

The Abundant Life

December 24, 2015
For Sunday, Dec. 27th

From The Rector

Broken Hearts and Ornaments

The actual heart of Christmas - the intimate connection between heaven and earth, between God and all humanity - informs every part of my life. Yet as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, I wonder why I do not share the excitement and joy as completely as I would expect, and wonder how to connect.

I think there are clues in the simplicity and directness of Linus telling the Christmas Story in "Charlie Brown Christmas." I understand Linus' joy, but am drawn to Charlie Brown. Charlie Brown is like the broken ornament from the Christmas tree. It was once delightful, but now is broken and no longer part of the decoration and festival. Charlie Brown is a tender and broken-hearted hero. He knows the songs and the story, sees the joy of others, but these are disconnected from him. They are dull and flat, and Charlie doesn't see a way past his ensuing despair.

Charlie is the despairing hero for so many people who find themselves filled with sadness during this season when even joy can feel depressive. In his alienation and hurt, he reaches out to the broken tree and sets it in the midst of the celebration. None of his friends understand. None can appreciate it.

Charlie is unaware, but in gently reaching out to the most fragile of trees, he begins reconnecting to joy. And I am intrigued by how things progress so Charlie and the tree are honored.

Christmas is a most joyful time, but remember that it happens in a stable - perhaps even a cave - where the birth would be unnoticed if not for the Shepherds who heeded the angels. While the Word becoming flesh in Jesus calls out for the highest praise that all creation can muster, it is a truth and a joy that was revealed slowly, intimately, and unexpectedly.

Join in the celebration, if you are able. Know that God's love sustains the silent night if that is where you find yourself. Be gentle with one another

and with yourself. Bright and broken ornaments are part of the Holy Night, and both radiant and broken hearts are part of our Holy communities.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

A Christmas Video from
The Episcopal Church

[1]

Christmas Schedule

Click [2]here for larger view

Giving Made Easier

St. Paul's has a new system for online giving and we encourage you to use it at www.stpaulsps.org. If you have any questions, please contact the office and we will be happy to assist you. Our online system makes it easy to direct your donation to a specific fund. For a short while we will have the option of "Christmas Gift". Thank you for your donations to this fund.

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.

Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

Episcopal Café in The Chapel

December

12/27 Christmas Recess: NO SESSION

Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

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.

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.

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.

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.

“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.

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?

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

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January 7th

Taizè Service

Our next Taize service will be Thursday, January 7th at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to this quiet service of music and meditation. For more

information, contact Nathan Ensign at 760-320-7488 x225.

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Save the Date

On January 24, 2016 Music Director Nathan Ensign will give a presentation on his Sabbatical. Be sure to save the date. Details will be coming soon.

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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 [4]here.

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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 Hours after the 8:00 and 10:30 services are hosted by John & Lucinda Hampson. Please consider hosting Coffee Hour with friends or family following either 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 or 858-793-4426.

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References

1. <http://stpaulsps.org/worship-2/>
2. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Christmas-schedule.pdf>
3. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/The-Abundant-Life-December-17-2015.pdf>
4. <http://www.facebook.com/EPISCOPALIANSAGAINSTGUNVIOLENCE/>