

## The Abundant Life

December 17, 2015

For Sunday, Dec. 20th

From The Rector

### Fierce Promises

With Christmas barely a week away, we read about Mary's encounter with her cousin Elizabeth. More, we read and sing Mary's response to God's fierce promises to her - fierce because they intend to turn the very order of things upside down. Mary is at the center of the promises now, and her soon-to-be-born son will be their fulfillment. Mary chooses to believe.

Belief is often a thought process of saying yes to a proposition. The belief that is ascribed to Mary is much more, because it is about heartfelt trust and faithful following. Mary believes and gives her hope over to God's fierce promises.

Our reading is filled with unexpected promises. God has had enough of the arrogant and proud. Those who expect to be catered to will trade places with those who have few expectations. Those who live on the leavings of society will feast and those who are used to more and more will be turned away. And the greatest promise is that God will show mercy to anyone who honors God. Mercy is not for the connected or the privileged - or for those who are routinely blessed - but for absolutely everyone who gives honor to God.

What is so fierce - powerful and frankly scary - is that we don't get to limit, sort, or label who the recipients of God's grace are. God has more to offer than any of us can expect and God is honored by more people than we can imagine.

The challenge of these promises is that they require us to adopt counter-intuitive responses to God and to the creation that God has made. I have a tendency to control, to take charge, and to feel like I deserve what I have (so long as it is what I want). The reality that God's fierce promises demand is that all of us are stewards of the resources, love and mercy that we have received. We care for them in Godly trust for ourselves and others.

We are called to apply that stewardship in our daily lives, in our response to the poor and marginalized, in our care for creation, and in our financial commitments. God invites us to stand with those whom God promises to lift up. And God invites us to rejoice fiercely.

Join us.

Fr. Andrew

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### Featured Scripture

Luke 1:45-55 Common English Bible (CEB)

"Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

He shows mercy to everyone,  
from one generation to the next,  
who honors him as God.

He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,  
remembering his mercy,  
just as he promised to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever.”

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### A Special Anniversary

St. Paul's celebrates the 28th anniversary of Fr. Andrew Green as our Rector! Fr. Andrew arrived on Tuesday, December 15, 1987 after serving at his first parish, St. Dunstan's San Diego. We thank God for Fr. Andrew's spiritual guidance, compassion and dedication to our parish and to the larger Palm Springs and Coachella Valley community. Fr. Andrew is recognized well beyond the parish for his unfailing and courageous leadership as a champion for the underserved, the marginalized and the forgotten. Thank you and congratulations, Fr. Andrew!

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### Calling All Elves!

CALLING ALL ELVES! It's time to “deck the halls” for Christmas!

Tuesday, December 22, starting at 9:00 a.m.

We're Looking for jolly holiday volunteers to decorate the interior of the church.

If you would like to help, please call the Parish Office @ 760.320.7488 to sign up.

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### Christmas Schedule

Click [1]here for larger view

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## Giving Made Easier

St. Paul's has a new system for online giving and we encourage you to use it at [2]www.stpaulsps.org. If you have any questions, please contact the office and we will be happy to assist you.

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## Drive to Church With a Buddy

As we move into the high season in Palm Springs, Church parking is becoming more scarce. Because of renewed businesses in the neighborhood, the street parking on El Alameda is unavailable. Please think about two suggestions: First, drive with a friend. Find someone whom you know and commute to church with them. Save a parking space. Second, park on Belardo (to the west of the Church) and walk further if you are able. This saves a close-in parking place for a new worshiper or someone who has difficulty walking. On Sunday the Parish Staff do not park in our lots.

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## Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

### Episcopal Café in The Chapel

#### December

12/20 Speaking to the Soul: Merry Christmas.

Led by Br. John Charles

Read about it [3]here

12/27 Christmas Recess: NO SESSION

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## Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

#### December

12/22 Christmas Recess: NO SESSION

12/27 End of Year Celebration & Reflection:

Parish Hall 7 PM

All Program participants and Team members are invited; dine, celebrate and reflect on the Adult Faith Formation Program.

January

Faith Building classes resume in January with discussions on the Gospel of Luke.

1/5 Epiphany Service - In Church

It is suggested that you read the selected scripture passage before class.

1/12 Luke 1:39-56 The Announcement of the Birth of Jesus.

Led by Br. John Charles.

1/19 - Luke 4:1-30 The Temptations: Who is Jesus, Part 1.

Led by Br. John Charles.

1/26 - Luke 5:1-9:50 The Galilean Ministry: Who is Jesus, Part 2.

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Christmas for the Homeless

It's time once again for our annual Christmas fundraiser for the homeless men, women and children at Roy's Desert Resource Center. In the past, we have used donated funds to buy Walmart and Revivals gift cards which Roy's residents can use to purchase essentials, and we're planning the same for 2015. Our target this year is to raise \$2,000 (for 85 gift cards) between now and December 25, so please consider a contribution to this worthy cause. Simply drop your check payable to St. Paul's into the plate any Sunday and make sure to write "Roy's Christmas" on the memo line. Don't hesitate to contact Chris Kelly at (760-406-2978) with any questions or for more information on how you can help our ongoing outreach to Roy's.

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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.

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## 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](mailto:mike.funke@yahoo.com)!

Help us live our mission statement!

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## 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.

“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.

“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.

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Announcements

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CHURCH

OFFICE HOURS

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

Should you call on Monday when we are closed to the public, please leave a message. In case of an emergency, a priest will return your call.

Please Note: The Church office will be closed Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25.

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Bishop's Visitation

Bishop Mathes will visit St. Paul's on December 3-4, 2016. He will Preside and Preach at our worship and will offer Baptism and Confirmation.

The Inquirer's Class will begin in early October.

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Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

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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 [5]here.

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## CHRISTMAS FLOWER

### OFFERING

If you would like to contribute toward the cost of Christmas flowers, please use the special offering envelopes found in the pew pockets.

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## VESTRY NOMINATIONS

We will soon be preparing the ballot for the next vestry elections. Please give thoughtful consideration to who you would like to see serving in this capacity and submit their names (even your own!) for consideration by the vestry nominating committee.

There's no need to ask individuals if they are willing to serve. The committee will do that. Submit names soon to any vestry member.

Click [6]here for the Vestry Member E-mail list.

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## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School sessions are active and exciting for the new school year! We look forward to having the children attend the 10:30 Sunday School Program. We are still looking for volunteers to be a storyteller or a doorkeeper. If you are interested, please contact Ted Barajas at 760-902-1014 or email at tedbarajas1@yahoo.com.

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## 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 13th, at 10:15am. The Presiding Priest always welcomes assistance from parishioners.

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## COFFEE HOUR

The Coffee Hour after the 8:00 services is hosted by Michelle Hathaway. Please consider hosting Coffee Hour with friends or family following an 8:00 or 10:30 service. Sign-up binders are on the large table, on the right, as you enter the Parish Hall.

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## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry invites you to join our circle on Wednesday's from 10 am-1 pm 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.

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## 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 John Seitman, at [jseitman@pacbell.net](mailto:jseitman@pacbell.net) or 858-793-4426.

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## References

1. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Christmas-schedule.pdf>

2. <http://www.stpaulsps.org/>
3. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/speaking-to-the-soul-merry-christmas/>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/The-Abundant-Life-December-10-2015.pdf>
5. <http://www.facebook.com/EPISCOPALIANSAGAINSTGUNVIOLENCE/>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Contact-Info-Vestry.pdf>