

The Abundant Lite

Friday, December 27, 2013  
For Sunday December 29th

From The Rector

Only the Beginning

On these first days after Christmas, we leave the birth in the manger in Bethlehem and move to the birth of creation. While Luke's description of the Holy Family, angels and shepherds is the image of Christmas, the reading from John is a mystical reflection on the origin of the One who became flesh.

John shows us that the Word was part of the beginning of everything. Alluding to Genesis, where God "spoke" everything into existence, John understands Jesus to be the embodiment of that divine speech - the Word. Jesus the Word has been intimately connected to God and God's actions from creation to the present, and each generation and person is offered the gift of connection to the "beginning."

That Word is life and light to all people, not a divine self-admiration society. The Word that was part of creation is creating still. Through the Word, God is always creating a community of "children" who are part of the life and light of God which "dwells among us." These children are not a legacy of flesh and blood any more than Jesus was. They are not beholden to any human lineage, but to God who "speaks" them into being God's people.

God's children are those who hear and receive what the Word is creating. One does not become a child of God by seeking or achieving, but as a result of being sought.

When we read the last line of this week's text - "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." - we see how God seeks us out. The Word becomes one of us, so we may become one with the Word as "the wondrous gift is given."

There are an abundance of possibilities when God continues to create and to welcome us into his family. Responding to them is our life. Sharing that life with the Word and one another is what calls us to worship and service. Rejoice!

Fr. Andrew

## Featured Scripture

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

## 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?)

Christmas For the Homeless

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](mailto: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.

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.

## Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

## 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, 145 pledges for an projected income of \$252,520 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.

Contributions for 2013 must be in the office no later than Tuesday, December 31st, at Noon, in order to be credited and deposited before the close of business for the year.

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. [4]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, [5](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 15th

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

### Coffee Hour Celebration

Coffee Hour Hosts today: after the 8:00 service Jerry DiNoto.

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 [6]here.

### 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](mailto:twilssdca@gmail.com) or 619.518.4713.

### 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-19-2013.pdf>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Well-in-the-Desert.pdf>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>
6. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>