

The Abundant Lite

January 2, 2014

For Sunday January 5th

From The Rector

What Rising Star Do You Follow?

The Magi greet a suspicious King Herod with a question about the child whom they associated with a special star they had seen. Where is the child who has been born to be the king of the Jews? Remember, they are asking the man who considers himself to be the king in question. It does not appear that the Magi felt the threat that Herod experienced. In seeking the child whose star had risen, they were focused. In their focus, they were unaware of the impact their search their quest would have.

We Christians have understood this episode with the Magi as the confirmation that the birth of Jesus was not just a local experience, but had cosmic significance. It was a sign that the one born to the stable was part of a plan of salvation for all the world, not simply for one people. It was a small episode, and once the Magi leave they are not mentioned again. They followed the star to Jesus - then left.

As we bridge between the old year and the new, Christmas and Epiphany, I wonder if we are following the star that points to Jesus, only to stop following once he is in sight. In a sense this is about our focus on Christmas and the place it holds in our hearts and families. Do we follow all the build-up to Jesus' birth, only to consider the deep spiritual experience of Advent concluded? Could we instead see the following year as a significant preparation to taking our place as Jesus' followers - a continuation of Advent?

I wonder what the Magi would have learned, had they checked back as Jesus grew and committed themselves to following the one whom God had sent rather than the star advertisement only. What might we learn in this transition from a Bethlehem focused Christmas to an Epiphany that witnesses to God's breaking forth in forgiveness, healing, and renewal?

The star that rose and witnessed to Jesus' birth was only our beginning. It shines upon the one whom God invites us to follow. I believe that the light of Jesus shines ahead of us and beckons us to follow. The journey will take us to

places where we have God's love and grace shared with us, and where we are called to share with others. Sometimes - often - it is the same place.

So, the journey does not end. The journey does not end while the light of Jesus shines.

Join us this weekend as we celebrate Magi and journeys and give thanks to God.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

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.

## 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 [\[1\]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.

## 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.

[\[2\]](#)"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.

[\[3\]](#)"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.

## Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

## Church Office Hours

Please observe that the office is not open for walk-ins on Mondays. If you call, please leave a message. In case of emergencies, a priest will return your call.

## PLEDGE UPDATE

As of December 29th, 150 pledges for a projected income of \$261,520 have been received for the ministry of St Paul in the Desert in 2014.

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.

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.

## Coffee Hour Celebration

Coffee Hour Hosts today: after 8:00 service Barry Hagenbuch & Robert Woods and

after 10:30 George Holliday & Rick Tinsley.

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.

Taizé services will resume February 6th at 7 p.m., and will be presented the first Thursday of the month thereafter.

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.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Please join Prayer Shawl Ministry to create Prayer Flags on Wednesday, January 15th, 10am-1pm and/or Sunday, January 19th, while sipping coffee. Bishop Mathes has invited us to create Prayer Flags to explore and express prayer through fabric, color, words, and thoughts. Prayer Flags are a universal symbol of peace, love, and compassion. They will be displayed at convention, February 21st & 22nd, and at dedication festivities for our first Diocesan Center. Prayer Shawl Ministry would appreciate offerings of embellishments for the flags, such as ribbons, buttons, fabric scraps, beads, fabric paint and permanent markers.

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.

“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!

References

1. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>
3. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/The-Abundant-Lite-December-27-2013.pdf>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>