

The Abundant Life

December 3, 2015

For Sunday, December 6th

From The Rector

Change My Heart and Life

This is the first appearance of John the Baptist in our new church year. We read about him and his call for people to choose renewal in their lives as a part of God's plan for the healing of the world. Luke connects John's invitation to the words of Isaiah. As a result, we Christians understand John the Baptist to be "the voice crying out in the wilderness" as he proclaims that the moment of God's salvation has arrived.

John's key message of salvation is central to our participation in God's healing of the world. To participate fully, we need a change of heart that leads to a change in the rest of our lives. However, it would be unwise to think that a change of heart - a radical turning - is to be simple or easy. We protect the comfortable and usual by moralisms and comparisons. We resist change that shows us to be inadequate, and counter with self-righteousness. John entreats us to respond to his message.

God's call to us through John and the other prophets is to love differently.

An example of this different kind of loving is found in a renewal of real biblical hospitality. I have never been to a congregation that did not see itself as welcoming. Most sincerely desire to be welcoming, but they confuse welcome with comfort. "I have found a place where I am comfortable in worship and with the people who populate our congregation. You are welcome if you love that, too." We love the familiar and the places where we have found comfort. Now John and the prophets call us to build a new and different hospitality on the strengths of that comfort.

Radical Hospitality, as developed by the Rev. Stephanie Spellers, is about disconnecting my welcome from my own comfort and seeking the healing and wholeness of the stranger. A change of heart is required to turn our love to the stranger and to that which is unfamiliar and challenges us.

John the Baptist is the voice calling us to join him in the wilderness as we learn to love differently, abundantly, and expansively. Join in our worship "wilderness" - in our desert home here at St. Paul's - as we practice changing our hearts. We are learning to care for "pew strangers," and we hope to learn to care for the stranger at our door and on our street.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Luke 3:1-6 (CEB)

In the fifteenth year of the rule of the emperor Tiberius—when Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea and Herod was ruler over Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruler over Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—God’s word came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. John went throughout the region of the Jordan River, calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. This is just as it was written in the scroll of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

A voice crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled,
and every mountain and hill will be leveled.
The crooked will be made straight
and the rough places made smooth.
All humanity will see God’s salvation.”

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.

Christmas Schedule

Click [\[1\]](#)here for larger view

African Team Ministries

Visit the African Team Ministries this Sunday in the Parish Hall. Please visit our display of African crafted jewelry, crafts and musical instruments this Sunday, December 6th and next Sunday, December 13th. Remember friends and family with gifts that help others.

We also accept donations for the water systems that will help with the gardens and bringing water to the villages. If you have any questions, please see me at the display or give me a call at 760.409.8534. Thank you for your support. Rosanna Langley, Junior Warden.

Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

Episcopal Café in The Chapel

December

12/6 Keeping Advent.

Led by Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch

Read about it [\[2\]](#)here

12/13 Shadows of Advent.

Led by Craig Ewing

Read about it [\[3\]](#)here

12/20 Speaking to the Soul: Merry Christmas.
Led by Br. John Charles
Read about it [\[4\]here](#)

12/27 Christmas Recess: NO SESSION

Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

December
Meets in the Church

Taizé Prayer Services

12/1 Taizé Prayer Service. Led by Nathan Ensign

12/8 Taizé Prayer Service. Led by Nathan Ensign

12/15 Taizé Prayer Service. Led by Nathan Ensign

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.

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.

Baked Goods Donations for

ROY’S DESERT RESOURCE CENTER

- See more at: <http://stpaulsps.org/#sthash.je9rkb97.dpuf>

Announcements

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Lite?

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

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

TAIZÉ MEDITIATION

SERVICE

Taizé style meditation services continue through Advent. Join us at 7:00 PM, on December 8th and December 15th. To learn more, contact Nathan Ensign at: 760.320.7488, Ext. 225. NOTE: we are looking for a few volunteers to assist in setting up for the services.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

The Social Justice Committee

...meets Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 pm in the Library. Chris Kelly will join us to share ideas about possible new initiatives to help the homeless in our community and the opportunities for St. Paul's to participate in this important ministry. All are welcome.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

COFFEE HOUR

Join us in the Parish Hall for coffee and fellowship after each service today. The Coffee Hour after the 8:00 and 10:30 services are hosted by the Vestry.

There are a couple of Sunday hospitality opportunities still available through the end of the year. The sign-up binders include all 2016 opportunities as well. 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.

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

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.

+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+--+

References

1. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Christmas-schedule.pdf>
2. http://www.episcopalcafe.com/keeping_advent
3. http://www.episcopalcafe.com/shadows_of_advent
4. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/speaking-to-the-soul-merry-christmas/>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/The-Abundant-Life-November-26-20151.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Contact-Info-Vestry.pdf>
7. <http://www.facebook.com/EPISCOPALIANSAGAINSTGUNVIOLENCE/>