

The Abundant Life

May 12, 2011
For Sunday, May 15th

From The Rector

Overarching Abundance

The Gospel selection we will read this weekend is at the heart of who we are at St. Paul in the Desert and, I believe, why Jesus was born, taught, healed, was crucified, and was raised.

Warning! I do not intend to cover everything about Jesus in this article. I want to raise up Jesus' purpose from his own words.

Years ago I was taking a course on Small Groups at Fuller Seminary. The professor, Dr. Gareth Isenogle, asked a question. "What is the heart of Jesus' message?" Most answered something about the "Good News." Dr. Isenogle corrected us. Read John 10:10 (the last line of our Gospel selection). "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." The Good News is the means of communicating. Abundant life is the message.

Jesus came that we might have Abundant Life!

This is not about how much money or "stuff" we have, although money and "stuff" need to be understood in the context of the abundant life Jesus gives. It is primarily about God's orientation towards us, absolutely all of us. The 23rd Psalm reflects this. "My cup overflows." In the valley of the shadow of death, God is there. "Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The Gospel selection contrasts this purpose of Jesus with the purpose of those who want to steal and destroy. In my experience it is all too common for people to understand themselves living out a tragic life where God is opposed to them in almost every way.

The abundant life provides a different context, a life lived in cooperation with God and in God's blessing. This is not something that we create. It is the purpose of God in Christ. We are invited to receive it and live into it. From this perspective, difficulties and challenges are not evidence of a mean spirited God who "has it in" for us. From this perspective, God is with us in every difficulty and challenge, and will never cut us off.

It is our intention that our weekend Worship be an expression of the Abundant Life and we practice it week by week with hospitality and joy. Join us.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

John 10:1-10

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who

enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Episcopal Relief and Development

Responds to Severe Storms and Tornado

Episcopal Relief and Development Responds to Severe Storms and Tornado - The severe storms and tornadoes that have overwhelmed five Southern states continue to disrupt the lives of all in the region. Over 350 people have died and thousands are now homeless.

Episcopal Relief and Development needs your support to reach the growing number of dioceses responding to those in distress. Help storm victims by donating to St. Paul's and write in the comment, "storm relief".

Pray for those who are at risk or who have suffered losses, for the families of those who have died, and for the rescue and relief teams who are working to save lives and address immediate needs.

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

On Sunday, May 1st, we began a three week Faith Building class in the Library on Peter. The classes occur at 9:15 am each Sunday. Bring a friend, a cup of coffee, and join us in conversation and/or discussion on subjects you have asked for. It's never too late to join in. We continue with the three-week series on First Peter, the Epistle readings for the Easter Season this year (Series A):

May 15 What does 1st Peter say to us today?

This series led by the Rev. Dr. David Abernethy-Deppe.

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Continuing "Sundays at 9:15"

A new, three week series, "Anglican/Episcopal Tradition" ...what does it mean and from whence did we come? Beginning on Sunday, May 22nd and continuing on Sunday's through June 5th, we shall explore our origins and our history. We will use a series of video presentations followed by discussion, which will

help us discover where this denomination of ours began and developed as an on-going, growing community of faith. We may not answer all the questions; however, we may increase our ability to live comfortably with ambiguity, led by the Rev'd Canon Victoria Hatch.

There is no need to sign-up for these classes, show up and discover.

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"Thursdays at 7" is the name of our new adult spiritual faith formation group, starting May 12th at 7:00 p.m. in the Library. The topic will be: Paul, The Man and His Mission. Each evening will begin with a half hour DVD presentation by Prof. Bart D. Ehrman, Chair of Religious Studies Dept, University of North Carolina, followed by a guided discussion:

- May 12 The Acts of the Apostles
- May 19 Paul, the Man, the Mission and Way of Operating
- May 26 Paul and the Crises of His Churches
- June 2 Pauline Ethics.

This series will be facilitated by Jerry DiNoto.

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Continuing "Thursdays at 7"

The Heartbeat of God: Finding the Sacred in the Middle of Everything - this book written by The Most Reverend Katherine Jefferts Schori's will be the topic of discussion offered Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. on June 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th. This series will be facilitated by The Rev'd Canon Victoria Hatch. The book is available from Amazon, both in hard copy and as a downloadable to your Kindle or Nook.

2011 Pledges Are Still Needed

The primary means of financially supporting God's mission and ministry at St. Paul's is the personal pledge. It helps the parish leadership anticipate giving so that we can plan staffing and programs.

Many 2010 pledgers are donating the same amount they gave in during 2010, but did NOT send in a 2011 pledge card. Your pledge affects our ability to create an appropriate budget for 2011. If you are not listed as "pledged", then you are NOT counted in the pledge totals. An indicator, that we don't have a pledge card from you, is that you did not receive the end-of-the-quarter statement in April. It is vital that you are counted correctly in the pledge total. Please contact Valerie, Pledge Secretary, with any changes or questions you may have at valerie.winters@stpaulsps.org.

Desert SOS Needs Funding

The population of men, women and children being cared for at Roy's Resource

Center has increased 30% this year. The women, children and men are in need of the basic necessities of life. The SOS Fund needs YOUR support to continue to help our homeless friends at Desert SOS who are trying to break the cycle of homelessness. Each month \$300.00 comes from the fund to provide undergarments, socks and necessities. If you are interested in supporting this outreach ministry, drop a check in the collection plate. Make the check to: St. Paul's , and in the memo area, write: SOS Fund. Thanks from our friends at Desert SOS.

Desert SOS Dessert Ministry

St. Paul's SOS Dessert Ministry NEEDS YOUR HELP - Please make the commitment to donate dessert. We need our parishioners, when they do their weekly shopping, to buy an extra box of cookies or other yummy dessert, bananas, string cheese or some tangerines. This gesture would assist us in providing enough dessert for the 90+ clients of Roy's Desert Resource Center, every Monday evening, many of them children. Parishioners may deliver desserts, any day, but are needed before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, in the Parish Hall kitchen (labeled "SOS"). Special thanks to this week's servers who, once again, braved yet another sand storm, they are: Chuck Marx, Jeff Peck, Gary Koch, Ron Shepherd, Michael Howard and Hap Blaisdell. Several parishioners are regular dessert providers, please become one too! This week, Tom and Shirley Schott's, home-made brownies were a hit! Questions? Contact Hap at 760.323.5726.

Camp Stevens Programs for

Families and Adults

Next Sunday in the Parish Hall, join Bonnie Stroock at the Camp Steven's table.

Camp Stevens provides a welcoming home for retreats, education, and adventure. Their summer camp, year-round programs, and retreat center are designed to foster and deepen connections among people, between people and the earth, and for individuals and their spiritual journeys. Contact www.campstevens.org.

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

[1]Click here to receive a Printer Friendly (text only) version.

Notice - The Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Holy Communion service, held in the Library, has been closed for the summer.

Coffee Hour

To host a Coffee Hour is a grateful way to give-back to your fellow parishioners. Perhaps choose a date of celebration or thankfulness to share. The Coffee Hour sign-up sheets are posted on the north wall at Hogarth Hall. Find an empty slot and fill it with your name. For more information, call Ray Kelley at 760.778.1725.

Gift Acknowledgements

St. Paul's wishes to thank those who have provided gifts during the months of

March and April.

To view the acknowledgement list of gifts for this period, [2]click here.

The Childrens Choir

All children age 4 and above are welcome to participate in this group, learning singing skills and providing special music for the 10:30 service several times during the school year. For more information or questions please contact Nathan at 760.320.7488, ext. 225.

The Bishop's Appeal

The Bishop's Appeal supports the mission of the diocese through gifts that are used for support of our ongoing programs and ministries: congregational support and development, leadership development, pastoral care, ministry development, and Christian formation. 100% of your gift goes to supporting our ministries. To make a gift, to the secure website at www.edsd.org or mail to: Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, 2728 Sixth Ave., San Diego, CA 92103.

Report Sexual Misconduct

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a safe haven for everyone, please be reminded that our diocese values the tenet of our baptismal covenant to "respect the dignity of every human being." Part of the way we live into that is to train people in the prevention of sexual misconduct. Another part that goes hand-in-hand with training is reporting incidences of sexual misconduct. Our bishop, the Rt. Rev. James R. Mathes, takes reports seriously and investigates them thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced sexual misconduct of any kind, please contact Bishop Mathes immediately: bishopmathes@edsd.org, 619-481-5450.

NEWCOMERS

Are you receiving the latest mailings and the Abundant Lite weekly newsletter? If not, then we probably don't have your correct mailing and/or email addresses. We want to make sure that you receive the invites to join us in a series of Newcomer events that we believe you will find to be informative and enjoyable. Please fill out the form in the pew pocket and place it in the plate, give it to an usher, or send your contact information by email to valerie.winters@stpaulsps.org.

Bullies Not Welcome Here

At St. Paul in the Desert we want to welcome all worshipers to a place that is free of violence and bullying.

Physical, verbal or emotional violence against others or against oneself is not acceptable.

[3]"It Gets Better" is a series of video messages to encourage Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender youth and let them know that they are loved as they are.

[4]"A Blessing for Those Who Are Bullied" was written by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, a Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

It is not enough to say "NO" to bullies. It is important to stand up for people and to provide resources for those who have been the targets.

References

1. http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/The_Abundant_Lite_5-5-111.pdf
2. http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/2011_MARCH__APRIL_GIFTS_5-5-11.pdf
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>
4. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>