

The Abundant Life

November 29, 2012 For Sunday, December 2nd

From the Rector

Can We Thank God Enough?

There are times when I don't think I can thank God enough. Have you felt like that?

My starting place is situational. That is, when something happens that is good or exciting, I am inclined to be thankful. The more important the "something" is, the more thankful I feel. But, excitement wears off and my sense of gratitude wanes. This thankfulness is stimulus and response.

In this week's reading from 1 Thessalonians, I think Paul is contemplating something else. He does not seem to be writing about a stimulus and response type of gratitude, though I imagine that he had those. He does write about good times and hard times, and he was happier in some situations than in others.

Most importantly, he was writing about his thankfulness for relationships. Specifically, he was wondering if he could be thankful enough for the people of Thessalonika who had been part of his ministry. This is a different kind of gratitude. It is not only a product of relationship, but it defines the relationship. Paul was not focused on only the things that the people had done, but on the existence of the relationship that endured with them, even when out of contact. And he names the center of that connection as Jesus.

This week we begin Advent. It speaks to the beginnings of God's relationship with us and all creation. From the birth of Jesus to the consummation of all things in Christ, there are defining relationships drawing us into community. There are relationships within the Triune God, the earthly family of Jesus, the disciples, believers of our and all generations, and between all of these. I think that the enduring, consistent, gratitude Paul writes about is the positive connection of all these relationships. In the same way that God always invites us to join this community of Faith, Paul invites us to navigate and nurture all the resulting relationships with thankfulness.

Join us in worship this week as we test being thankful enough for our relationships with God and others.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Desert Convocation Series

We welcome Dr. Diana Butler Bass, who is preaching Sunday, Dec. 2nd at the 10:30 service.

A Chabreja Fellow with Bexley Hall-Seabury, Diana Butler Bass is an author, speaker, and independent scholar specializing in American religion and culture. She holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University and is the author of eight books including: *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*; *A People's History of Christianity: the Other Side of the Story* (2009), and the best-selling *Christianity for the Rest of Us* (2006), which was named as one of the best religion books of the year by Publishers Weekly and was featured in a cover story in USA TODAY.

[1][View the entire](#)

[2]["Desert Convocation: Building a Community of Conversation"](#)

[3][flyer by clicking here.](#)

Help Needed - Decorating for Christmas

Christmas is upon us! It's time to decorate the church and the Christmas trees in the Parish Hall and the church office. We need your help! On Sunday, December 23rd at 1:00 PM, we will decorate the inside of the church. To volunteer, please

contact Rosa Zing at 760.408.7796 or rozingg@yahoo.com.

Celebration of Life for Jack Becker-Nov.30 at 1 PM

Jack Becker

9/8/1939 - 11/10/2012

A Celebration of his life will be held

at St. Paul's Friday, November 30, 2012

at 1:00 p.m.

A Death in the Parish

Emile E. Duvernay

6/19/1918 - 11/28/2012

Emile and wife, Ruth, have been members of St. Paul's for many years.

He had served in virtually every position possible in our Parish and was a founding member of our Men's Bible Study.

Emile died Wednesday morning in their apartment at Windsor Court.

Funeral arrangements are pending

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

The Hebrew Scriptures - The Book of Genesis

12/02 "Overview: Luke's Gospel" led by Victoria Hatch
12/09 "Luke's Christmas" led by David Abernethy-Deppe
12/16 "John, the Baptist" led by David Abernethy-Deppe
12/23 "Luke's Canticles" led by David Abernethy-Deppe
12/30 NO CLASS

"Tuesdays At 7"

In The Library

Reason and Faith-Faith Seeking Understanding

Part I: A look at philosophy of the Middle Ages and how Reason and Faith were used to address the nature of God, humanity, evil and freedom, led by Jerry DiNoto.

11/27 Boethius - Does God foreknow our actions?

Advent Taize Prayer and Song, Tuesdays at 7 in the Church

12/04, 12/11, 12/18 led by Nathan Ensign. Bring a Cross and/or Candle!

Diocesan Executive Council is Planning Ahead

The diocesan executive council has endorsed the findings of our recent feasibility study and voted to move ahead with initial planning for an eventual capital campaign to provide mentorships for new clergy, to fund congregational loans and grants and to renovate the Episcopal Church Center. This is an exciting and challenging time for the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, but many hands make light work. We want everyone to feel involved and have the opportunity to participate. So when someone asks you to help out, please say yes.

To learn more about the campaign initiatives, visit the diocesan website: [4]www.edsd.org/feasibility and watch this space for future updates.

Roy's Desert Resource Center & SOS

Christmas for the Homeless.

St. Paul in the Desert is planning a repeat of the very successful Christmas in-gathering we had for the men, women, and children at Roy's Desert Resource Center last year. Our parishioners made Christmas so much merrier for those less fortunate through their donations to Roy's SOS Fund. We were able to provide \$25 gift certificates for most of the homeless at Roy's, and the staff facilitated their being able to use the certificates for their special needs at designated retailers.

YOU can be a part of this Christmastide happiness for the homeless by donating to our Roy's SOS Fund. Make your check out to St. Paul's and designate it for "SOS Christmas." For more information about this program, call Hap at 760.323.5726.

Please call Hap Blaisdell at 760.323.5726 for additional information and ideas. SOS is the ministry of St. Paul's at Roy's.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Life?

[5][Click here to receive a Printer Friendly \(text only\) version](#)[6].

Lessons and Carols

will be presented by the Choirs of St. Paul in the Desert on Sunday, December 16th during the 10:30 worship service. Be sure to make this program a part of your Advent preparation.

Emergency Update:

Hurricane Sandy

Episcopal Relief and Development is helping to meet the need.

Your help is urgently needed.

[7][Click here to donate.](#)

Holy Communion Service for

Local Care Facilities

Holy Communion will be hosted by the Nursing Home Ministry on the second Wednesday of each month at Windsor Court. The next service will be December 12 at 10:15 am. Father Dick Merrill will preside and welcomes assistance from parishioners.

The Family and Children's Ministry

...will meet in the Godly Play room after the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 2nd. All families with young children who are planning to attend church on Christmas Eve, please come and help plan our special service.

ECW Welcomes the Holidays!

The Episcopal Church Women will gather on Thursday, December 6th for their annual Christmas luncheon. The event begins with a business meeting, followed by a festive meal. As is our tradition, there will be caroling and a “special guest” to help “deck the halls”. The salad luncheon is a noon and those attending are asked to bring a salad that serves 6-8, rolls/bread or a dessert. Beverages will be provided. Questions? Please contact Bette Knutson, 760.416.5739. Hostesses for the luncheon are Marilyn Johnson and Ruth Kraus.

Dining in the Dark

Desert Blind & Handicapped Association's 40th Anniversary Event: Dining in the Dark! Saturday, December 8th, 5 PM at the Annenberg Rotunda at Eisenhower Medical Center, Rancho Mirage. \$150 (\$75 tax deductible) per person . Experience the nation-wide phenomena - A Gourmet dinner experience served in total darkness by blind professional wait staff! No-host bar, limited seats available. Call 760.422.3002 for tickets or [8]www.desertblind.org.

Coffee Hour Celebration

Hosts after both services are the Altar Guild. Coffee Hour hosts are still needed for several services the rest of the year. To sign up to host a Coffee Hour, please use the binder on the entrance table in the Parish Hall. If you have questions, please call Ray or Cheryl Kelley at 760.778.1725.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

... meets every Wednesday from 10 am - 1 pm in the Parish Hall. This peace-filled stitching circle gives members fulfillment and spiritual sustenance in creating prayer shawls to comfort those in need of prayer. For more details contact Valerie Ferguson at 760.799.5927, Barbara Hawkins Villani at 760.322.3987, or Audrey Spencermorris at 760.835.5506.

Sign Up for Flowers,

Coffee Hour and

Roy's SOS

To make it easier for parishioners to sign-up for Flowers, Coffee Hours, and the Desert SOS Dessert Ministry, the sign-up sheets are in binders that are on the entrance table in the Parish Hall. The 2012 binders are filling fast, so if you have a special date that you want to commemorate, be sure to sign up early.

2013 Budget

Your Input Welcome

Your Vestry would like your input on the 2013 Budget. The Draft Budget is being evaluated and a copy is available [9]here. Share your comments [10]here.

Report Sexual Misconduct.

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a safe haven for everyone, please remember 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 and to encourage all to report any misconduct. All reported incidents are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced sexual misconduct of any kind, please contact the Rev. Canon Suzann V. Holding immediately: sholding@edsd.org

or 619-481-5452.

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.

[11]"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.

[12]"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/2012/11/The-Desert-Convocation-b1.pdf>
2. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/The-Desert-Convocation-b1.pdf>
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5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/The-Abundant-Lite-November-22-2012.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/The-Abundant-Lite-August-23-2012.pdf>
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8. <http://www.desertblind.org/>
9. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Budget-2013-for-Congregation-input.pdf>
10. <mailto:budget@stpaulsps.org?subject=2013%20Budget>
11. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>
12. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>