

The Abundant Life

August 20, 2015

For Sunday August 20th

A Message from the Rector

Not Human Enemies, But Systemic Evil

If one gathers news of the world in any given week, there are usually examples of folks hurting one another under the cover of religion. Some examples would be Christians who are attacked, by different groups, in Palestine and Pakistan and Muslims who are attacked by Christians in Central Africa and by Buddhists in Myanmar. There are plenty more.

The easy way to look at this is to see each conflict on a local level and be glad it has not come near me. A more complex way is to see this localized and very personal violence as a symptom of larger forces that are at work throughout the world. In Ephesians, the author warns the readers to depersonalize their sense of struggle. It is not a conflict between fellow human beings, but between the followers of Jesus and those who use power to thwart justice. Think of David and Bathsheba. As a person, David committed adultery. However, because he was the King, he was able to order Bathsheba's husband to battle, where he would certainly be killed, and hide from full responsibility.

These undefined Rulers and Authorities are not evil. They are the repositories of earthly power and are intended to promote justice. Today, in the United States, the Pledge of Allegiance that I was raised with and say often, ends "with liberty and justice for all."

As Christians we hope that all rulers and authorities promote peace, justice, and the well being of the community. We pray for them. But our responsibility does not stop there. The image used in Ephesians is of a soldier preparing for battle. I prefer to shift the image and think of a skilled worker inventorying their tools. We are equipped with truth, justice, faith, a readiness to share the good news of God's peace, an assurance of God's forgiveness, and knowledge of God's Word.

With these tools, we can grow as Christians, and be ready to stand firm when the challenges move beyond simple personal conflict. We can stand

together and "speak truth to power" when justice and mercy are absent in the systems of rule and authority.

Join in this weekend as we praise God who loves us, and calls us to stand with those who need to experience God's love for them.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Ephesians 6:10-20 (CEB)

Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and his powerful strength. Put on God's armor so that you can make a stand against the tricks of the devil. We aren't fighting against human enemies but against rulers, authorities, forces of cosmic darkness, and spiritual powers of evil in the heavens. Therefore, pick up the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground on the evil day and after you have done everything possible to still stand. So stand with the belt of truth around your waist, justice as your breastplate, and put shoes on your feet so that you are ready to spread the good news of peace. Above all, carry the shield of faith so that you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

Offer prayers and petitions in the Spirit all the time. Stay alert by hanging in there and praying for all believers. As for me, pray that when I open my mouth, I'll get a message that confidently makes this secret plan of the gospel known. I'm an ambassador in chains for the sake of the gospel. Pray so that the Lord will give me the confidence to say what I have to say.

Help Others Beat the Heat

Help Others Beat the Heat - This summer, St. Paul's is helping our brothers and sisters in need to find relief from the heat. In collaboration with the Social Justice Team, St. Paul's has purchased and is distributing free bus passes to clients of Well in the Desert, and others, so they can have access to the cooling center, showers, bingo and crafts workshops. If you would like to contribute, please make checks payable to "Church of St. Paul in the Desert", with "bus passes/Social Justice" in the memo line. Or, put cash in an envelope, identified in the

same way, and place it in the offering plate.

Faith Formation

"Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

Episcopal Café returns in The Chapel"

8/23 When you say you 'don't see race,' you're ignoring racism, not helping to solve it!

Led by Craig Ewing. [1]Read about it here

8/30 If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

Led by Louisa Young-Caffrey. [2]Read about it here

9/6 How Do I Address A Conflicting Belief With My Neighbor?

No website preview-handout given at session.

Led by Alan Zimmerman.

9/13 Getting Beyond Hateful Acts & Labels-Part 1.

Led by Br. John Charles.

9/20 Getting Beyond Hateful Acts & Labels-Part 2.

Led by Craig Ewing. [3]Read about it here.

9/27 Can Mindfulness Reduce Racism?

Led by Br. John Charles. [4]Read about it here.

"Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Library"

There will be no Tuesday night sessions during August. Tuesday evening Adult Faith Building sessions resume on Tuesday evening, September 8th at 7 PM with a series on "DeMystifying the Book of Revelation".

9/1 Apocalyptic Literature and How to "Read" It.

Led by Rev. Canon David Caffrey.

9/8 What Inspired Revelation's Author?

Led by Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch.

9/15 Basics: Who wrote Revelation? When?

What does the Book say?

Led by Craig Ewing.

9/22 What Makes this Book So Attractive to So Many?

Led by Br. John Charles.

9/29 The Erroneous “End of the World” Interpretation.

Led by Jerry Di Noto.

Baked Goods Donations for

ROY’S DESERT RESOURCE CENTER

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

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.

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.

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 Lite?

[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.

OPEN INVITATION

All Altar Guild and Altar Ministers, and any parishioners who may be interested in joining one of these ministries, are cordially invited to a gathering for fellowship and refreshment at the home of Richard Wells on Sunday, September 13th at 5:00 pm. Watch this space for more details in coming weeks.

COME AND

BRING A

JOYFUL VOICE

Soon it will be September - when St. Paul's Parish Choir reassembles for weekly rehearsals. Wednesday, September 16, 7-8:30 pm is the time, and the choir room of the Parish Hall is the place. If you'd like to join the choir this fall, please contact Meg Irwin-Brandon prior to the rehearsal. Meg will serve as Interim Director for Nathan Ensign, through October. She can be reached at 413-285-6881 or mibrandon@verizon.net. Newcomers are welcome!

SAVE THE DATES

Saturday and Sunday, October 10 & 11, Diocesan Day of Service, following the 4:00 pm, 8:00 am and 10:30 am services.

Sunday, October 18th, St. Paul's Parish Open House and Ministry Fair, between the 8 am and 10:30 am services and following the 10:30 am service.

Details to follow!

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

COFFEE HOUR CELEBRATION

Sunday's coffee hour following the 8:00 am service is hosted by Michelle Hathaway.

There are several Sunday hospitality opportunities available through the end of the year. Please consider hosting a Coffee Hour after the 8:00 or 10:30 services with family or friends. Sign-up binders are on the large

table on the right as you enter the Parish Hall.

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.

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.

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://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/26/do-not-see-race-ignoring-racism-not-helping>
2. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karen-fleshman/white-people-if-youre-not-part-of-the->

solution-youre-part-of-the-problem_b_7665452.html

3. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-v-taylor/get-beyond-hateful-acts-a_b_7764188.html

4. <http://www.tutfoundationusa.org/2015/08/can-mindfulness-reduce-racism/>

5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Abundant-Lite-August-13-2015.pdf>

6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Abundant-Lite-August-13-2015.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>