February

2020

Edition

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*Yvonne Sidell*



The Ambrosian

The Monthly Newsletter of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church

900 Edgewater Boulevard, Foster City, California 94404

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Dear Members and Friends of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church,

Aloha! “Life is short and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk the way with us.” This is the beginning of the blessing we use here at St. Ambrose ever since I joined you all in September 1997. This is so true, isn’t it?

Sometimes we are shocked to remember this truth. On Sunday, January 26, 2020 before our Annual Meeting was about to begin, I was told that Kobe Bryant, the retired NBA basketball player died in a helicopter crash. Only later, did I learn that his daughter, Gianna, who was thirteen years old, along with two of her basketball teammates, three parents, an assistant coach and helicopter pilot died in the crash too. They were all on their way to an AAU girls’ basketball tournament.

As news of the tragedy spread, reports of grief were shared by many people who either knew of Kobe Bryant or the others who died unexpectedly and tragically. The tragedy is a reminder to us all of how fragile and precious is the gift of life.

A couple of days later, I learned that two of those who died in the crash with Kobe were connected to the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Los Angeles. Sarah Chester served as a Trustee of St. Margaret’s Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, California and her daughter Payton was a student there. I found it significant that I read about them through the Episcopal News Service. It reminds me that we are all part of networks which spread out to more and more people as when a pebble is thrown into a pond. The ripples keep going out into the pond until there are no more ripples.

The grief of these tragic losses of life spread to loved ones, friends, school communities and other networks. When we grieve, we grieve not only for our loves ones who passed away, but we grieve for ourselves because we miss them from our lives. It takes time to grieve over what has been lost. I imagine that we grieve because life as we have expected it to be is not to be.

# Reflections from our Rector

Reflections from our Rector (continued)

When confronted with tragedy, our faith teaches us to trust in God who brings new life from death. When tragedy occurs, life as we may have expected and imagined it to be has been lost and we must grieve for our loss. But this does not mean that all hope has been lost. By trusting in God’s love for those we have lost and the dreams that are not to be as we expected, we can once again hope that a new and different life will emerge. And so, we give thanks for the ones who have finished the journey of their lives and the gifts we have received from them. We are to allow ourselves to grieve until we can let go enough so there will be space sufficient in our hearts for new dreams and visions. And when we do, then we can live into the ending of our blessing, **“So let us be swift to love, make haste to be kind. And the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among you always.”**

Yours,

David Y. Ota, Rector

Reflections from our Rector (continued)

**Episcopal school trustee, student are among dead in Jan. 26 California helicopter crash**

By Janet Kawamoto Posted 5 hours ago

 Payton Chester (right), a student at St. Margaret’s Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., and her mother, Sarah, a school trustee. Photo courtesy of Catherine George

[Diocese of Los Angeles] Sarah Chester, 45, a trustee of St. Margaret’s Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, California, and her daughter Payton, 13, an eighth-grade student there, were among the nine people who died in a helicopter accident on Jan. 26 in Calabasas. Retired Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna also died in the crash.

The other five crash victims were Orange Coast College basketball coach John Altobelli, his wife Keri and daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, an assistant basketball coach; and the helicopter pilot, Ara Zobayan, a respected flight instructor.

Gianna, Payton and Alyssa were members of an AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) basketball team based at Kobe Bryant’s Mamba Sports Academy. The group was headed for a basketball tournament at the academy’s Thousand Oaks location when the crash occurred. According to news reports, Bryant and his family often traveled by helicopter to avoid traffic.

Survivors in the Chester family include Sarah’s husband and Payton’s father Chris; Sarah and Chris’s twin sons Hayden and Riley, who are 10th graders at St. Margaret’s School; Sarah’s mother, Catherine George, a member of St. Matthias Episcopal Church, Whittier; and Sarah’s brothers Andy and Chris George.

“This is an unimaginable loss for the Chester family and the entire St. Margaret’s community,” wrote William N. Moseley, head of St. Margaret’s School, in a letter informing faculty, students and parents of the tragedy. “We are a community in mourning. Our greatest strength is when our St. Margaret’s community pulls together with arms around one another, and this is one of those times.”

Reflections from our Rector (continued)

“The deaths of Sarah and Payton, beloved members of our diocesan family, in a tragic accident receiving global attention serve as heartbreaking reminders of the connectedness and unity of all creation – of the indissoluble bonds among all who walk in faith,” said Bishop John Harvey Taylor of the Diocese of Los Angeles. “Each of us in the Diocese of Los Angeles is praying for Chris, Sarah’s husband; for Hayden and Riley, Payton’s brothers; for Catherine George of St. Matthias in Whittier, Sarah’s mother; for the whole St. Margaret’s Episcopal School community; and for the Bryant family and the families of all who died.”

Catherine George told NBC News that Payton was an accomplished basketball player who “loved playing for Kobe Bryant. He was a great coach.”

She said Sarah was “the heart of that family,” a devoted mother who spent much of her time nurturing her children’s talent for sports and the family’s love of travel.

Payton had ambitions to play basketball in high school and college, said her uncle Andy George, a football coach at La Serna High School in Whittier. “She had the sweetest soul – the kindest, … gentlest person you would ever meet,” George told the Orange County Register. “She always had a huge smile on her face. Every time we would see her she would spend all her time with my little daughters.”

George said his sister Sarah was “the one that everybody counted on. She was there for everyone. She was everything to her family, to our family. Anytime I needed anything, she was the person I went to.”

*– Janet Kawamoto is editor of The Episcopal News, a publication of the Diocese of Los Angeles.*

Announcements

**St. Ambrose Annual Meeting and 2020 Vestry Organizing Meeting**

St. Ambrose Episcopal Church renews its leadership each year with the Annual Meeting. Thanks to those who rotated off the Vestry: Michael Lord, who served three years, this year as Senior Warden and two years as Treasurer; Jim Miller, who served three years, three as Clerk and Don Gundry who served three years and as Vestry liaison to the School Board, Shaiji Ajit who served three years, and Barbara Milligan who served three years. We welcome to the Vestry Alison LeBlanc elected to a two-year term, and Nilda Chong, Hamilton Fong and Jim Neubert who were elected to serve three-year terms.

We elected a new slate of delegates and alternates to Diocesan Convention. Thanks to Don Gundry, Michael Lord and Yvonne Sidell who served as delegates, and to Cathy Rincon, David McIntyre and Alison LeBlanc who served as alternates. We elected Alison LeBlanc, Daniel Tate and Yvonne Sidell as delegates, and Cathy Rincon and David McIntyre as alternates.

David McIntyre, Elliott Dun and Barbara Milligan received the St. Ambrose Award from the Rector. Michael has served as Treasurer the past year and helped organize our participation in the Carbon Tracker through Sustainislandhome.org. Elliott Dun has co-chaired the Capital Campaign for Clergy Housing and has been a faithful, fun and regular worshipper. Barbara has served faithfully for three years on the Vestry.

Following the Annual Meeting the 2020 Vestry organized itself. The Rector appointed April Cherrington as Senior Warden. Elected to offices were Shelley Keefe, Junior Warden; Alison Le Blanc, Clerk; and David McIntyre, Treasurer. The Vestry Planning Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The Vestry Dinner will be held on Sunday, February 9 starting at 5:00 p.m. at the home of April and Grant Cherrington.

**UPDATE – 2020 Pledge Campaign: Caring for our Communities and God’s World**

To date, we have received 63 pledges totaling $124,067. We have also received 37 pledges of time and talent, and 19 pledges for Altar Flowers. The 2019 pledge total was 65 pledges for $129,704. **Thanks to everyone who has turned in a pledge for 2020**.

Keith & Charlene Adolph Donna and Ed Avakoff Kay Ballantyne

Honkai Chang and Milda Beh Bill and Charlotte Bradford Christina Brockman and Stan Hui

Marilyn Canon Angela Carducci Sal and Linda Censoprano

Eunice Chee Scott Chang & Judy Chen April & Grant Cherrington

Nilda Chong and Kyn Dellinger Bettie Davis Reena Davis & Tarunpreet Ubhi

Jeanne DeTorre-Ozeki Elliott Dun & Teresa Murakami Hamilton Fong

Maureen Fromme George & Janet Gardiner Raphaele & Jacques Gerber

Don Gundry Eugene Hetzer Randy Jew & Katherine Ozeki

Shelley Keefe Joanne Kerseg June Kudzia

Alison LeBlanc Dulce & Michael Lord Judy Marshall

Dorothy Matsuo Kirk & Brenda Matsuo David McIntyre & Cathy Rincon

Valerie Mersh Jim Miller & Torrie McAllister-Miller

Barbara Milligan David & Carolyn Moriarty Kenneth & Karen Nagar

Announcements (continued)

Wilfredo & Oliva Nagar Jim Neubert Alain & Liva Neyroud

David Ota Clara Padilla Karin Patterson

Don & Elizabeth Peter Ajit Philip & Shaiji Ajit Jimmy & Poppy Rawley

Joshua and Grace Rawley Rob & Anita Richards Diane Robertson

Julio & Ngoc Rodriguez Frank & Barbara Saunders Sandy Schowengerdt

Irene Stead Jon & Marilyn Stephens Susan Sullivan

Karen Swanson Matt & Meltem Tanner Daniel Tate

Phoebe Venkat Andy Walker 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 Rev. Randall Gardner, Guest Celebrant and Preacher on February 23**

The Rev. Randall Gardner will be our guest Celebrant and Preacher on Sunday, February 23 at the 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. services. He currently serves as Dean of the Chapel for the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley. In this role, he coordinates and helps plan the seminary’s worship life. Please welcome him.

**Study Groups in February**

**The Monday Evening Study Group** will meet this month on **Mondays, February 10 and 24 at 7:00 p.m.** The study group will be meeting at the home of Warren and Nellie Wong, 826 Phoenix Lane, Foster City. They are studying the upcoming Sunday lessons.

**The Tuesday Bible Study Group** meets on **February 4, 11 and 25** from **12:45 p.m. to 2:00** **p.m.** in the Foyer. They are currently reading the Apostle Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians.

The study groups are open to any interested person.

Announcements (continued)

**Mark Your Calendars**

Youth Ministry Service Event: **Saturday, February 1, 9 am,** Santa Maria Urban Project, San Jose

Super Bowl Party: **Sunday, February 2, 2:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Bible Study on 1 Corinthians: **Tuesdays, February 4, 11, 25, 12:45 p.m.,** Foyer

Choir Practice: **Thursdays, February 6, 13, 20, 27, 7:30 p.m.,** Chapel

2020 Vestry Planning Day: **Saturday, February 8, 9:00 a.m.,** Parish Hall

2020 Vestry Dinner: **Sunday, February 9, 5:00 p.m.,** home of April Cherrington

Bible Study on Sunday Lessons: **Mondays, February 10 and 24, 7:00 p.m.,** Wong’s home

Altar Guild Meeting: **Saturday, February 15, 9:00 a.m.,** Kitchen

Rector on vacation: **Monday, February 17 to Monday, February 24**

Associate for Youth, Children and Family Ministry on vacation: **Monday, February 17 – Friday, February 28**

Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting: **Tuesday, February 18, 6:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

School Board Meeting: **Tuesday, February 18, 7:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Evensong (celebrating those married or partnered 50+ years): **Sunday, February 23, 2:00 p.m.,** Grace Cathedral, 1100 California Street, San Francisco

Vestry Meeting: **Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 p.m.,** Parish Hall

Ash Wednesday Services: **February 26, 12:10 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.,** Chapel

Stations of the Cross: **Friday, February 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27, April 3, 12:10 p.m.,** Chapel

First Sunday in Lent: **Sunday, March 1**

Daylight Savings Time begins: **Sunday, March 8**

The Desk of Rev. Karen Swanson

**St. Ambrose Youth News**

**Youth To Help Food Bank**

On Saturday, February 1, St. Ambrose youth will help Santa Maria Urban Ministry with its mission of providing healthy food to families in need in the San Jose area. Interested youth will gather at 8:00 a.m. in the St. Ambrose parking lot to carpool to the site. Between 9:00 a.m. and about 11:30 a.m., they will help set up the food bank and then clean up areas associated with the outreach. The activity will conclude with a pizza lunch to be enjoyed by the hardworking youth. We will arrive back at the St. Ambrose parking lot by 2:00 p.m. Please call or text the Rev. Karen Swanson at 650-200-8449 if you plan to participate.

**March Youth Inquirers’ Class**

The Youth Inquirers’ Class is designed for any youth who would like to be confirmed, or would like to explore the Christian faith as it is expressed in the Episcopalian tradition. It will begin in March and end with the Bishop’s visit in June. The class will include a focus on the spiritual life, a service opportunity, and hands on learning about the faith. The teaching approach will include art, discussion, games, and a movie as well as mini-lectures. Please contact the Rev. Karen Swanson (650-200-8449) to sign up for this opportunity. The schedule will be organized around the needs of the students.

**The Return of the Mason Jar Mission**

St. Ambrose Youth will be selling mason jars filled with goodies again this spring in order to fund mission work. This year, the mission they will fund is their own with the Sierra Service Project. Right now, the youth could use your help with the donation of pint or quart mason jars, or other glass jars with lids to serve as containers for delicious bean soup or cookies. Please place any jars you can donate in the marked box in the parish hall.

*Youth, the date for assembling the mason jars is Sunday, March 8 – please put this date on your calendar.* Ideally it will involve each volunteer adding one ingredient to the jar. Those who are not going to the Sierra Service Project this year can still contribute to the success and enjoyment of those who are by helping with this project! We will also need entrepreneurs to sell the filled mason jars on Sundays March 15, March 22, and March 29. **Thank you!**

**Is the Easter Bunny a Teenager?**

It’s hard to say definitively whether the Easter Bunny is an adolescent, but it is certainly true that at St. Ambrose the teens fill our plastic Easter eggs with goodies donated by the parish, and then hide them in the playgrounds. Join in the fun by joining other youth at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 12 in the filling and hiding of eggs. Breakfast will be provided.

Children’s Ministry – by Fe Balamiento

Dear St. Ambrose,

Jesus Loves the Little Children!



     The Children's Ministry would like to invite members and children to bring a loved one to church and decorate a cookie for Valentine's Day! Come join us!

Thank you,

Fe

February Outreach Report – by Steve Yuen

**Philippine International Aid**

Last year St. Ambrose made a donation to Philippine International Aid (PIA), which provides educational assistance to Philippine children who “live on the streets”; their futures are bleak because they cannot afford to attend public school.

A donation of $250 is enough for one child’s annual tuition and fees, books, supplies, field trip costs, uniforms, shoes, meals and transportation. Founded in 1986, PIA is a U.S. 501(c)3 all-volunteer organization.

Thanks go to Dulce Lord for referring us to this Outreach program.

**Outreach 2020 Calendar**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month | Outreach Meeting | Home & Hope | Sandwiches on Sunday | CALL Primrose | United Thank Offering | Blessing of the Animals | StockingStuffers | Family Sharing |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2020** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| January | None |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| February | None |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| March | 1 |  | 29 |  |  |  |  |  |
| April | None |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| May | None | 19, 21 | 31 |  | 17 |  |  |  |
| June | 7 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| July | None |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| August | 2 |  | 30 |  |  |  |  |  |
| September | None |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| October | 11 |  |  |  | 18 | 4 |  |  |
| November | 1 | 10, 12 | 29 | 15 |  |  |  |  |
| December | 6 |  |  |  |  |  | 3 | 13 |

The above calendar includes most, but not all, the Outreach programs of St. Ambrose. If you would like to help members of the local community, please sign up for activities that will be posted in the Parish Hall a month in advance. Also, through the Outreach Committee we consider donations to various charities that are in accord with the church’s mission.

Please join us! If you have any questions or comments, please contact Steve Yuen (341-1966, stevebyuen@aol.com).

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

Well, January flew by ending with preparations for the Chinese New Year celebrations in every classroom. The school was full of delicious food and fancy dragons. Now, it’s February and registration for Summer and Fall are upon us. **Please let your friends and neighbors know that we still have a few openings in our program for the Summer and upcoming year.** There is much fun to be had year round at Sea Breeze!

Taking care of the school is always a full-time job. We have recently spent a lot of our time on the maintenance of the school. We have had our gate closers upgraded, the Wi-Fi signal increased and the fluorescent lighting throughout the church and school upgraded to LED. This change was an amazing one and made things so much brighter in all areas.

We held our Annual Open House on Tuesday January 28 and Registration for the 2020-2021 School year opened on January 29. Families moved quickly to register and secure a space. The 2020-2021 School Year will see us shrink our After School Program and increase our three year old program. We are very fortunate to have the flexibility to change our programming as needed to meet the needs of our families.

This month, there are lots of other things going on besides registration. Valentine’s Day parties (we are always partying at Sea Breeze); learning about our Presidents; and, preparing for our upcoming Family Fun Day will keep everyone busy. We are also very excited to be hosting Parents’ Night Out on Friday February 7 beginning at 6:00 p.m. Many of our families are here and have no family to assist with babysitting, and this night allows them to drop their children off with us for 3.5 hours while they enjoy some much needed quiet time. The children will enjoy a spaghetti dinner, decorate Valentine’s Day cookies and make a special gift for their parents, all while wearing their jammies and enjoying a movie.

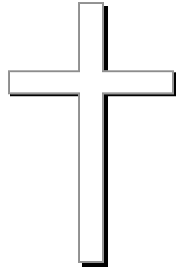
**Have a wonderful February.**

Continued Blessings,

Jerelyn Weber, Principal

The Editor’s Corner– by Yvonne Sidell

## 



## *Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. –John 15:5 (NLT)*

Imagine that you have been invited to a special meal at a friend’s home. This friend has prepared a feast and you are the guest of honor. All of your favorite foods are sitting around the table. All of the food looks great. Everything smells delicious. Everyone sits down at the table.

“Help yourself,” says the host. People begin to pick up bowls and platters and pass them your way. You hold a bowl and say, “Mmmmm, it smells so wonderful.” Then you pass the plate without taking any food. A platter is passed to you. Again, you comment as you pass the plate on to someone else, “This looks terrific!” You keep passing the plates never taking any of the food.

Imagine the host’s response. “What are you doing? Why won’t you take anything? I’ve worked so hard! Don’t you care for it? I thought these foods were your favorite!” Finally, you reply, “Well yes, they are my favorite foods, but no, I don’t actually eat the food. I just look and breathe in the aromas.”

Clearly, unless someone was on a very special diet, no one would do this! Yet, as Christ-followers, I’m afraid many of us do this very thing, spiritually speaking. We gather around a feast of good things that God prepares for us to strengthen and build our lives, such as the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship with other believers, worship and serving others in ministry. Too often our response is similar to the imaginary story described above. “Mmmm… Boy that mission project sure looks good, but no thanks,” or, “Wow, I know that small group Bible study is so wonderful, but it’s not for me.” And so, we sit at the table of a spiritual feast and then pass the plates without taking anything.

God wants us to move beyond a safe, mediocre diet of Christianity–to experience all of what God offers in order to build our lives–so that we truly become all that He has created us to be. We need an ongoing connection to Jesus in order to remain healthy and effective as His servants!

Today, whatever spiritual growth opportunities come your way, be sure to dig in!

\*Credit: HomeWord Devotioals