

The Abundant Lite

December 19, 2013

For Sunday December 22nd

From The Rector

Angels Interrupt Us

Joseph knew what he had to do.

He was engaged to Mary and before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant. He knew what he had to do. He had to end the engagement.

The society in which they lived was ruled by perceptions of shame and honor - which were not personal or private, but affected your entire family and even your community. Evidently, Joseph had a choice of laying it before the wider community, or handling it quietly, and this righteous man had decided to end the engagement quietly.

That is when the angel interrupted him and everything changed. He had a dream that confirmed his anxiety - that he was not the father - but at the same time invited him to trust the message from God. Joseph was being invited to be a part of something life changing, something that would make a difference. God would be with him, and all the people, for healing and reconciliation.

These last days before Christmas are full of plans for most of us. In fact, the plans have been in place for some time. Gatherings of friends and family may be planned. Serving others by helping with a Festive Dinner with the Well in the Desert may be planned. Those for whom the burden of grief and loss is too great may be planning a very quiet, even isolated, Christmas.

“Angels” still might interrupt us with messages from God that show us how to change our lives. It may be that God is inviting us to interrupt our plans so that we might attend to what God is doing in the world in a different way. If the experience of Joseph is any example, I think God may interrupt us with a request that we make room. Joseph made room for Mary and Jesus, and the world has never been the same.

We may be asked to make room for God to be with us in many ways, if we are willing to be interrupted. I know that if we listen for, watch for, wait for God

to be with us and interrupt us - as we face these days ahead - we will find the world a different place.

Join in worship this weekend (and on Christmas Eve, Christmas Morning) as we wait together in expectation and count on God to be with us - Emmanuel.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

National Homeless Person's Memorial Day

In recognition of National Homeless Person's Memorial Day on December 21st, Older Adult Ministries and Social Justice are **TAKING ACTION** to create 100 Blessing Bags for our sister's and brothers in need. We request contributions of bars of soap, granola bars, pairs of socks, disposable razors, toothbrushes, boxed toothpastes, Emory boards, tissue packs, etc. for our Sunday Basket. We will distribute Blessing Bags at Sunrise Park on Saturday, December 21st from 11am to 1pm. Blessings for your caring and generosity.

Older Adult Committee Trip

Older Adult Committee Trip to The Getty Center, Los Angeles, for the Exhibit "Canterbury & St. Albans: Treasures from Church & Cloister" on Thursday, January 23, 2014, departing St Paul's at 7:15 AM returning about 5 PM. \$45 per person by cash, check or credit card. Transportation by Cardiff Luxury Bus with restroom. Coffee with lite breakfast will be served before we board. Wine, soft drinks and snacks available on the way home. Lunch at one of the Getty's restaurants on your own. Tickets on sale after Services on Dec 1, 8 and 15 or in the Parish Office. Limited Seating – buy your seat now.

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

The Three Comings of Jesus, led by Rick Tinsley
12/22 Will Come Again in Glory to Judge the Living and the Dead

Lights in the Dark Ages, a DVD series based on "Lives of Great Christians" by William R. Cook. Hosted by Craig Ewing
1/05 St. Patrick and the Conversion of Ireland
1/12 St. Benedict and His Rule (530 C.E.)
1/19 Leo IX, Gregory VII and Church Reform (11th Century)
1/26 NO CLASS (Annual Meeting)

"Tuesdays at 7"

In The Library

Controversies in the Early Church, a DVD series based on "The History of Christianity" by Luke Timothy Johnson. Hosted by Bob Hettinger
1/07 Imperial Politics and Religion—

Placing Imperial Power Behind the Church
1/14 Constantine and the Established Church—

Converting an Empire to Christianity
1/21 Theological Crisis and Council—

The Trinity (Three in One . . . or Not?)

1/28 Theological Crisis and Council—

Christology (God-Man . . . or Not?)

National Homeless Person's Memorial Day

In recognition of National Homeless Person's Memorial Day on December 21st, Older Adult Ministries and Social Justice are **TAKING ACTION** to create Blessing Bags for our sisters and brothers in need. Sunday, December 15th, you may share in filling Blessing Bags during the coffee hour. We will distribute Blessing Bags at Sunrise Park on Saturday, December 21st from 11am to 1pm. Blessings for your caring and generosity.

Christmas For the Homeless

St. Paul in the Desert is planning to repeat its annual Christmas in-gathering for the men, women and children at Roy's Resource Center. Last year, the generosity of our parishioners helped make Christmas much merrier for the less fortunate. We provided \$25 gift certificates for most of the homeless at Roy's for clothing and other necessary items. Please help us repeat this by making a special donation to St. Paul's, designated for "SOS Christmas" – your contribution to this worthy cause will be much appreciated by those in need. For information, contact Hap Blaisdell at 760.323.5726.

Roy's Desert Resource Center is an outreach of St. Paul's that serves the homeless by providing clothing and desserts on Monday evening served by our volunteers. You can help by contributing desserts, 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.

"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 Paul'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!

Bullying Behavior Not Welcome Here

At St. Paul in the Desert we 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.

[1]"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.

[2]"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.

Report Misconduct.

Report Misconduct. As part of our ongoing commitment to creating a safe haven for everyone, our diocese trains people in the prevention of misconduct and encourages all to report misconduct. All reported incidents are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced misconduct of any kind, please contact the Rev. Thomas Wilson at twilssdca@gmail.com or 619.518.4713.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Life?

[3][Click here to receive a Printer Friendly \(text only\) version](#)[4].

Church Office Hours

Please help the staff by observing that the office is not open for regular business on Mondays. The doors will not be open for walk-ins; and if you call the office, please leave a voice mail message. In case of emergencies, a priest will return your call.

PLEDGE UPDATE

Pledge update. As of last Sunday, 140 pledges for an projected income of \$245,520 have been received for the ministry of St Paul in the Desert in 2014.

At the

Church of St. Paul

in the Desert

. . . we welcome all worshipers to a place free of violence, bullying, and abuse. Physical, verbal or emotional violence against others or against oneself is not acceptable because of our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. Please let Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself be your guide.

You are invited to help . . .

DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS

Please come to the church Sunday, December 22nd, at 1:30 p.m.

For further information, call the office at 760.320.7488.

Christmas Worship Schedule

December 24th - Christmas Eve

Carols - 5:45 p.m.

Family Service - 6:00 p.m.

(Childcare available)

Carols - 10:45 p.m.

Midnight Mass - 11:00 p.m.

December 25th - Christmas Day

Holy Communion and Carols

10:30 a.m.

Free Vision Screening sponsored by the Palm Springs Lions Club is on Saturday, December 28th, 8am to 2:30 p.m. at St Paul's. For information call Linda at 760.702.0879 or to volunteer to help, email Lena Granet at lenahome@aol.com.

Taizé services will resume every first Thursday of the month on February 6th at 7 p.m.

Well in the Desert

. . . is seeking volunteers to help prepare and/or serve dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Volunteer applications are in the church hall. Please fill them out if you are interested and we will group FAX them. Thereafter you will be called with the particulars. [5][Learn more](#). . .

Our Partnership

with

Katherine Finchy

Elementary School

. . . continues through our donations of classroom supplies. Please take a blue classroom supply wish list, available from the ushers, [6](or view and print), to use when you go shopping. Please place your donations in the basket marked "Katherine Finchy Elementary" located in the Narthex. You may also bring your purchased supplies to the Church Office during business hours. If you are unable to shop, but would like to help financially, please make your check out to "St. Paul in the Desert" and write "Katherine Finchy" on the memo line.

THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR

...every Wednesday at 6pm in the Choir Room. All children age 4 and above are invited to participate in this activity learning musical skills while having fun and assisting in the congregation's worship. For more information please contact Nathan Ensign at 760.320.7488 ext 225.

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 January 14th at 10:15 am. Parishioners are welcome to participate and assist.

Coffee Hour Celebration

Coffee Hour Hosts today: after the 8:00 service Tim Johnson, and after 10:30 Gayle & Pete Conley (25th anniversary) and Suzanne & Harvey Trackman (10th anniversary).

Hosts are needed for many Sundays throughout 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.

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 [\[7\]here](#).

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.

References

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>
2. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>
3. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/The-Abundant-Lite-December-12-2013.pdf>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/The-Abundant-Lite-August-23-2012.pdf>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Well-in-the-Desert.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>
7. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>