

September

2021
Edition



The Ambrosian

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

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Editor
Yvonne Sidell

Reflections from the Interim Rector

Dearest Sisters & Brothers,

Clearly, 2020 was an *annus horribilis*, but St Ambrose rose to the occasion with grace, creativity, and fortitude. The community held together, supported each other in myriad ways, and continued our work of worshipping God in Christ uninterrupted. We achieved a lot especially with the added challenge of being in 'Interim Time' – not least of all, the monumental task of a whole new online presence with all the technological advances of equipment and training. Even our beloved school did an amazing job of staying open with a nearly perfect record of no illnesses!

So far, in 2021, we have achieved **many** things:

>The Sacristy is getting a much-needed redesign with beautiful new cabinets and sink. [Our gratitude to Marilyn Stephens for donating the new sink, Jim Neubert and the Buildings & Grounds Committee, and the Altar Guild!]

>The Finance Committee has been hard at work working on more digital-friendly options for stewardship.

>The Vestry is considering exciting new opportunities with our endowment investment portfolio.

>The choir and musicians are finding new and creative ways to offer liturgical music under the constantly-changing COVID-19 regulations.

>The Search Committee has begun its Herculean task of Town Hall meetings preparation, listening to the needs/desires of the parish for the composition of a Parish Profile, and future advertisement to attract, hopefully, many applicants.

>We have re-gathered in person and online for our worship with relatively few problems.

>Our virtual Bible Study and Contemplative Meditation groups continue to meet weekly with an impressive number of attendees.

>**And** we will be celebrating the sacramental Confirmation of several parishioners at Grace Cathedral at 6.00 p.m. on September 26 [Please contact the Interim Rector if you would like to be included!]

Reflections from the Interim Rector (continued)

Now, we are presented with ever-new challenges as we try to prepare for a busy Fall schedule. Yet, there is an always-lurking anxiety that all our plans could change with little or no warning due to the constantly changing pandemic. For instance, our parish retreat at Bishop's Ranch; our Stewardship kickoff lunch; youth events; or even just getting Acolytes.

The constant uncertainty about planning future events is daunting, to say the least. Yet, we continue to face all these anxieties and uncertainties with the Christian faith of the Resurrection. We know God will give us the Spirit to meet all new challenges because we saw that happen last year and this year.

In the meantime, we will continue to support each other, tend to one another, forgiving, loving, and looking forward to the time when all of this is behind us. So often, the Spirit is best seen at work in the rearview mirror. **May God be pleased to continue to bless all our endeavors!**

Devotedly in Christ,

Reverend Canon Shane Scott-Hamblen
(Interim Rector)

Announcements

St. Ambrose Choir

The choir will resume rehearsals on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. We will be masked and correctly distanced, and would be happy for anyone who wishes to join us. We will sing for services beginning on September 12. If you wish to join us, please let Maureen Fromme know so she can prepare a folder for you. You may contact her at mhfromme@yahoo.com OR 415.990.6758.

Reflection and Gratitude

Summertime is here, and we hope you can share Love and Joy with family and friends!

This summer, Saint Ambrose would like to invite you to a time of reflection and gratitude, especially after the pandemic. Our community has indeed been impacted in many different ways in the past 18 months – from illness/death to job loss, isolation, racism, violence of all types, overwhelming family care or work and anxiety. Situations have been very hard to handle. Still, when facing those, God is always with us.

With this in mind, Saint Ambrose would like to invite you to pray and reflect.

Scope of reflection:

- 1. Reflect on how the pandemic has impacted you*
- 2. Reflect on blessings received and how church (and Saint Ambrose more specifically) has helped you navigate through this unprecedented time*

If you like, please share your thoughts! Come and write them on post-its for a poster board located in the Narthex of Saint Ambrose or send an email to St Ambrose Reflections and Gratitude (reflections.gratitude@gmail.com) . We will copy your email on a post-it that will be displayed on the board. This way, as a community, we can be more mindful about what we went through, pray together, and share gratitude.

*Thank you for joining this project!
Raphael Gerber and Valerie Mersh*

Announcements (continued)

The Search Committee

The St. Ambrose Search Committee has been meeting since early July to identify qualified candidates for Rector of our Parish.

The members of this committee are:

Father Shane
Canon Denise Obando (Diocesan Transition Minister)
April Cherrington
Nilda Chong
George Gardiner
Carolyn Moriarity
Liva Neyroud
Yvonne Sidell
Warren Wong
Steve Yuen

Our first task was to answer a series of questions from the Diocese to describe our successes, challenges, liturgical style, caring for spiritual/emotional/physical well-being, ministries, and preparation for the future.

The second part of this process is to conduct Town Hall Meetings (Listening Sessions) with all members of our congregation to elicit personal views, opinions, and experiences as a part of the St. Ambrose community and their vision for the future.

After all these meetings, we will compile the information and write a Parish Profile that can be distributed to prospective candidates.

All qualified candidates will be screened by the Diocese and the Search Committee, followed by interviews, visits, and references before submitting two or three names to the Vestry who will make the final decision.

Father Shane's Schedule

We have been working on setting a regular work schedule for Father Shane so that we can all know when it is best to contact him, and also so that he can have some routines (which include day off, Sabbath and study day).

It seems that the best days to have off are Friday and Saturday. From Monday through Thursday, he will be working at the office or from home. While we all know he is available to us when necessary, it would be best to keep communication to emergencies during his days off. Thank you!

Announcements (continued)

Contemplative Meditation Group

St. Ambrose has a wonderful "Contemplative Meditation" group who meet each week on Hump Days. That's right! After the first two hectic days of the week, it's just time for a much needed 30+ minute break.

Beginning with his monastic early life, Father Shane has a lifetime of meditation. From this wealth of experience and knowledge, Father Shane draws inspiration from various forms of contemplation as well as meditation.

Of course, we all know that schedules can get in the way of participating...even on Zoom. We have been recording some of the sessions and are making them available for your practice on your own time. How about that?!

Please email me at hfongster@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to request access for the recordings...maybe even the Zoom link to join us.

Thank you, Hamilton Fong.

Senior Warden's Report – by Shelley Keefe

Mark Your Calendar!



We hope you all had a wonderful and restorative summer. Many parishioners travelled to see family and friends, probably for the first time in a couple of years, and we give enormous thanks for their safe journeys. If you're planning to travel in September or October, we wish you Godspeed and a safe return home.

As usual, Fall brings a very full calendar to our church and school. Sea Breeze School is already in full swing, almost back to pre-pandemic capacity and anticipating Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We are planning to restore some of our Fall favorites, so please mark your calendars for the upcoming events at St Ambrose:

- ❖ September 12 Restoration of a second Sunday service (8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.);
Memorial for our dear friend Peggy Redmond;
Town Hall Meeting #1 hosted by the Search Committee
- ❖ September 15 Town Hall Meeting #2 at 6:00 p.m., hosted by the Search Committee
- ❖ September 21 Town Hall Meeting #3, *time TBD*, hosted by the Search Committee
- ❖ September 21 Town Hall Meeting #4, *time TBD*, hosted by the Search Committee
- ❖ September 26 Confirmations at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco at 6:00 p.m.
- ❖ October 8-10 Bishop's Ranch Weekend (still time to join!)
- ❖ October 17 Stewardship Campaign Kickoff Brunch at 11:30 a.m.
- ❖ December 5 Altar Guild Bake Sale. Yay!

Respectfully Yours,

Shelley Keefe

Youth Ministry and Youth Group News – by Daniel Tate

We will share a report on Youth Ministry and Youth Group next month! Happy September!

Respectfully Yours,

Daniel Tate

Hymns for September – by Maureen Fromme

“Singing Songs of Expectation”- Hymn 527

Have you ever found a message in a bottle along the shore? According to legend, the melody of the hymn this month was found in a bottle. Hence, the Welsh name for this hymn tune is “Ton-y-Botel”.

It is only a legend, because we know the name of the real composer. I am sure that it made for a good story when it first was thought by some to have been found in a bottle. This hymn tune has also been Ebenezer (Stone of Help), the name of a chapel in South Wales which the composer attended when he was writing the music. That composer's name is Thomas John Williams (1869-1944).

Mr. Williams was born in Wales and served as an organist and choir director for 40 years in various churches. His primary work was in the insurance business. This tune has at least nine different texts that have been set to it. Originally it was part of a longer anthem by Mr. Williams. The poem is by the Danish novelist and poet Bernard Severin Ingemann (1789-1862). He was also a professor of the Danish language and wrote 34 volumes of poetry, including the words for this hymn. It was translated into English by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) a rector in England. He was also the author of several hymn texts.

The energy created by the music, including the frequent use of triplets, helps to emphasize the positive text: *God leading us with a guiding light through the darkness; trusting God as we move forward; God's presence that inspires faith and hope.* As you listen to and sing through the hymn with the recording, may you rejoice in all that His love leads us through, especially in this time of COVID and other personal situations in our lives. May we rejoice in the power of God's love and of the power of words and music! <https://youtu.be/GTScuNRqNwQ>

*Singing songs of expectation, onward goes the pilgrim band,
through the night of doubt and sorrow, marching to the promised land.
Clear before us through the darkness gleams and burns the guiding light:
trusting God we march together stepping fearless through the night.
One the light of God's own presence, o'er his ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror, brightening all the path we tread:
one the object of our journey, one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward, one the hope our God inspires.
On the strain the lips of thousands lift as from the heart of one;
one the conflict, one the peril, one the march in God begun:
one the gladness of rejoicing on the far eternal shore,
where the one almighty Father reigns in love for evermore.*

Respectfully Yours,

Maureen Fromme

September Outreach Report – by Steve Yuen

Sandwiches on Sunday – August 29

For the first time this year, the sandwich assembly line was moved indoors. The 92°F heat on a breezeless day and the poor air quality from the wildfires were the deciding factors.

We were four vaccinated, symptomless individuals and made sure that we were masked and appropriately distanced, in other words just like during church services.

Learning from our previous mistakes, inventory was taken before the commencement of sandwich-making. We had undercounted the bread and remedied the shortage before the noon start-time.



Shawn Venkat, Shia Venkat and Daniel Tate

In 90 minutes, we assembled 90 brown bags, each containing two sandwiches, one trail mix, and one apple. **Thanks go to everyone** who bought the supplies, made the sandwiches, or delivered them on Sunday (Rob and Anita Richards, Daniel Tate, Shawn and Shia Venkat, Steve Yuen)!

The brown bags were stored overnight in refrigerators at the church and a parishioner's home.



There were 40 people in line at the Redwood City Community Center. Some were so hungry they began devouring the sandwiches as soon as they got them.

Many asked for an extra bag or two for a spouse, kid, or a friend. This time, there were sufficient supplies to satisfy the request immediately instead of asking them to come back after everyone got at least one bag.

After half an hour, all potential "customers" had left.

Antonio, the county worker who assists us on Sundays, said that no one bothers to show up after that, because everyone assumes that the lunches have been completely distributed.

Steve took the five remaining bags to the Catholic Worker House on Cassia Street, where they quickly found a home. There were three people waiting on the porch hoping that someone would come by with food. Timing is everything.

September Outreach Report (continued)

The Catholic Worker House is a place to leave donations like extra food including perishables, clothing, and other useful items. The materials are cleared off the porch every day.

The next Sandwiches on Sunday will be on **October 31**. If you would like to participate in Outreach or have any questions or suggestions, please contact Steve Yuen (650-341-1966, stevebyuen@aol.com).

Home and Hope – August 29

The 30 Peninsula churches and synagogues which comprise Home and Hope can no longer provide temporary shelter or serve dinner to families who are accepted into the program. The advent of COVID-19 has resulted in housing being provided on a limited basis at hotels, and churches have been asked to fill requests for food and supplies.

St. Ambrose joined with Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church to complete the list for a total of four families, each church taking two. We dropped off our purchases at Hope Lutheran, which made the deliveries. Thanks go to our participants Diane Robertson, Nellie Wong, Steve Yuen.

Helena Dummler of Hope Lutheran wrote:

“This is the combination of groceries and supplies donated by St. Ambrose and Hope that we brought to four homeless families at Home & Hope this morning!”

Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness for our neighbors. I had the opportunity to meet a couple of the lovely families, and they are so grateful and excited to have your care. The program manager also told me of an incredible single father with three small children in the program who relies on the city bus for transportation, so they were delivering his supplies to him later today. These families face substantial and heart-breaking challenges in their lives. With your gifts, you made a big difference for many people today!”

St. Ambrose is likely to participate in at least one more food-and-household-supplies drive this year. Please watch for an announcement.



Sea Breeze School News – by Jerelyn Weber, Principal

We will share a report on Sea Breeze School next month! Happy September!

Respectfully Yours,

Jerelyn Weber

The Editor's Corner – by Yvonne Sidell



*“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
–Matthew 7:1-2*

Here is a HUGE challenge: *Go on a fast today from criticism.* Today, your assignment is not to criticize anybody about anything. Just for 24 hours, even if you have a legitimate criticism, don't offer it.

Most of us are far too critical. We offer lots of grumbling and complaining about issues that frankly don't make much difference. All of the criticism has a very negative result. Critical people are often unhappy people. The act of criticizing drains positive energy from our lives.

I've heard it put this way:

A critical spirit focuses us on ourselves and makes us unhappy. We lose perspective and humor.

A critical spirit blocks the positive creative thoughts God longs to give us.

A critical spirit can prevent good relationships between individuals and often produces retaliatory criticalness.

Criticalness blocks the work of the Spirit of God: love, goodwill, and mercy.

Whenever we see something genuinely wrong in another person's behavior, rather than criticize him or her directly, or far worse, gripe about them behind their backs, we should ask the spirit of God to do the correction needed.

“Do everything without complaining or arguing” (Philippians 2:14). This means that if you're driving today and someone cuts you off – do not complain. If you get disconnected from your cell phone call – do not complain. If someone spills split pea soup on your best shirt or skirt – do not complain.

Understand and accept, rather than fume and whine. A wise friend once told me that we never know enough about a situation to be truly angry. Think about it.

I have the feeling that you are going to have a very good day! 😊

