

The Abundant Life

December 31, 2015
For Sunday, Jan 3rd

From The Rector

By Another Road

This second Sunday of Christmas, we hear the story of the Magi and then anticipate Epiphany. These travelers from “the East” introduced a threat to King Herod by inquiring after another king, whose star they were following. The Magi were on a mission to honor the new king – Jesus. They brought gifts and presented them to the child in the presence of his family. Their coming signals that the Good News of God was not to be limited to one people at one time, but was a proclamation of God’s love for the whole world.

The Magi gave Jesus one other gift: they left by another road and did not return and report to Herod. Perhaps there is a gift for us in the story also.

Herod was fearful for his tenuous hold on his kingship. There were multiple candidates who could claim the throne and grow rich from the partnership with the occupying Romans. Herod’s own road to the crown was not paved with honor; like the dictator he was, he conspired to eliminate this new threat to his crown. Whereas he claimed to desire honoring the new king, he only wanted to locate, then kill him.

The Magi did not go back to Herod - did not support his evil plan. They simply left by another road.

Herod’s plan to destroy the threatening baby is a dramatic conflict in the story of Jesus’ road to being God’s anointed one. Choosing a different road was an effective response by the Magi; it presents us with an option when we face conflict or hostility. We can choose to travel by a different road.

Recently, I came upon conflict and hostility in an exchange on FaceBook. A person made a statement that seemed to reveal a political leaning. The responses quickly left the content of the statement and deteriorated into personal attacks. Commonly today, disagreement takes the road of attack.

If the attacks are sharp and emotional enough, the resulting exchange builds in destructive verbal power.

This latter is one response to conflict, but there are many choices, many roads, open to us in such situations. I would like to encourage an underused response to those conflicts which are fueled only by our personal imaginations. Do as the Magi did: leave the conflict by using a different road. Walk away from participation that can lead to attack. Don't press "Send."

We are striving and learning to be a community that makes safe spaces for listening, healing, and for God. Join us in worship, and join us in thinking about one of the many responses to conflict - about choosing another road for its resolve.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

`And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had

seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

January

1/3 Don't Write "New Years" in Old English Script

Facilitated by Alan Zimmerman

Read about it [\[1\]here](#)

1/10 Why Do We Worship?

Facilitated by The Rev. Canon David Caffrey

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

1/17 The Privilege of Belonging.

Facilitated by Craig Ewing

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

1/24 A Christian Response to Gun Violence.

A Church Next on-line presentation in the Library.

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.

Leader to be determined

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.

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.

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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 Life?

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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 [\[5\]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

Today's Coffee Hour after the 8:00 service is hosted by Barry Hagenbuch and Robert Woods. There are opportunities to host future Coffee Hours. Please sign up in 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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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!

Help us live our mission statement!

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References

1. http://www.joyfulheart.com/new-years/tradition_newyears.htm%20
2. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/why-do-we-worship/>
3. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/privilege-of-belonging/%20>
4. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/The-Abundant-Life-December-24-2015.pdf>
5. <http://www.facebook.com/EPISCOPALIANSAGAINSTGUNVIOLENCE/>