

The Abundant Life

February 20, 2014

For Sunday, February 23rd

From The Rector

Take a Stand, Not a Side

There is a difference between taking a stand and taking sides. Jesus is teaching his first disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, and he defined what the life of following him would be like. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, those who mourn, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those who suffer for following Jesus. Then Jesus confronts the common wisdom or spirituality of his day: "You have heard it said, ..., but I tell you ..." In this week's Gospel selection, Jesus confronts the ultimate "us vs. them" scenario - responding to those who would do us harm.

It is important to remember that this is about his disciples responding personally to personal attacks, not about defending the poor and needy, and in our own context, not about standing up to the person who bullies others. He tells his disciples not to resist, but to love and pray for the antagonist or the enemy - to treat neighbors and enemies the same. No taking sides - not resisting and not polarizing is his strong response.

Why?

There is no common sense reason. There is no plan to change the antagonist or enemy, although that may happen. There are two reasons given by Jesus: Disciples would take their place as God's children and they would be growing in the kind of spiritual maturity or perfection that is God's example. It is clear that this is not a way to be more loved than another group or person. It is not about being on the winning side or marshaling the power of God to "smite" the other side.

Jesus tells his closest followers that just as God causes rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous, so our loving behavior - our stand - is to be shared with all alike. No taking sides. No compromising personal integrity.

In our life today, taking a stand can LOOK like taking sides. It worked like that in Jesus' day, too. However, he took stands. He lifted up the faith of the foreigner and dined with the Tax-Collector, and people acted like he was taking sides. He saw things differently.

Jesus, like his Father, acted out of abundance, not scarcity. For him there was enough love and respect to go around, so he could care for neighbor and enemy the same.

This integrity takes practice. We practice when we are clear about our stand and equally clear that the “other side” is always respected and treated lovingly. We practice it when we worship in a diverse community of people with different ideas, interests, and histories. We practice it equally when we welcome people to Communion, or when we refuse to talk down to others, especially those who disagree with us.

Join in worship this weekend as we practice being holy, perfect, mature - as God is.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Faith Building: Sunday Mornings

Faith Building Class: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" - Dramatic Changes in Global Christianity

We are pleased to have the Rev. F. Dean Lueking lead our Sunday Morning program for four weeks in March. Pastor Lueking and his wife, Beverly, have engaged Christians from many countries around the world to learn about the state of Global Christianity. The result was his twelfth published book, Through Their Eyes, A People's View of the Global Church. Dr. Lueking's class will be based on this book. Copies of the book will be on sale following each service and in the Parish Office for \$20.00.

Pastor Lueking is a Lutheran Pastor from River Forest, Il. He was ordained in

1954 and served Grace Church, River Forest for 44 years. Since his retirement in 1998, he has been the Pastor Emeritus. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1960.

He and Beverly have been married since 1954 and have begun spending part of each winter in the Coachella Valley. ([1]Click here for his full Curriculum Vitae.)

Come to Convention!

Come to Convention! All are welcome and encouraged to attend the 40th Annual Diocesan Convention on Friday, February 21, and Saturday, February 22. This year's gala dinner will be special because it kicks off the diocesan capital campaign, Build the Serving Church, and will serve as the 40th birthday party of the diocese. We have fun surprises planned! A festive Eucharist at St. Paul's Cathedral is open to all. Convention is the biggest diocesan event of the year. The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, will be our keynote speaker at the Diocesan Convention gala dinner. Bishop Jefferts Schori will bless the Episcopal Church Center in Ocean Beach as the new diocesan center. Come hear speakers, worship with other Episcopalians and take advantage of these opportunities. For times and locations visit: www.edsd.org/diocon2014. Contact Hannah Wilder with questions: hwilder@edsd.org, 619.481.5456.

The Experience of Confirmation:

Accepting God's Gift of Faith

- * Are you worshipping with our community and ready to take a further step into becoming an Episcopalian?
- * Are you confirmed in another denomination and want to be received into the Episcopal Church?
- * Are you already an Episcopalian and have been inactive and want to reconnect?
- * Are you interested in exploring your faith in the context of St. Paul's community?

Then our Confirmation Program is for you! This journey will lead you through your own spiritual life story as well as through the history, theology and worship of the Episcopal Church. It is an opportunity for you to grow spiritually in and through the community of faith at St. Paul's. Our first meeting will be on Sunday, February 23rd, at 5:30pm, here at St. Paul's and will include dinner. Thereafter, there will be five weekly sessions, all including dinner, on Sundays during Lent in preparation for Confirmation/Reception by Bishop Mathes on Sunday, April 6th.

Please RSVP your interest in attending by signing up in the Parish Hall or by calling Susan Jacob at 760.320.7488 ext 227.

Please Note:

Confirmation sponsors are needed for the upcoming confirmation class, beginning February 23rd. We are looking for individuals who would like to accompany our confirmands on their journey, during the process and after. A sponsor would meet occasionally with their confirmand for conversation, pray for them and touch base with them after they are confirmed. A brief organizational meeting will be held on Sunday, February 23 @ 4:30 in the Parish Hall, just before our first Confirmation Class. For information or to sign up, please call Br. John Charles Westaway in the Parish Office: 760.320.7488.

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

The Divine Feminine - Recovering the Feminine Face of God as we explore various spiritual traditions around the world, renewing and integrating our relationship with the Divine Feminine.

February 23

Led by Victoria Hatch and Audrey Spencermorris

The Twilight Zone: What Happened on That Mountain - a closer look at the Transfiguration.

March 2

Led by David Caffrey and Andrew Green.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally:

Dramatic Changes in Global Christianity.

We are pleased that the Rev. F. Dean Lueking will lead our Sunday morning program March 9, 16, 23, and 30. Pastor Lueking and his wife, Beverly, have engaged Christians from many countries around the world to learn about the state of Global Christianity. The result is his twelfth book, Through Their Eyes, A People's View of the Global Church, which will be the basis of the class. Copies are on sale following each service and in the parish office for \$20.00. Lueking was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in 1954 and served Grace Church, River Forest, for 44 years. Since his retirement in 1998, he has been the Pastor Emeritus. He

earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1960. He and Beverly have been married since 1954 and have begun spending part of each winter in the Coachella Valley.

"Tuesdays at 7"

In The Library

Old Testament - a continuation with Amy-Jill Levine on DVD; hosted by Jerry DiNoto and Craig Ewing
2/25 Babylonian Exile

Jesus and the Gospels - a continuation of the DVD series by Luke Timothy Johnson. Hosted by David Abernethy-Deppe.

3/04 Why Not "The Historical Jesus?"
3/11 The Starting Point – The Resurrection Experience
3/18 The Matrix – Symbolic World of Greek and Jew
3/25 Parallels – Stories of Greek and Jewish Heroes
4/01 The Context – Jesus in the Memory of the Church
4/08 Earliest Stages – Paul and the Oral Tradition

Roy's Desert Resource Center

Roy's Desert Resource Center is an outreach of St. Paul's that serves the homeless by providing clothing, special Monday night desserts and other volunteer services to one of the Coachella Valley's largest transitional living facilities. You can help by contributing desserts, donating to the SOS fund, adding to the donation baskets in the Narthex or by joining our volunteers to assist our Monday evening outreach. Several new services are planned, and new volunteers are both needed and welcome. For more information, contact Hap Blaisdell at 760.323.5726 or Chris Kelly at 760.406.2978.

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 John Seitman, at jseitman@pacbell.net or 858-793-4426.

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.

“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!

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 [4]here.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

[5]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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE WISDOM

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only Light can do that. Hate cannot not drive out hate; only Love can do that” - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

PLEDGE UPDATE

As of February 18th, there are 171 pledges, for a projected income of \$318,564, that have been received for the ministry of St Paul in the Desert in 2014. Offering envelopes can be picked up in the parish office.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

meets Tuesday, February 25th, at 1:15pm in the condo behind the church office. As a prayer, service, and evangelism order, we strive for a closer spiritual bond with all the ladies of St. Paul's. We invite you to come and find out what DOK is about. Take a look at our bulletin board as you enter the Parish Hall. Any questions, please call Val Ferguson at 760.671.5372 or 760.799.5927.

THE EPISCOPAL

CHURCH WOMEN

meets on Thursday, March 6th, at 11:30am. The event affords a special time of fellowship, and all women of the parish are welcome. At the business meeting we will discuss plans for the All Parish Spaghetti dinner on March 22. The salad luncheon and program will follow the meeting. Those attending (except for newcomers) are asked to bring a salad to serve 6-8, rolls, or a dessert. Beverages are provided. Hostesses for the luncheon are Bette Knutson and Harriet Yost. For additional information, contact Kathy Briski at 760.864.7145.

SAVE THE DATE!

Please save the date of April 6th for Lunch with the Bishop after the 10:30 service! It's an opportunity for us to get to hear from our Bishop, James Mathes. Details will follow at the beginning of March.

A Taizé Service

. . . is held on the first Thursday of the month. Currently the service schedule is March 6th at 7:00 pm.

The Annual Parish Spaghetti Dinner

and

ECW Bake Sale

. . . are on the horizon! It will held in the Parish Hall on Saturday, March 22nd from 5-7 PM. Tickets will go on Sale Sunday, February 23rd, after each worship service, and each Sunday thereafter through March 16th, and in the Parish Office until the event.

For Epiphany, we are using the Sanctus and Agnus Dei from the Sewanee Mass by Malcolm Archer, English Church Musician, Conductor, Composer and Recital Organist. Since 2007, Archer is Director of Chapel Music at Winchester College in the heart of England, where he trains and conducts the Choristers and Chapel Choir. He also teaches organ and composition. He has a distinguished career in Cathedral music, which has taken him to posts at Norwich, Bristol, and Wells Cathedrals, as well as Director of Music at the famous St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

HOLY COMMUNION

SERVICE

FOR

LOCAL CARE FACILITIES

Holy Communion at Windsor Court, 201 South Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, is hosted by the Nursing Home Ministry on the second Wednesday of the month, next, on March 12th, at 10:15am. The Presiding Priest always welcomes assistance from parishioners.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION RETREAT AT

CAMP STEVENS

Do you need a weekend of spiritual reflection and Christian company in a beautiful, natural setting? Camp Stevens in Julian offers the Gary Hall annual retreat for men and women on Feb. 28th - March 1st, as well as Women's Retreat on March 28th -30th. For more information go to the website for Camp Stevens: [6]www.campstevens.org/adult.

COFFEE HOUR CELEBRATION

The hosts after the 10:30 service are Diane & Tom McClocklin and David & Lynette Wright.

You may sign up to host a Coffee Hour by using the binder at the entrance to the Parish Hall. There are lots of opportunities in 2014. If you have questions, call Ray or Cheryl Kelley at 760.778.1725.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

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.

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, [7](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.

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.

References

1. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Vita-curriculum-Lueking.pdf>

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://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/The-Abundant-Lite-February-13-2013.pdf>
6. <http://www.campstevens.org/adult>
7. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>