

The Abundant Life

December 11, 2014

For Sunday December 14th

From The Rector

Rejoice, Pray, Thank, Test

As we prepare for Christmas, the reading from 1st Thessalonians gives us a simple rule of life - Rejoice, Pray, Thank, Test. We are instructed to rejoice always, to pray continually, give thanks consistently, and to test everything we "hear" from the Spirit. These rules constitute practice for moving deeper in our relationship with God and growing spiritually during the holidays.

Rejoicing is more than feeling happy. It is more intense, like the difference between like and delight. The intensity is triggered by deeper relationships. Observing other people's children can make me happy, but I delight in our grandchildren. There is a difference between seeing a beautiful sunrise and the rejoicing in that same sunrise that springs from a sense of intimate connection to God's created world. Our worship is filled with expressions of joy that spring from a relationship with God who meets and embraces us in Jesus.

Praying continually is not primarily about constant attention to a list of prayers, though these are important and an expression of our connection to our community. Praying without ceasing is about prayer that connects us to God as breathing connects us to life. Ancient monks and people living today have made a connection between breathing and prayer. One version of the "Jesus Prayer" has us praying, "Lord Jesus, son of God" as we breath in, and "have mercy on me" as we breath out. The key is praying so that one is constantly aware that being in God's presence is life-giving.

Giving thanks in every situation is more about becoming intensely aware of God, of the people around us, and even of the world, than it is about the specific merits of the situation. Gratitude reminds us that all of our life comes from God. The good and the difficult in life are different if we are connected rather than isolated. It is challenging to give thanks for something that you don't particularly like. But in giving thanks, your choices are expanded by God's partnership.

Testing or examining everything reminds us that we are responsible to God, to others, and to ourselves for our choices in life. The admonition that we should “hang on to what is good” invites us to be partners with God in the conduct of our lives and relationships. Being a partner means that I have an important role in choosing how to engage life, even if all the choices don’t belong to me.

These kinds of spiritual practice have a component we do by ourselves, and a component we do by engaging together in our worship, in our fellowship, and in our reaching out to a world in great need. Join us.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Common English Bible (CEB)

Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Don’t suppress the Spirit. Don’t brush off Spirit-inspired messages, but examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil. Now, may the God of peace himself cause you to be completely dedicated to him; and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept intact and blameless at our Lord Jesus Christ’s coming. The one who is calling you is faithful and will do this.

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.

12/14 - "More Hymns for Mid Advent Season. Advent Customs for Home and Family."

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

"Tuesdays at 7"

December ~ In The Church

12/16 - Taize Services

No service on December 23rd or Dec 30th.

“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.

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

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.

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.

Our Taize style meditation service is returning for 3 Tuesdays in Advent. Our next Taize service will be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00 PM.

In a setting of icons, candles and low light, and, using short songs repeated again and again with a few words to express a basic reality of faith, this service of prayer and meditation becomes a way of listening to God. All are invited. To learn more, contact Nathan Ensign at: 760.320.7488 Ext. 225. We are also looking for a few volunteers to assist in setting up for the service.

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 December 10th, 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 Barry Hagenbuch and Robert Woods. Coffee Hour following the 10:30 AM services is hosted by Bruce McLean and Mark McMillan.

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.

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.

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-4-2014.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>