

The Abundant Lite

April 4, 2013

For Sunday, April 7th

From the Rector

Who Forgives What Sin?

Jesus is not a “take charge” kind of fellow. In fact, he is a “give charge” savior.

As I have mentioned in sermons on and off for some time, Jesus is unique in leading from a vulnerable place. Not only in his 1st century culture, but also in our 21st century culture, power is to be acquired, not given away. It would be accurate to say that the powers he had been given by God were willingly shared.

Jesus preaches to his disciples about a mutuality between himself and them that mirrors his mutuality with God: sharing all facets of himself as he leads, empowering the community of disciples. “On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” John 14:20

In the this week’s Gospel Reading, Jesus shares even more. He shares the ministry of forgiveness. Forgiveness absolutely cancels indebtedness and obligation, equalizing relationships. Being forgiving got Jesus in trouble. The authorities were threatened by his claim of the power to forgive. It challenged their traditions and the power they accrued from them.

On the evening after his resurrection, he meets his fearful disciples. He gives them a greeting of peace as they shift from fear to joy. Then he gives them one thing more - his spirit. He breathes on them as a sign of that gift and connects it with a responsibility. They are to realize a greater depth of mutuality: they are to be managers of the forgiveness of sins. They are given free reign to forgive, or not.

But what sins are to be forgiven? Karoline Lewis, on [1]Sermon Brainwave #228, points out that sin in John’s Gospel is very specific. It is related to believing or rejecting Jesus.

John does not have a list of bad behaviors to be avoided. He is only concerned

about people being connected to Jesus, and the Jesus community, by believing. The last line of St. Paul's Mission Statement asserts that, "We are an ...empowering ...community." Our community is empowered by believing and empowered to forgive.

On this weekend, every year, we hear Jesus invite Thomas not to doubt, but believe. We may ignore that every one of the other disciples, men and women, were also slow to believe, because the focus is on Thomas. But they were no sharper than he. Jesus is giving the power to forgive sins to this bewildered gathering of sinners - to a community that had already rejected him once!

It is the Holy Spirit that makes this now believing, empowered community work. Jesus gives his Spirit to his people to hold their hand in believing and to guide them in forgiving. He will even guide them to forgive themselves.

Connect this week to our community of believers as we are empowered to forgive and to give this gift of God's love.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the religious authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands.

Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Funeral Announcement

Patrick T. O'Hearn

June 22, 1930-March 31, 2013

Funeral Services are scheduled for April 5, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. at

The Church of St. Paul in the Desert.

St. Paul's to Host Conference Worship

On April 14th at the 10:30 service, St. Paul's will host the Western Region of the [2]Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) in worship as they conclude their Annual Conference.

[3]Founded in 1968, "The Union of Black Episcopalians stands in the continuing tradition of more than 200 years of Black leadership in the Episcopal Church."

[4]The Rev. Zelda Kennedy will preach at the service and there may be guest clergy sharing in the worship leadership.

We welcome the conference participants to our worship and we look forward to hearing the Rev. Kennedy, a leading preacher in the Episcopal Church.

Art Installation

Have you appreciated or been inspired by the Windsails? Then, please write in the blue and silver book on the table in the narthex. The book will be returned to Wendy, their creator, after Easter.

Episcopal Night at the San Diego Opera

'Murder in the Cathedral'

Friday, April 5, at 7pm

Join Bishop Mathes and members from churches of the diocese for an evening of world-class opera and experience a 900-year old story of politics, intrigue, temptation and murder. Tickets purchased at a 20% discount include a backstage tour and a glamorous pre-opera reception. Visit the webpage [5]www.sdopera.com/promo/offeredsd. For more information, pick up a flyer in the church office or contact Vanessa Dinning at 619.533.8047 or Vanessa.Dinning@sdopera.com.

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

Coptic Church/Traditions

Hosted by Rick Tinsley

4/07 Session I

4/14 Session II

4/21 NO CLASS - Confirmation with Bishop Mathes

From Convent to Miter:

The Legacy of Women in the Episcopal Church

Hosted by Victoria Hatch

4/28 Religious Orders and Religious Education

5/05 The Fight for Ordination I

5/12 The Fight for Ordination II

5/19 The Election of Katharine Jefferts Schori

5/26 NO CLASS - Memorial Day Weekend

"Tuesdays at 7"

In the Library

The Old Testament

A study of the Hebrew Scriptures, DVD with Amy Jill Levine.

Hosted by Craig Ewing and Team

4/09 Isaac - Genesis 21-22

4/16 The Jacob Saga - Genesis 25-36

4/23 Biblical Folklore Analysis - Genesis 25-36

4/30 Moses and Exodus - Exodus 1-15

5/07 The God of Israel - Exodus 1-15

5/14 Covenant and Law, Part I - Exodus 19-40

5/21 Covenant and Law, Part II - Exodus 20-35 and Leviticus

5/28 The Conquest - Deuteronomy 20-21, 27-31, and the Book of Joshua

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Life?

[6][Click here to receive a Printer Friendly \(text only\) version](#)[7].

Bishops Speak on Violence

The Bishops of the Episcopal Church just ended a four-day meeting in North Carolina with a Pastoral Statement.

It is called:

A Word to the Church:

Godly Leadership in the Face of Violence.

You may read the statement [8][here](#).

They encourage all members to pray and work for an end to gun violence.

Desert Blind and Handicapped

Breakfast at Coco's

. . . to support transportation for people with disabilities. Takes place at Coco's, Smoke Tree Village, 1901 E Palm Canyon, Drive on Saturday April 20th from 8 AM -11 AM. Tickets are \$20 and are available by calling 760-778-8552 or see George Holliday.

We Need Volunteers

. . . to assist with Name Badge organization. Please contact Mike Funke at 760-409-0986 or: mike.funke@yahoo.com if you can help.

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 April 10th at 10:15 am. Father Dick Merrill will preside and welcomes assistance from parishioners.

Coffee Hour Celebration

Coffee Hour today is hosted after the 8:00 Service by Dee Hansen, along with Bert and Jean Anne Zimmerly. Hosts for after the 10:30 Services are Bryan Wannop and Frank Kajfes.

Coffee Hour hosts are needed for the rest of 2013. To sign up to host a Coffee Hour, please use the binder on the entrance table in the Parish Hall. If you have questions, 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.

Episcopalians Against

Gun Violence

. . . is an ad-hoc group of bishops, clergy and lay people disseminating information about Episcopalians who are working, collectively and individually, to curb gun violence. For further information, click [9]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.

“A Welcoming, Empowering, Supportive”

Ministry!

Our mission statement calls us to be “a welcoming, empowering and supportive community.” We are currently forming a new ministry at St Pau’s to support that mission. Volunteers are needed from all three services to donate approximately 90 minutes of their time per month. That time is split into 3-30 minute segments: 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after the service you attend, once per month, to support the Welcoming Table located in the Narthex and another 30 minutes a month assisting with name badge organization. If you are able to lend a hand, please contact Mike Funke at 760.-409.0986 or mike.funke@yahoo.com!

Help us live our mission statement!

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.

[10]"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.

[11]"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.

Roy's Desert Resource Center is an outreach of St. Paul's that serves the homeless by providing clothing and deserts on Monday evening served by our volunteers. You can help by contributing deserts, donating to our SOS Fund, adding to our donation baskets in the Narthex or joining our volunteers on Monday evening. For more information, call Hap Blaisdell at 760.323.5726.

References

1. <http://www.workingpreacher.org/brainwave.aspx>
2. <http://www.ube.org/>
3. <http://www.allsaints-pas.org/about/parish-staff/zelda-kennedy.htm>
4. <http://www.allsaints-pas.org/about/parish-staff/zelda-kennedy.htm>
5. <http://www.sdopera.com/promo/offeredsd>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The-Abundant-Lite-March-28-2013.pdf>
7. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/The-Abundant-Lite-August-23-2012.pdf>
8. <http://tinyurl.com/cjdogqp>
9. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>
10. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>
11. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>