

The Abundant Lite

March 13, 2014

For Sunday, March 16th

From The Rector

Senior Blessings

This week's reading from the Hebrew Scriptures is simple, pivotal, and incredibly important.

Simple because God tells Abram to leave his homeland and go to another land. Our selection is only four verses - Leave here, go there, I will be with you. God's purpose is stated clearly that those who are blessed, should benefit others.

Pivotal because these are the verses where God's purpose of restoring blessing to the world begins. In the first 11 chapters of Genesis, the world has been created - with humankind in the divine image - and then disobedience disrupts and separates creation from the Creator. With God's call to Abram, the story changes. Now begins the return. It is a theme that will evolve throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and be taken up by Jesus.

Important because it defines the relationship between God, those chosen by God, and the world. Abram is chosen and blessed to be a blessing for "all the families of the earth." God's intentions, then, are not for a select few. God's love is not only for the chosen, but for all. That intention is explored, practiced, yet sometimes ignored as the story follows Abram's family.

And Abram was 75 when he got the call to disrupt his life!

It would be a mistake to read too much into his age at the call. Aging and our context for "elders" or "seniors" are very different from that of Genesis. However, I find it inclusive. God's initiative to bless the world comes through someone who has already lived a life. At a time when he could have "rested on his laurels," he leaves what he knows and goes where God sends him.

This reminds us that doing God's work is a risk. Our comfort should be challenged. The envelope of God's blessing should be pushed.

Join in worship this Lent as we practice accepting risk and find ways to bless

the world in Jesus's name.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

John 3:1-17

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Passing the Peace - An Invitation

The exchange of peace is an ancient ritual grounded in reconciliation and maintenance of relationship for those long separated. Sometimes we envision it

as if it is the way we welcome new worshipers. However, our practice, while warm and friendly, seems directed to renewing current acquaintances. None of this is bad, but I would invite you to try a different approach.

At the time of the peace, look around. Identify a person or couple you do not know, and exchange the peace with them. Let them know you are sincerely glad that you are together for worship. Pay particular attention to those who are sitting away from others.

A gentle handshake should be sufficient, as a full-on bear hug might be unwelcome.

Save most, if not all the familiar greetings for the Coffee Hour.

Let me know how it feels and if we are becoming more welcoming of the stranger.

Fr. Andrew

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.)

Deaths in the Parish

Gus Frouws

Died 2/21/2014

Funeral services are scheduled for March 22nd at 11:00 am.

Thomas R. Paling

February 4, 1959 -

February 7, 2014

Interred at St. Paul's,

February 15, 2014

Please keep his partner

Michael Chacon in your prayers.

Faith Building

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

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 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

Jesus and the Gospels - a continuation of the DVD series by Luke Timothy Johnson.

3/18 The Matrix – Symbolic World of Greek and Jew

3/25 Parallels – Stories of Greek and Jewish Heroes

Hosted by Jerry Lynch

4/01 The Context – Jesus in the Memory of the Church

4/08 Earliest Stages – Paul and the Oral Tradition

Hosted by Jerry DiNoto

Roy's Desert Resource Center

Volunteers needed for Roy's Desert Resource Center! St. Paul's is expanding its outreach to the men, women and children of Roy's, one of the Coachella Valley's largest transitional living facilities for the homeless. New volunteers are needed to assist in our continuing Monday night dessert service to Roy's residents, as are baked goods, used clothing, and donations to our Roy's "SOS" fund. We are also looking for new volunteers willing to assist residents as they visit the on-site "God's Closet" clothing repository. We are hoping to have "team" together for this new program by early April. We expect to have additional volunteer needs as we expand our ministry over the next few months, and encourage everyone with a little time to spare to join us in this opportunity for service and fellowship. For more information, contact Chris Kelly at 760.406.2978. We would love to hear from you!

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.

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.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

[6]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

"The Roots of Violence: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Commerce without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice, Politics without principles." Mahatma Gandhi

Social Justice Ministry meets Thursday, March 13th, at 7pm in St. Paul's library.

PLEDGE UPDATE

As of March 10th, there are 172 pledges, for a projected income of \$332,564, 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.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY OUTING

...will meet at the Coachella Valley Preserve parking lot off Thousand Palms Road on Saturday, March 22nd, at 1:30pm. Contact Bonnie Stroock at 760.324.7949 or Michael Howard at 760.323.1050.

LUNCH WITH

BISHOP MATHES

A Lunch with our Bishop will take place at 12:30 PM on Sunday, April 6th at Temple Isaiah, 332 W Alejo, Palm Springs. Tickets are \$10 and will be sold after each worship service or in the Parish office through Sunday, March 30th. Don't miss this opportunity to hear from our Bishop, James Mathes.

A Taizé Service

... is held on the first Thursday of the month. Currently the service schedule is April 3rd at 7:00 pm.

The Annual Parish Spaghetti Dinner

and

ECW Bake Sale

... will held in the Parish Hall on Saturday, March 22nd from 5-7 PM. Tickets are on sale after each worship service, each Sunday through March 16th, and in the Parish Office until the event. Tickets are \$10 and proceeds will benefit Desert Blind and Handicapped. Enjoy an evening in an Italian trattoria.

MUSIC OF J. S. BACH

... and His Boys for Violin and Harpsichord, played on period instruments by the eminent Dutch violinist, Jaap Schroeder and harpsichordist, Margaret Irwin-Brandon will be presented Sunday, March 23rd, at 2:30pm in the Parish Hall. A reception to meet the artists will follow and a suggested donation of \$20 is requested. Contact Nathan Ensign at 760.320.7488 ext 225.

[7]Click here for more details

ECW Destination:

The Holy Land

A visit to many of the favorite pilgrim sites in the Holy Land, via photographs and personal recollection, will highlight the ECW Spring luncheon on Thursday, April 3rd. A brief business meeting, to be followed by luncheon at noon, will preface the program.

Tour guide will be Bonnie Stroock, who will discuss her recent trip to the Holy Land where she visited Jerusalem, Galilee, Bethlehem, and the site of the Sermon on the Mount. This is a not to be missed Lenten season event, and all women of the Parish are encouraged to attend.

Please, (except for newcomers) bring a salad to serve 6 to 8, rolls, or a dessert. Beverages will be provided. Hostesses for the luncheon will be Bonnie Stroock and Kathy Briski. For additional information, contact Kathy Briski, (760) 864-7145.

THE DAUGHTERS

OF THE

KING

. . . will be training prospective members during the next two months. We are meeting in Palm Springs on Monday afternoons. Join us to see how the DOK Rule of Prayer and Service can work in your life. Call Bonnie Stroock at 760.324.7949 for more information.

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 April 9th, at 10:15am. The Presiding Priest always welcomes assistance from parishioners.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION RETREATS AT

CAMP STEVENS

Camp Stevens offers two retreats during Lent. March 29-30 is a Women's Weekend led by Mother Kelli Grace Kurtz with a pilgrimage theme. The Gary Hall retreat will be April 11-13; a popular retreat leader, The Very Rev. Gary Hall is presently Dean of Washington National Cathedral. The DOK is planning carpooling to the women's event. Register with info@campstevens.org.

COFFEE HOUR CELEBRATION

The host after the 8:00 service is Tim Johnson; the hosts after the 10:30 service are Cheryl and Ray Kelley and Kathryn and David Clemons.

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. 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.

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/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/The-Abundant-Lite-March-6-2014.pdf>
7. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/J.-S.-Bach-etc.pdf>