

The Abundant Lite

June 11, 2015

For Sunday June 14th

From the Rector

Be the Weed!

Jesus is speaking in parables again, and he leaves me perplexed.

I want to be a “good” Christian and leader, but I don’t hear the kind of direction I am hoping for. The message I hope to hear is THE way to get folks to listen and take action of the kind I want. I hope to learn the exact steps I have to take to fill the pews or cover the budget. Others like me hope to hear how to make sure our personal and parish families live according to faithful values, and how to extend this stable life to establish peace in the world.

Instead, this week’s parables tell of a farmer who scatters seed without a plan or expectations, and loses no sleep over the undirected project. And they tell of the tiny mustard seed that unassisted becomes an enormous shrub. The farmer isn’t put in charge by God, and this neglect perplexes me, if not the farmer.

A reason for that unease is that many of us think of the stories as ways for us to include all ages and strangers in the faith community. We think of them as simplified descriptions of a complicated process given to us for spreading the kingdom, one that requires our direction and effort. But these two parables of Jesus don’t simplify anything, and they don’t explain things very well. Yet they can deepen our understanding as they direct our attention away from established tradition or expectation.

Farmers plan, plant, tend, and work hopefully for a harvest. But these parables of Jesus aren’t about that process; they are not about how things usually work. They are about how the reign of God is an experience of unimaginable abundance.

The reign of God is happening without our control. The abundant grace of God is scattered with abandon and has effects without our conscious effort. Any planting that we don’t plan for is regarded as a “weed.” Yet

in these parables, the unplanned robust growth is the love of God spreading everywhere, with strength, beauty and richness.

By telling stories that upset conventional thinking and amuse us, Jesus is teaching us to expect something different from God. Grace and love trump our control. Join us as we are surrounded by abundant grace, and are given the sensitivity to find our place in it.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Vestry Update - June 2015

At the Vestry's May 28th meeting, we heard preliminary reports from the Rector and Junior Warden Rosanna Langley on plans to reduce water use on the St Paul in the Desert campus. Obviously good stewardship of our environment is a common value. The prolonged drought prompted the Governor and water authorities to impose restrictions on water use statewide. The Rector, Junior Warden and Sexton are working together with a landscape designer to create a plan to replace much of the lawn and planting areas with drought tolerant plants and expanding use of rocks and gravel. The Vestry approved a budget not to exceed \$10,000 for this project

The migration to QuickBooks as our bookkeeping and accounting software is just about complete. One benefit of the new software is easier and faster reporting tools. Our Treasurer, Alan Zimmerman, used this feature to report on year-to-date income through April. Alan reported that income was about \$22,000 above budgeted expectations for the first third of the year. However Alan also reminded us that this surplus included the Easter Offering and that income commonly exceeds budget when attendance swells during the winter months.

We also learned that the mailed appeal to parishioners to consider special gifts or increased pledges to help close our budget deficit generated \$7,600 in income. Welcome as that news was, the amount represents only 10% of the current deficit. Obviously the Vestry and Finance and Stewardship committees continue their efforts to resolve the deficit. The good news is that the new bookkeeping and accounting software enables us to monitor our financial situation with accuracy and immediately on demand.

The Adult Faith Building committee reports that the Episcopal Café series will continue on Sunday's at 9:15 am; however, there are currently no plans to continue the Tuesday evening sessions during the summer.

The Stewardship committee suggested and the Vestry supported a St. Paul's Ministry Fair on a Sunday between and after services in early October. Details will follow. The Fair will be an opportunity to learn more about the many ways St. Paul's participates in our community and beyond and how each of us has a role in making an impact in our Parish, our community and our world.

– Tom Lutgen, Clerk

St. Paul's Vestry 2015

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Faith Formation

"Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

Episcopal Café returns in The Chapel"

6/7 Reclaiming Climate Change as a Moral Issue

Facilitated by Jerry Lynch

Read up on it [1]here.

6/14 Can We Inconvenience Ourselves a Little?

Facilitated by Alan Zimmerman

Read up on it [2]here.

6/ 21 Why Institutions Matter.

Facilitated by Diane Stielstra

Read up on it [3]here.

6/28 Is the Holy Spirit the Snake in the Garden?

Facilitated by Craig Ewing

Read up on it [4]here.

"Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Library"

6/9 Book of Common Prayer. Orientation/Offices.

Facilitated by Rev. Canon David Caffrey/Jerry DiNoto

6/16 Book of Common Prayer: Sacraments Part I.

Facilitated by Rev. Canon David Caffrey

6/23 Book of Common Prayer: Sacraments Part II.

Facilitated by Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch

6/30 Book of Common Prayer: Creeds/Catechism/Documents.

Facilitated by Br. John Charles Westaway.

Baked Good Donations for

ROY'S DESERT RESOURCE CENTER

St. Paul's ongoing outreach to the homeless men, women and children at Roy's Desert Resource Center needs renewed donations of cookies, cakes and other baked treats for our Monday night dessert service at the North Pam Springs facility. Homemade items are especially popular and appreciated. You can simply bring donations with you to church and leave them with an usher before the service. Or you can feel free to contact Chris Kelly – (760) 406-2978 – for further information. Thanks for your help.

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!

Announcements

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Life?

[5]Click here to receive a Printer Friendly (text only) version[6].

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The church office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm with a lunch break from 11:30 am until 1:00 pm.

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.

The next meeting of the Social Justice Team will be on Thursday, June 11, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library at St. Paul's. Jerry DiNoto will lead a discussion on the social service and social justice traditions of the Deaconate and monastic communities. All are welcome to participate.

THE FAMILY/

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

. . . will be hosting a bowling event at Palm Springs Lanes on Sunday, June 14 at 12:30. If you are interested in participating please contact Ted Barajas at 760-902-1014. Let him know how many will be in attendance in order to make the appropriate reservations.

Copies of . . .

A CHURCH GROWS

IN THE DESERT,

Rev. Robert Semes' history of the first 75 years of St. Paul in the Desert, is available at the Church Office during regular business hours. Rev. Semes is an accomplished historian and his richly illustrated book chronicles the life and times of the people and events that shaped the Church we are today. Cost of the book is \$20.00.

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 July 8th, at 10:15am. The Presiding Priest always welcomes assistance from parishioners.

COFFEE HOUR CELEBRATION

Please consider hosting a Coffee Hour celebration. A binder at the entrance to the Parish Hall indicates available Sundays throughout 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.

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.

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.

[8]"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.

[9]"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.

References

1. <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2015/03/30/reclaiming-climate-change-as-a-moral-issue/>
2. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/can-we-inconvenience-ourselves-a-little/>
3. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/why-institutions-matter>
4. <http://www.dirtysexyministry.com/2015/05/snake-in-garden.html>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Abundant-Lite-June-7-2015.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Abundant-Lite-June-7-2015.pdf>
7. <http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopaliansAgainstGunViolence>
8. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPZ5eUrNF24>

9. <http://scg-wakeupcall.blogspot.com/2010/10/blessing-for-those-who-are-bullied.html>