

The Abundant Life

February 25, 2016

For Sunday, Feb. 28th

From The Rector

Nourish

In the middle of Lent, we are reminded of the urgent need to turn things around – to repent. There is encouragement, and there is an underlying threat, in this week’s scripture story of the fruitless fig tree.

Typically, it is a reminder that repentance is serious business. Lack of attention to our relationship with God and God’s mission can lead to spiritual weakness and possible severance. Christians who don’t bear fruit through inviting and welcoming others, by developing compassionate virtues and actions, are not useful parts of God’s plan. There is a warning for such fig trees: produce or be cut down.

Another possible lesson is the one-more-chance opportunity, like a work-improvement plan. For example, one’s work has been judged unsatisfactory. Rather than sever the worker outright, a program for improvement is begun which identifies the steps to be taken to get the job done. The worker has some potential, gets a second chance, and may save his job.

But a warning, even with a plan, isn’t that useful, and I don’t find these two lessons helpful. Trees cannot always bear fruit, but are dependent on specific outside influences like soil, water, nutrients, and special care. So what if this parable has as its center, not the fruitless fig tree (the deficient worker or the second chance) but the dedicated gardener, the one committed to the health of the tree, the one whose personal plan will restore it to health and fruitfulness? The owner has complained that the tree is wasting the soils nutrients for no return. So the gardener offers more dedicated attention and an increase in the nutrients for the non-performing tree. He wants to invest in more nourishment for the tree. Listen again to his proposal: spend extra time and resources, carefully, so the tree might bear fruit.

There is the assumption, or at least a hope, that this tree has potential – that it can bear fruit – if only it receives the gardener’s attention,

his extra investment.

I believe that there is a critical lesson for us as the people of God. Each of us desires to bear fruit. That fruit might be increased participation, welcoming or inviting others, or nurturing compassionate virtues. When we face unfruitfulness, our response might be carefully, prayerfully to increase our investment of personal and spiritual resources to achieve new growth. As we “garden” and nurture ourselves, we can learn to nourish others.

Join in worship this week as we become God’s gardeners - pruning, turning soil, adding nutrients, carefully tending - so that God’s garden is always called to growth and abundance.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Luke 13:6-9 (CEB)

Jesus told this parable: “A man owned a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He said to his gardener, ‘Look, I’ve come looking for fruit on this fig tree for the past three years, and I’ve never found any. Cut it down! Why should it continue depleting the soil’s nutrients?’ The gardener responded, ‘Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer. Maybe it will produce fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.’”

Newcomers Class

with Fr. Andrew

Many worshipers wonder how to become a member of St. Paul’s. If you are interested, join our Rector in the Chapel on Sunday, February 28th at 9:15 am. You’ll learn how easy it is to become a member and will hear more about St. Paul’s, its ministries, and how we serve our members and our community. This is a single session class and is not the same as the Inquirers’ Class. If you are already a member of St. Paul’s, this class is not for you.

Piano Concert

with Member John Granet

We are delighted to present our own member, John Granet, in a classical piano concert of works by Scarlatti, Mozart and Schubert on Sunday, March 13th at 4:00 pm. John requests this special event be a benefit concert with all donations (graciously received at the door) going to the Music Ministry. A reception will follow to greet our artist and one another in the Parish Hall.

Ushers, Altar Ministers and Altar Guild Member Training:

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE

There will be hands-on training for Ushers, Altar Ministers (Acolytes, Chalice Bearers and Worship Coordinators) and Altar Guild members, on SATURDAY, MARCH 5TH, 2016. The training will be delivered separately for each ministry: 9:00 am - Worship Coordinators; 10:30 am - Altar Ministers and Ushers; 1:30 pm - Altar Guild. We ask that all current and prospective members of these ministries attend - even those who have extensive experience serving. And we also invite participation by those who simply want to learn more about these ministries. You may find one is just right for you! Please RSVP to the parish office (760.320.7488).

Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM

Episcopal Café in The Chapel

[1]Check it out

February:

The Prophets: Then & Now.

Led by guest presenter Rev. Dean Lueking.

2/28 Jeremiah - Prophet of Torment and contemporary examples

Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 PM
Faith Building - In the Library

March

3/6 Lent and Wilderness.

Leader TBD.

[2]Read about it here

3/13 Lent: Gazing At the Face of Evil.

Leader TBD.

[3]Read about it here

3/1, 3/8 & 3/15 Lenten Taize continues in the church at 7:00 pm.

Fridays at 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Faith Building - In the Library

Book Study: Leaving Church: A Memoir of Faith by Barbara Brown Taylor. Join us as we encounter together the struggles of this renowned and gifted preacher and Episcopal priest.

Br. John Charles and Audrey Spencer will lead the sessions. Participants should bring a bag lunch. Books will be available for purchase at the first session. The book is also available on Amazon and as a Kindle eBook.

February

2/26 Leaving Church - A Memoir of Faith

Book Study Continues March 4th, March 11th, and March 18th

Thank You From Roy's

We've been asked to pass along the gratitude of our homeless brothers and sisters and their children at Roy's Desert Resource Center for your generous support of St. Paul's annual Christmas gift card drive, which raised enough money to provide 80 Walmart gift cards of \$25 for Roy's residents this year. We hope everyone will help continue this good work in 2016 by donating baked goods and funds for new underwear, and by watching this space for other ways you can become engaged with those in need at Roy's. Your help makes a real difference, and is genuinely appreciated. For more information, contact Chris Kelly - 760.406.2978.

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](#).

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

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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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Holy Week Worship Schedule Now Available

[5]Click here to view and print a copy of the schedule

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Need to Print a Copy of

The Abundant Life?

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

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“Harpsichord Spring”

Even instruments can be resurrected - the harpsichord being among the many instruments of the Baroque and Renaissance whose original voices can be heard today. A series of 3 concerts - solo, ensemble, and two - yes, two - harpsichords, performed by celebrated international performers, will surprise you.

[7]Click here for details

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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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CHOIR CALL

As some of you have remarked, we are currently short on singers in the Choir, especially in the Bass and Soprano sections. We know that there are very fine singers (you) sitting in the pews because the Choir hears you singing as they process. Now would be an excellent time to join the choir as we prepare for Easter and the weeks that follow to June, when we break for summer. Please contact Nathan Ensign for more information after services or at 760.320.7488, ext. 225.

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Giving Made Easier

St. Paul's has a new system for online giving and we encourage you to use it (see the right hand column on this web page.)

If you have any questions, please contact the office. Our online system makes it easy to direct your donation to a specific fund.

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Next Taizé Services

Our next Taizé service is Tuesday, March 1st 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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HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE FOR LOCAL CARE FACILITIES

The next COMMUNION SERVICE at Windsor Court is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9th at 10:15 am. The priest and residents always welcome parishioners

to join in the worship. The priest will impose ashes in observance of Ash Wednesday for those attending this service.

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COFFEE HOUR

Sunday's Coffee Hour after the 8:00 service is sponsored by Mary Holmes. Bonnie Stroock and Cheryl Kelley are hosting the Coffee Hour after the 10:30 service.

Please consider hosting an upcoming Coffee Hour. The sign-up book is on the table to your 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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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 because of our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. Please let Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself be your guide.

"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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References

1. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/privilege-of-belonging/>
2. <http://www.episcopalcafe.com/speaking-to-the-soul-lent-and-wilderness/>
3. http://www.episcopalcafe.com/lent_gazing_at_the_face_of_evil/
4. <http://www.facebook.com/EPISCOPALIANSAGAINSTGUNVIOLENCE/>
5. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/HolyWeekSchedule2016-a.pdf>
6. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Abundant-Life-February-18-2016.pdf>
7. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Tamm-Dick-flyer.pdf>