July

2020

Edition

In This Issue:

*Reflections …….....….P 1*

*Announcements…...P 2-3  
  
Desk of Rev.  
Karen Swanson…......P 4  
  
Youth Ministry….…....P 5  
  
Hymns for July...........P 6  
  
Outreach…..……….P 7-8*

*Sea Breeze   
School News…..….…P 9  
  
Editor’s Corner….....P 10*

**Editor:**

*Yvonne Sidell*



The Ambrosian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

900 Edgewater Boulevard, Foster City, California 94404

***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! This will be my last month among you as your Rector. It has been my joy and privilege to serve in this role since I first arrived here to be with you in September 1997. Many if not most of you have joined the congregation of St. Ambrose after I first arrived. A fewer number of you have been members before my arrival. Each one of you has made a contribution to the life of the congregation so that St. Ambrose is the community of faith that it is today.

I am grateful for all the support you have given me, my family and the congregation over the years. Without your interest and love, a congregation could not really exist. Our congregation is a network of loving relationships based upon our common love of God based in our faith in Jesus Christ.

I am grateful for the trust you have put in me to care for you and to guide our congregation. I am especially grateful to those of you who have volunteered to serve in areas of leadership over the years.

It has been my joy to meet, know and come to love you as fellow spiritual pilgrims in faith. Serving as your Rector has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. As I plan to retire, know that you will always be in my thoughts and prayers.

As I move into retirement, I will need to leave you so that the Vestry will be able to call an Interim Rector and then a Rector. It is necessary for a healthy transition that I must no longer be involved in the ministry of St. Ambrose in retirement. This will allow you to welcome new clergy into your lives. I know it will be difficult for me.

As most of you know, in retirement I will be much more active in the care of my mother, Mary Ota (in San Francisco), as she now requires 24/7 care. I look forward to saying farewell to you this month.

And as we say at St. Ambrose, “Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk the way with us. So be swift to love and make haste to be kind. The blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you always.

Yours,

David Y. Ota, Rector

# Reflections from our Rector



**Mark Your Calendar for Fr. David's Retirement Celebration on Sunday, July 26th, 10 am.**

Be sure to check your email for details of Fr. David's Retirement Celebration on **Sunday, July 26th from 10 am.** The invitation was sent to all parishioners on the iContact list on June 23rd. If you did not receive it, or have questions, please email [frdavidsretirement@gmail.com](mailto:frdavidsretirement@gmail.com) or contact a vestry member. Join us and make it a great day for David.



Announcements

**Mark Your Calendars**

Inquirer’s Class for Youth Ministry: Zoom Meeting, **Wednesdays, July 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** For more information, contact [karen.2.swanson@gmail.com](mailto:karen.2.swanson@gmail.com) or call 650-200-8449

Virtual Fifth Sunday after Pentecost: Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II, Presider, the Rev. Karen Swanson, Preacher and the Rev. David Ota: **July 5, 10:00 a.m.** YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1Ii-yYov5kMpvDg>

Virtual Zoom Children’s Sunday School, Preschool to 5th Grade: **Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.** (join Zoom Meeting) To be invited, contact Fe Balamiento at [valentin\_fe@yahoo.com](mailto:valentin_fe@yahoo.com) or call 415-579-8872

Virtual Zoom Coffee Hour: **Every Sunday, 11:30 a.m.** To be invited, contact the Rev. David Ota at [dyota@mindspring.com](mailto:dyota@mindspring.com) or call 650-200-9331

Virtual Zoom Youth Group Meeting: **Every Sunday, 4:00 p.m.** To be invited, contact the Rev. Karen Swanson at [karen.2.swanson@gmail.com](mailto:karen.2.swanson@gmail.com) or call 650-200-8449

Virtual Zoom Bible Study on 2 Thessalonians: **Tuesdays, July 7, 14 and 21, 1:00 p.m.** To be invited, contact the Rev. David Ota at [dyota@mindspring.com](mailto:dyota@mindspring.com) or call 650-200-9331

Virtual Sixth Sunday after Pentecost: Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II, Presider, the Rev. Karen Swanson and Preacher, the Rev. David Ota: **July 12, 10:00 a.m.** YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1Ii-yYov5kMpvDg>

Monday Zoom Bible Study Group: **Monday, July 13 and 27, 7:00 p.m.** To be invited, please contact Warren Wong at [wwong@nd.edu](mailto:wwong@nd.edu)

Virtual Seventh Sunday after Pentecost: Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II, Presider, the Rev. Karen Swanson, Preacher and Presider: **July 19, 10:00 a.m.** YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1Ii-yYov5kMpvDg>

Zoom School Board Meeting: **Tuesday, July 21, 7:00 p.m.** To be invited, please contact April Cherrington at [aprilcherrington@gmail.com](mailto:aprilcherrington@gmail.com) or call 650-574-7449

Zoom Buildings and Grounds Meeting: **Wednesday, July 22, 6:00 p.m.** To be invited, please contact Jim Neubert at [jneubert5@gmail.com](mailto:jneubert5@gmail.com) or call 650-759-9468

Zoom Vestry Meeting: **Wednesday, July 22, 7:00 p.m.:** To be invited, contact the Rev. David Ota at [dyota@mindspring.com](mailto:dyota@mindspring.com) or call 650-200-9331

Virtual Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist: Rite II and Retirement Celebration, Presider, the Rev. Karen Swanson and Presider; the Rev. David Ota Preacher: **July 26, 10:00 a.m.** YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfCRkqxS1Ii-yYov5kMpvDg>

The Rector’s Last Day at St. Ambrose: **Friday, July 31**

Bishop’s Ranch - CANCELLED All Overnight Summer Camp Programs through July 31

St. Dorothy’s Rest - CANCELLED All Summer Programs for 2020

Diocesan Convention: **Friday, October 16, 2:00 to 8:30 p.m. / Saturday, October 17, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Grace Cathedral

Harvest Festival Dinner CANCELLED: **Saturday, October 24, 6:00 p.m.,** Foster City Recreation Center, Lagoon Room and Blue Bird Room

The Desk of Rev. Karen Swanson

**Youth Inquirers’ Class**

Guided by instructors Alison LeBlanc, Daniel Tate, and the Rev. Karen Swanson, three of St. Ambrose’s youth are inquiring about the Episcopal Church, and reflecting on the meaning of a life of faith. Michael Chang, Elliott Dun, and Oliver Moriarty are participating in the six-week class. Each session of the class includes an experience of spirituality, information about the Book of Common Prayer, a reflection on Scripture, the telling of someone’s faith story, and a game or art project. Please pray for these young men as they explore the deeper meaning of a life shaped by faith.

**Youth Group Meetings**

During July, the youth group will focus on gratitude, including finding ways to express thanks to the Rev. David Ota as he prepares to retire from St. Ambrose. Virtual meetings will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday July 13 and 20. Youth group will be cancelled for the Fourth of July weekend so that the youth can relax with their families (and on Sunday, July 26, so that those interested can participate in the celebration for Father Ota).

Youth Ministry – by Fe Balamiento



**We have faith growing here**

***Life is short...make haste to be kind***

Dear St. Ambrose,

As I get Zoom ready in my Sunday best, I begin to question – Why do I think I can make an impact through a computer? Why does this Zoom link still give me trouble? Moments later, children’s faces appear on my screen and Satan is silenced.

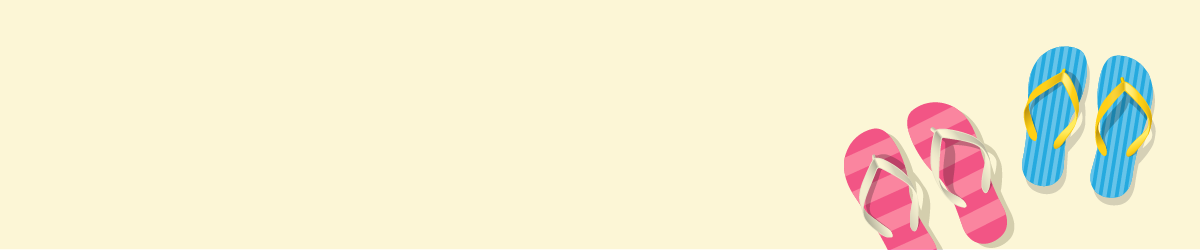
In these difficult times, the new normal and the old status quo clash and crescendo in my cranium. It is now that I thank my parents for helping me to grow my faith. Thus I turn to the Lord, I let go, and let God…for he is strong and mighty. I go forth in faith believing the Lord is by my side.

This month we ended the Spring Spark curriculum and will begin again with the book of Genesis throughout this month. Hope and faith with love go on. Children continue singing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* and *Jesus Loves Me*. Drawings are still scribbling our ideas of God’s house in heaven. Activity sheets of Adam and Eve are "stickered" with apples.  The Spark curriculum is used and our souls are fed.

Next step in the summer is July with planning moving forward creatively with grace for Virtual VBS. Volunteers are needed for storytelling, singing, games and crafting (supplies provided by families).

Thank you,

Fe



Hymns for July – by Maureen Fromme

*“God Me In My Head”- 1982 Hymnal, 694*

During this time of COVID-19, we are all probably staying at home, or closer to home, more than usual, although some loosening of restrictions have started. Maybe we have found or made creative masks, cooked new recipes, cleaned out closets we have ignored, and had more time to visit with friends and family. Hopefully, you are staying well and keeping positive.

Prayer has possibly become a larger part of life than usual. The hymn for July comes from a Latin prayer book written in 1514 (using the English translation). The text is simple, but introspective, strengthening and all-encompassing:

*God be in my head, and in my understanding;*

*God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;*

*God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;*

*God be in my heart, and in my thinking;*

*God be at mine end, and at my departing.*

<https://youtu.be/xfMSeWpe5jA>

The composer of the music is Sydney Hugo Nicholson. He was the organist at Westminster Cathedral in the 1920s, and founder of the School of English Church Music (he also composed the triumphant hymn *“Lift High the Cross”*). Mr. Nicolson chose the hymn tune name *“Lytlington”*, the last name of an Abbott at Westminster in the 1300s.

At this point, we do not know when we will be back in our church building to worship together in person. For now, we can thank the Worship Team for leading services and sharing fellowship online. We can be assured that God is very much a part of our lives and that He will give us strength, calm and wisdom.

I hope you will take time to listen to the hymn and feel strengthened by the words of the prayer. Keep in touch with friends, neighbors and family and take time to sing!

Thank you,

Maureen

July Outreach Report – by Steve Yuen

As most of you know, Outreach activities have been put on hold until when and in what form the various programs can resume safely.

The churches that participate in **Sandwiches on Sunday** have met via Zoom to figure out how they can continue to serve the 50-80 people who come for lunch every Sunday at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City. In consultation with Redwood City officials they have come up with the following re-opening plan. From Dave Grady, one of the founders of SOS:

**Sunday Distribution:**

Fair Oaks continues to offer ongoing support for SOS and will have staff, Antonio, on hand during lunch distribution.  Fair Oaks asks we abide by the safety protocols and insure people wear masks, wash hands, stay 6 ft apart, avoid congregating in groups, grab and go, and if necessary, use the rest facility at the end of the parking lot.  It’s important surfaces are disinfected throughout the distribution.  Volunteers must wear masks and gloves.  Have available and use hand sanitizer as necessary.

**It was decided a group of 3 to 5 can volunteer to be on hand to distribute lunches.**  It’s important volunteers be authoritative in having guests abide by safety protocols.  Our hope is to **resume Sunday lunch distribution on July 12th.**

**During Covid, only bag lunches** are to be distributed.  No potlucks or hot meals are to be prepared or made available.

A group of people standing around a table

Description automatically generatedWhat this means: St. Ambrose’ next SOS will be on **August 30, 2020.** We will no longer make hot meals but will only pass out bag lunches made by St. Pius. Our (small) crew of volunteers will wear masks and gloves and practice social distancing and other safety protocols with which we are now familiar. Please contact Rob Richards ([rob.richards@tensor.labs](mailto:rob.richards@tensor.labs)) if you are interested in helping or have any questions.

Father Ota and Steve Yuen met with [**Star Vista**](https://star-vista.org/about-us/#about-mission) via Zoom on June 19th. The meeting was led by parishioner Doug Stewart, who is now a member of Star Vista’s board.

Star Vista is a non-profit organization that has been helping people throughout San Mateo County for over 50 years. Its services to tens of thousands include counseling, crisis prevention, and youth housing.

*Doug Stewart at SOS with Shane in 2015*

Over the years St. Ambrose has been involved with Star Vista programs, the most recent being the Giving Tree where we purchase presents for children at Christmas. We are considering a donation to Star Vista from our Outreach Budget.

Outreach Report (continued)

A person in a blue shirt

Description automatically generatedFinally, our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to Jill Schwab, who lost her husband Jerry near the end of June.

Jill is the founder and leader of **Stocking Stuffers**, which assembles and donates over 1,000 gift bags to elderly shut-ins from San Francisco to Palo Alto. Even after moving to Sonora in 2016 Jill returned to the Peninsula for the next four Christmases to supervise Stocking Stuffers.

We spent many a happy moment putting together the stocking stuffer bags at their Foster City house. Jerry was a polite and forgiving host, because what started as a mission often became a party. Aloha, Jerry, and *mahalo nui loa*.

Sea Breeze School News **–** by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

Another School year has ended, although very different than any of us could have imagined.

The last three months of our year was spent teaching our children through what became our “virtual campus”. The teachers and children became very computer literate and spent each day staying connected with one another through a computer screen. It was new, it was scary, it was fun and it was successful!   
  
On Thursday, June 11 we held a drive thru “step up” for the children in all of our Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten classes.  The teachers created large and colorful Congratulations signs and placed them on Edgewater Boulevard for the children and their families to see as they arrived for their ceremony. Each family drove through the parking lot, the child got out of the car, walked across our “stage” to receive their certificate and elbow bumps from their teachers before having their picture taken and returning to their car to drive away. Teachers lined the parking lot cheering for the children and blowing bubbles and playing Pomp and Circumstance. We had great participation from the families, many many smiles and even more happy tears. It was a really fun way to culminate a very exciting school year!

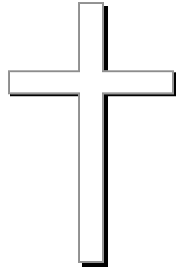
Summer Camp opened on June 22 and is going well. We have very small groups of children on campus and we are enjoying building relationships with them while maintaining our social distance. Children, families and teachers were excited to return to campus and each program is filled to capacity. We are also hosting a Virtual Summer Camp that 40 children are attending each morning. In addition to the regular curriculum in the morning, the virtual camp includes a music class, an introduction to Spanish class and pajama story time each night. This has all been such a fun and exciting learning experience for all of us.

As we continue to learn and grow each day, I do hope that you are staying safe and healthy during these very different times.

Stay well,

Jerelyn

The Editor’s Corner– by Yvonne Sidell



## *“How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” –Mark 6:38*

## There is this fascinating story about Jesus and His disciples in the Scriptures. The disciples had just come back from being sent out to do and teach all that they had seen Jesus do and teach. They were filled with excitement and couldn’t wait to tell Jesus all about what had happened. Jesus, on the other hand, had something else in mind, taking His disciples away by boat to find some much-needed rest. Yet before they could even step off the boat, the crowds hungry for Jesus met them on the shore. Jesus, filled with compassion for the people, began to teach, sharing with them the mysteries of the kingdom life. The disciples, sensing the day coming to a close, approached Jesus. It was getting late. They asked, “What should we do about food for all these people?” It was a reasonable request. Yet, rather than give them an answer, Jesus took the conversation to a whole other level.

But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take almost a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

Do you get the sense that, for Jesus, something larger than merely finding food for the crowd is going on here? Jesus turns the tables on them: “What are you going to do about it?” The disciples’ response is just wonderful, isn’t it? “Are you kidding us, Jesus? Do you even know what you’re asking?”

Jesus has the disciples just where He wants them. While they had eyes to see the need, they were blind to the solution. Perhaps the solution was closer than they ever imagined, if they could only see it. Again, Jesus is brilliant. He answers a question with a question, a question that will lead them to the very solution, if they only had eyes to see it.

The problem was not that the disciples missed the need. They saw it. The problem was that it never dawned on them that they might actually have a role in the solution. What results is nothing short of a miracle. Well over 5,000 people are fed with five loaves and two fish, all distributed by the disciples.

Often it’s easy for us to see the needs around us and cry out to God, “Where are You? If You are such a loving God, then why are You allowing this to happen?” We see the need, but are we blinded to the fact that we might actually hold the key to the solution? Could it be that God is inviting us to be a part of the solution?

God is always present, always at work, so there are no God-forsaken situations, only situations that have been forsaken by His followers. God is answering our question with another one, “I’m right here; where are you?” Do you have eyes to see the needs? Do you hear the invitation? How many loaves do you have?