: **Wednesdays, January 11th and 25th, 7:30 p.m.,** Foyer

Saturday Evening Eucharist: **Saturday, January 14th, 2017 5:30 p.m.,** Chapel

Finance Committee Meeting: **Sunday, January 15th, 2017, 11:30 a.m.,** Room 1

Office Close: **Monday, January 16th, 2017**, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting: **Tuesday, January 17th, 2017, 6:00 p.m.,** Rector’s Office

School Board Meeting: **Tuesday, January 17th, 2017, 7:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Fellowship Dinners Potluck Organizing Dinner: **Saturday, January 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Chili Cook-Off: **Sunday, January 22nd, 2017, 11:20 a.m.,** Parish Hall

Vestry Meeting: **Tuesday, January 24th, 2017, 6:30 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Annual Meeting of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church: **Sunday, January 29th, 2017, 11:30 a.m., Chapel**

Mardi Gras Luncheon: **Sunday, February 26th, 2017, 11:20 a.m.,** Parish Hall

Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes: **March 1st, 2017, 12:10 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.,** Chapel

## Outreach Report - by Steve Yuen

**Stocking Stuffers**: As she has for fourteen (14) years, Jill Schwab and her merry band of volunteers from St. Ambrose, Santa Clara Thunderbird Club, and the Boy Scouts assembled over a thousand gift bags for elderly shut-ins and those who reside in assisted-living facilities.

Jill’s efforts were especially notable in 2016 because she and Jerry had moved to Sonora, over two hours away. Jill had to reserve a room at a Foster City community center and manage the materials logistics.

*Jill (far right) and friends*

We don't know how long she can continue doing this, but everyone who is there is grateful to be a part of Stocking Stuffers and witness her leadership. Thanks, Jill.

**Family Sharing**: The congregation opened its hearts and wallets to three local families, two families of five and one senior couple. We collected $1,445, more than enough to ensure a brighter Christmas for the recipients. (The excess will be donated to the victims and families affected by the Oakland “Ghost Ship” fire.)

Thanks go to Anders Zhou and Nellie Wong, who visited with the senior couple, and to Clara Padilla, who spent days on the phone and wrapped and delivered gifts for the six children and four adults.

**Home and Hope**: In December our cadre of cooks was ready to prepare dinner for the eleven (11) people who had been sheltered temporarily at Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church in San Mateo. Due to their evening jobs, most of the families arrived after 9 o'clock and had already eaten. Plentiful leftovers sufficed for the mother and daughter who needed dinner. Most of our volunteers took a well-deserved week off, and only a skeleton crew was necessary to clean up and prepare the kitchen for the next day. Steve Yuen was an overnight monitor on the evening of December 8th. The next Home and Hope assignment will be in March, when we will be feeding four families at Hope Lutheran Church in San Mateo. Even if you cannot attend, perhaps you can make a dish! A sign-up sheet will be posted in February in the Parish Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Yuen (341-1966, stevebyuen@aol.com)

**Christmas Caroling**: The St. Ambrose choir sang Christmas favorites to Foster City retirement home residents. Thanks go to Father Jay Watan and Jim Neubert for organizing this year’s caroling, and thanks to all the singers who brightened the day of our senior citizens.

As another year of Outreach draws to a close, we are grateful to be part of a St. Ambrose family that often puts a stranger’s interest ahead of itself. We look forward to another year of service in 2017.

**Upcoming Events**

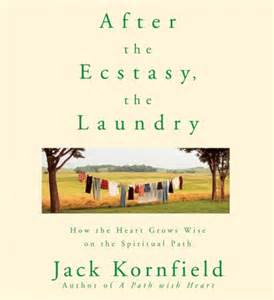
**Sandwiches on Sunday**: On **Sunday, January 29th**, we will be serving a hot lunch to 60-80 people at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City. We will post a sign-up sheet at the beginning of January. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Richards (rob.richards@tensorlabs.com, 577-8924)

# “**The Laundry**”- by Rev. Jay Sapaen Watan

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I really dislike doing the laundry. Sometimes I’d like to make *not* doing chores my New Years resolution. With a house full of kids who love to make a mess of what they wear, this process can take hours. Sometimes I feel I could be doing better things. I reckon my disdain comes from feeling that, like a soap opera, doing the laundry never really ends. Even if I were to put the whole hamper in the wash, what I’m wearing starts the cycles all over again. And dirty clothes eventually piles up into a mountain of smelly cotton, wool, nylon and polyester that begs to be cleaned. On the practical end fresh clothes requires routine washing, folding, and being put away for the next use. The kids and my wife have their chores at home and I have mine. And since I am the one particular about separating whites and colors so the colors do not blend, this burden rests on me.

Responsibilities that aren’t shared or acknowledged can sometimes become the seeds of resentment and isolation. So I’m careful to slow down and ask questions to myself when my dislike starts tasting bitter. I ask, “What’s really going on?” Perhaps it’s simply because I just get bored with the monotony of folding. But I know the issue really isn’t about the laundry. Rather it is about my attitude towards doing something that I’m not really passionate about.



My wife and I have now been married 16 years, and I still remember the sermon our preacher, The Rev. Julie Graham, shared on our wedding day. She reminded us that marriage is like a spiritual practice. And that enlightenment doesn’t come from being on the mountaintop, but about doing the everyday things that will get you there. She quoted Jack Kornfield’s *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry: How the Heart Grows Wide on the Spiritual Path* and related a story about a spiritual seeker who journeys to find a master who lives on the mountain. He finds this master on a road carrying a very heavy burden to his home higher on the mountain. The seeker asks the master, "What is the way of Enlightenment?" The master places his burden down. And the seeker immediately understands, thanks the master, then asks, "Now what?" The master picks up his burden and continues to walk up the mountain.

Family still needs to be cared for, work still needs to get done, and the bills still need to be paid. In this age where we’re encouraged to follow our bliss, there still exists a bottom line of doing what is needed and necessary. Now consider what happens when we reframe the burden of our everyday work into a practice of prayer? I’m not talking about the kind of prayer where we get on our knees or find stillness and meditate, but actually opening ourselves to find the Divine in the everyday things we do.

Spiritual practices, like prayer, can transform our heart and mind so we may become aware of what we never thought was there. In other words, if we desire to see the glory of God - and our call isn’t to escape our burden, climb a mountain, or go live in some small monastic community where quiet and simple living is the routine - focus on the parts of us we are not very passionate about and realize God’s presence there. Life is good if we choose to see it that way. And of course God is good. Spiritual practices have a way of helping us embrace life head on.

What might you find yourself praying through?

For this New Year… I find myself reflecting on the laundry. There’s a prayer in that.

***Happy New Year my friends!***

**Sea Breeze Registration School Year 2017-2018**

Beginning Wednesday, February 1st, and continuing through Thursday, February 2nd, Sea Breeze School will be registering present students, their siblings, children of St. Ambrose parishioners, and siblings of former students for Summer School 2017 and School Year 2017-2018. Registrations will be accepted in order received and in priority placement for all classes. **All current students must register each year. These registrations will be dated and processed in the order in which they were received.**

Summer School will begin June 19th. Classes will be offered for children who will be 3 years old by December 2nd, 2017 up to children who will be eligible to attend Kindergarten in August.

Sea Breeze is open 5 days a week between the hours of 7:30am and 6:00pm. School Year, 2017-18, begins in late August, full and part time classes will be offered for 3, 4 and 5 year olds for Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten. After School Care is available for children attending Foster City School Kindergarten and/or Grades 1 through 3.

For applications and additional information, please call Lisa Walker, Registrar, 650-574-5437 week days between 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.