

The Abundant Life

November 23, 2017

For Sunday, Nov. 26th

From the Rector

Graceful Judgement

The last weeks of the Church Year, and the first week of Advent raise up pictures of “the end times” and judgment. The language is dire and it is written to threaten people. However, this week’s Gospel portion gives a very down-to-earth evaluation of the nations the earth with both positive and negative outcomes. The nations will be judged based on their treatment of the “least” in their societies - the most vulnerable and those in the greatest need. We should not assume that those who are hungry, or thirsty, or naked, or sick, or in prison constitute an exhaustive list. From our own national and local news we might add other vulnerable populations: The homeless, the immigrant (also home-less), the mentally ill, and women who are abused by men with power are just some of the vulnerable populations that our judgement hinges upon today.

There is something interesting about this judgment. Although, most of the “end-time” scenarios come with upheaval in nature and with dreadful strife among humanity, this judgement does not. Neither the sheep or the goats have a clue that their behavior is being evaluated. The King simply observes their behavior and changes the context – the king himself being the object in the guise of the vulnerable. The nations are being judged, not on one specific behavior, but on a whole way of life. Those represented by the Sheep have a trajectory of grace in their interactions among all people.

Another Holy Currency is at work in this story. The king exhibits Gracious Leadership that builds the wellbeing of the whole community. Relationships between disparate groups are established, because those who have more are connected with those who have less, or with those who have gifts that are not obvious.

The power the king has is not used to strengthen his status, but is spent to erase the divisions built by status and position.

This simple message - when you do it for the least, you do it for me –

reminds us that each human is made in God's image and likeness. This is the standard by which we are judged and it becomes an invitation to imagine our human family generously. Week by week we pray together so that our vision may be clearer and God's gift of dignity might be recognized more widely - especially where we least expect it. Join us.

Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

Matthew 25:31-40 (CEB)

“Now when the Son of Man comes in his majesty and all his angels are with him, he will sit on his majestic throne. All the nations will be gathered in front of him. He will separate them from each other, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right side. But the goats he will put on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who will receive good things from my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then those who are righteous will reply to him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ Then the king will reply to them, ‘I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.’”

[1]

Click the calendar (above) for a full size, printable calendar.

“St. Paul’s 101” – Welcome!

If you want to join St. Paul’s or learn more about the parish, come to “St. Paul’s 101.” The next single session class with Fr. Andrew is Sunday,

November 26, at 9:15 am in the Conference Room in the Parish Office. In this informal setting, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about St. Paul's and learn how to become a member.

End Gun Violence!

On December 10, 2017, St. Paul's will join the Nationwide Vigils and Events to end Gun Violence to commemorate the 5-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy. Hundreds of rallies, marches, concerts, house gatherings, educational forums, and events across the country will be sponsored by a nationwide network of organizations (secular & faith-based), activists, and artists with the goal of keeping guns out of dangerous hands and making gun violence prevention a priority for Congress and the rest of America. We ask you to wear orange on this day to remember 30,000 who die and 100,000 who are injured each year through needless gun violence.

African Team Ministries

...thank you on behalf of all those in Africa who will be helped by your purchases and donations. Our total sales over the past two weeks was \$1,063. My sincere appreciation, Rosanna Langley.

Calling All Elves!

It's time again to decorate for Christmas. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, November 28th starting at 9:00 am. We are seeking jolly holiday volunteers to help decorate the parish hall and the office lobby. In addition, we will be decorating the outside of the church with lights in time for the Palm Springs Festival of Lights Parade. Please call the office at 760-320-7488 and let us know you'll be able to help. Refreshments will be served.

Vestry Call!!

The outgoing members of your Vestry have opened nominations for Vestry for

terms beginning in 2018. The Vestry is your working government of the church. Members of the Vestry help guide the parish's growth and its service to parishioners and the community we live in. If you or someone you know would be interested or would like to learn more, please contact Steve Moore at pscars4u@aol.com or at 760.218.7667 or any of the other departing Vestry members: Alan Zimmerman, Karen Nelson and Ted Barajas. Thank you for being part of the St. Paul in the Desert Family.

Parish Life Book Club

Parish Life Book Club meets on the first Tuesday each month at 1 PM in the Library. New members are always welcome. The Book Club meets again on December 5th. The Kitchen House: A Novel by Kathleen Grissom is the next selection. In this gripping bestseller, Kathleen Grissom brings to life a thriving plantation in Virginia in the decades before the Civil War, where a dark secret threatens to expose the best and worst in everyone tied to the estate. This book is available in paperback. For more information please contact Jackie Freeburn at jfreeburn@dc.rr.com. In January 2018, Book Club marks its first anniversary. The January selection is Before We Were Yours: A Novel by Lisa Wingate. Members are looking forward to reading this popular book.

Help Discern the Next Bishop for Our Diocese

Would you like to have a voice in selecting the new bishop of the diocese? Well, now is your chance! The leadership and parishioners of the eastern areas of the Diocese of San Diego, Mission areas 6 and 7, are invited to participate in a Listening Session to make your thoughts known. Sessions will be held at these locations:

- * Saturday, Nov. 18, 9 a.m.: Good Shepherd, Hemet
- * Saturday, Nov. 18, 9:30 a.m.: Ss. Peter and Paul, El Centro
- * Saturday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m.: St. Margaret's, Palm Desert

Members of the diocesan Nominating Committee will be present to guide discussion and answer questions. The Listening Session will last approximately 2 hours. It is a gathering of all interested members of the diocese to answer a set of pre-determined questions. Responses to these questions will provide the basis for the Diocesan Profile to be posted

on-line by February 2018. We hope you can attend and participate in this important process of calling a new bishop.

SWEET AND SAVORY FINGER FOOD ADVENT POTLUCK

At 5:00pm on Wednesday, December 20th, the Parish Life Team is coordinating a casual potluck in the Parish Hall. Sign-up sheets will be in the back of the church and in the Parish Hall beginning the weekend after Thanksgiving. You are invited to bring tea sandwiches, croissant sandwiches or turkey/ham rollups and other finger food. Desserts are the sweet element but remember the FINGER FOOD theme and bring such goodies as brownies and cookies. There will be plates and napkins but no utensils so if you can't hold it, don't bring it! We anticipate a special musical treat for those attending and the event will conclude at 6:45pm. Feel free to dress up in holiday attire if you are so moved. Have fun and help spread the holiday cheer!

Communion at Windsor Court

The next communion service at Windsor Court is Wednesday, December 13th at 10:15 am. The priest and the residents are always happy to have parishioners attend.

Taizé Services

Mark your calendars now for the first 3 Tuesdays in December (5th, 12th, & 19th) to attend our Taize style service at 7:00 in the Church. As one person said, "Taize is a deeply spiritual service by candlelight with music, quietude and prayer. It is a wonderful opportunity to center your day and your life while expressing gratitude." For more information, contact Nathan Ensign at 760-320-7488 x225.

Hospitality Ministry

Please join us in the Parish Hall after each Sunday service for coffee and refreshments.

Please consider sponsoring a coffee hour!

FAITH BUILDING 2017

Sundays @ 9:15 am

AT ST. PAUL'S IN THE LIBRARY – The Episcopal Café

November

11/26 Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24: Failed Kings and the Good Shepherd.
Led by Gary Scott [2]Read about it

December

“Bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace”
A series of meditations and discussion on Violence and Nonviolence

12/3 Taking Jesus Seriously Led by Br. John Charles

12/10 The Root of Violence Led by Rev. Ron Giekow

12/17 The Inevitable Spiral of Violence Led by Gary Scott

12/24 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

12/31 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

Tuesdays @ 7PM

AT ST. PAUL'S IN THE LIBRARY

November

An Overview of the Reformation: Key figures and issues:
Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of the

Ninety-five Theses.

11/28 Revolution & Restoration. Led by Rev. Canon Victoria Hatch.

December

12/5 Advent Taizé

12/12 Advent Taizé

12/19 Advent Taizé

12/26 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

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 incidences are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and confidentially. If you believe you have experienced misconduct of any kind, please contact Mr. John Seitman, jseitman@pacbell.net, 858-793-4555 or the Rev. Janet Wheelock, jwheelock@edsd.org, 952-240-8067.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours are 9 am – 4:30 pm Tuesday through Friday. The office is closed on Mondays.

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.

Print a copy of The Abundant Life?

[3]Print a copy

Sunday Worship Childcare

Childcare is available for both the 8:00 a.m. and the 10:30 a.m. services.

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.

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.

The Church of St. Paul in the Desert

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References

1. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CHRISTMAS-CALENDAR.png>
2. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ezekiel-34-christ-the-king-sunday-on-scripture_b_1097125.html
3. <http://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-Abundant-Life-November-16-2017.pdf>