

The Abundant Lite

December 4, 2014

For Sunday December 7th

From The Rector

Coming Together For Advent

As the second week of Advent approaches, I am surprised by a beautiful message that appears in our chosen readings, in particular Psalm 80. The Second Sunday of Advent focuses on the message of John the Baptizer and his role as a prophet. The psalm, amplifying the reading from Isaiah 40 (Comfort ye my people) is a message of hope and reconciliation. It is about the connections that develop when the people of God truly listen and take action. Verses 10 and 11 are among the most beautiful in the Bible:

* Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

* Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

James Howell writes about this psalm on [1]WorkingPreacher.org and reminds us that Advent is not a time of Lenten penitence. Rather, it is a time of preparation, and these verses poetically point to a gracious God, whom we can see, who is a sign of hope for us, coming to be with us.

The four words active here are Mercy, Truth, Righteousness, and Peace. Each has a meaning in Hebrew that is not easily conveyed in English, but is full of nuance. Each emphasizes a quality of relationship that characterizes a people reconciled with God and each other. Mercy is about loyalty to a covenant with God and God's people. Truth emphasizes steadfastness and perseverance in living faithfully. Righteousness is the gift from God for the people of mercy and truth. Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the awareness of a deep and sustaining connection with God and with others. Each of these are worthy of far more reflection and study than the space of this brief format.

The meanings of these words are profoundly shaped by relationship and it makes me wonder about Advent and relationship. In Advent we are used to preparing for the coming of Jesus and it seems natural to focus on that

relationship - us to Jesus. However, mercy, truth, righteousness and peace have a far larger context - relationships within the community of faith and outside that community, and with the beloved creation of God. We are called to consider this larger context as we prepare for Jesus in Advent. All relationships matter, just as all life matters. Our calling is to participate faithfully in this web of relationships that is connected to our relationship with God.

We practice this as we worship together and embrace locally a model of all our relationships.

Join us.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

1

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

2

You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.

8

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9

Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10

Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11

Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12
The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.

13
Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

AFRICAN TEAM MINISTRIES Sale

December 7th after both services.

This is a not-for-profit organization which helps our brothers and sisters in Africa build water wells, educate children, offer employment and other humanitarian projects. This is done by the sale of crafts and jewelry made by those employed. When you purchase an item you are helping the individual who created it by giving them the income they need to survive. Last year we raised \$1,470.50. Thank you so much! If you have any questions, please call Rosanna Langley at 760.409.8534.

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.

Please call the Parish Office @ 760.320.7488 to sign up or just show up!

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.

12/7 - "Hymns for Mid-Advent, the Jesse Tree - its Symbols and the Bible story that forms It."

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

12/2, 12/9 & 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.

[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[5].

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.

Camp Stevens Visit

Dec. 6

Many people at church contribute to our beautiful Diocesan camp in Julian. To thank you, a lunch and tour has been arranged on Dec. 6th, a Saturday. Time away is 9 AM to 3 PM. If you are interested in coming along, contact Bonnie Stroock, St. Paul Camper's Coordinator at 760-324-7949.

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 9th 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

The St. Paul's Vestry members are the Coffee Hour hosts following the 8:00 and 10:30 AM services.

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, [6](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.

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.

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 [7]here.

References

1. https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2290
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/2014/11/The-Abundant-Lite-November-27-2014.pdf>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/The-Abundant-Lite-5-8-2014.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Finchy-Supply-list.pdf>
7. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>