

The Abundant Lite

December 18, 2014

For Sunday December 21st

From The Rector

The Lord is With You. ...How Can This Be?

A week from today, we will celebrate Christmas and our reading this weekend is the final installment in preparing the way. The angel Gabriel brings Mary a message from God. She is chosen, God is with her, she has a mission, and she wonders. This story builds towards the birth of Jesus. Mary's response and her witness to her older cousin Elizabeth set the tone.

This story is specific to Mary and the birth of Jesus, and the tone of setting the world right becomes a mission statement for him. However, Mary's story is our story, too. WE are chosen, God is with US, WE have a mission, and We wonder.

We wonder about being chosen. The angel greets Mary as a "favored one." I imagine that she wondered about being called favored. I wonder about it, too. Every society has reasons that people are favored; money, family, clan or race, or power. These reasons for favor are important to human and even church society, but I am sure that God has a different reason. Mary's being favored and our being favored is simply a gift of relationship from God. Because God formed us in the divine image, we are favored. God built a special connection in us and it is real. Spiritual growth is a process of coming to honor that in ourselves and in others - and all of us are on that journey.

We wonder about God being with us because we don't feel special, we don't feel worthy, we aren't paying attention, or because life is not going how we would like it to go. Mary's experience is instructive. No reason is given. We are given no back-story of any special qualities. She is about as ordinary - like us - as she can be.

Mary's mission was to bear Jesus, and raise him to be a part of God's Mission of reconciliation. Our mission is the same. We are to bear Jesus in our lives and live out God's Mission in the world. The mission for Christians is not to live as a class of favored ones or simply to rejoice

in God being with us, but to take that sign of God's love into the world - to let the world know of God's love. We have a mission to let those away from positions of power or status know that they are God's favored ones as well.

Week by week, we wonder as we worship. We wonder that God has called us and that our fellowship is a laboratory for taking God's love to others. Join us.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Calling All Elves - A Decorating Event

Come help decorate the church for Christmas. All interested folks are invited to come help decorate the church on Monday December 22nd at 9:00 AM.

Faith Formation

"Sundays at 9:15"

In The Library

Welcome to The Episcopal Café Discussion Group! Sessions will be held in the Chapel Room in the Parish Hall. These discussion/sharing sessions are based on online topics from Episcopal websites,

During the 4 Sundays of Advent - A Journey Through the Music and Customs of Advent led by Rick Tinsley and Rev. Canon David Caffrey.

12/21 - "Hymns for the Climax of Advent and the Incarnation: The Great O Antiphons - The Intersection of the old and New Covenants."

12/28- NO SESSION: Christmas Break

1/4 Torture and the Cross Facilitator: Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch

1/11 The Anosognosia of Racism Facilitator: Br. John Charles

1/18 Transgender Priest Rachel Mann Made Minor Canon at

Manchester Cathedral Facilitator: Craig Ewing

1/25 Annual Meeting: No Café session

"Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Library"

Christian Mysticism & Mystics

1/6 The Cloud of Unknowing and the Mystic Tradition.

Led by Rev. Canon David Caffrey

1/13 Teillard de Chardin. Led by Craig Ewing

1/20 Julian of Norwich. Led by Br. John Charles Westaway

1/27 de Caussade / Evelyn Underhill. Led by Rev. Andrew Green

“Christmas at Roy’s Desert Resource Center”

It’s that time again! For the past several years, St. Paul’s has raised money to buy Christmas gift cards for the men, women and children at Roy’s Desert Resource Center – a tradition of giving we want to continue. Through the generosity of our parish, each Roy’s resident will receive a \$25 gift

card that can be used to purchase clothes and other essentials at a local retailer. Please join in showing your support for this important outreach with a donation – simply make your check payable to “St. Paul-in-the-Desert” and put “Roy’s Christmas” in the memo line. Drop it in the plate on Sunday or bring it to the church office. Contact Chris Kelly 760.406.2978 for more information on how you can help. Our target this year is to raise \$2,500 by the end of December, so give early and give often!”

A WELCOMING, EMPOWERING, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

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

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.

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.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

Christmas Week

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.

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.

December 21st is National Homeless Memorial Day.

The day of the least daylight and longest darkness when Winter begins is especially fitting for this time of remembrance. Please pray for our sisters and brothers who presently are homeless and remember those named and unnamed who have died this past year - lives often cut short by extreme weather, addictions, violence and illnesses that might easily have been treated.

On Friday, January 16th at 7:30 p.m. we will present the Plymouth State University Chamber Singers from New Hampshire. Under the direction of Dr. Dan Perkins, this 21 voice choir will sing a program with works by such known composers as Whitacre, Bernstein, The Beatles, Part and others as a benefit for The Friends of Roy's Foundation. Donations are graciously received at the door and a reception will follow to welcome singers and community guests.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

(FORMERLY "GODLY PLAY")

NEEDS --> YOU

We are looking for volunteers to be Story Tellers and/or Doorkeepers (observers) for our Sunday School program during the 10:30 service. This is an opportunity to teach children through biblical readings and activities selected by the Sunday School Team from an Episcopal curriculum. If you are interested in volunteering or want more information, please contact Ted Barjas at 760.902.1014.

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 January 14, at 10:15am. The Presiding Priest always welcomes assistance from parishioners.

COFFEE HOUR CELEBRATION

Coffee Hour following the 8:00 AM service is hosted by Michelle Hathaway. Coffee Hour following the 10:30 AM service is hosted by Gayle and Pete Conley and Suzanne and Harvey Trackman

Please consider signing up to host a Coffee Hour in 2014. A binder at the entrance to the Parish Hall indicates available Sundays throughout the year. There are several Sundays available through the end of the year. If you have questions, call Ray or Cheryl Kelley at 760.778.1725.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry invites you to join our circle on Wednesday's from 10am -1pm in Hogarth Hall. Whether you wish to learn to knit or crochet or are an expert needleworker, we welcome you. Needles, hooks and yarn are provided. Please drop in to create and enjoy our prayerfully made creations.

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.

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.

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/2014/12/The-Abundant-Lite->

December-11-2014.pdf

4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/The-Abundant-Lite-5-8-2014.pdf>

5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>

6. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>