

The Abundant Life

December 14, 2017
For Sunday, Dec. 17th

From the Rector

Test Everything

For the third Sunday of Advent we are reading from the final chapter of perhaps the earliest of Christian Scripture. Paul is encouraging this young congregation to adopt spiritual practices that will build resilience and remind them of the faithfulness that is an essential part of God's character. Much of this chapter reads like a laundry list of these practices, including: Rejoice, pray, and hold fast to what is good. They are disciplines to be repeated until they become second nature.

Paul reminds those Christians that they will encounter circumstances that are not anticipated, and they are empowered to make choices. They should "not despise the words of prophets, but test everything." How does what this "prophet" – a spirit inspired preacher – say measure against the basics of what Paul taught about following Jesus? Are the prophet's words consistent with loving God and loving their neighbors? Or does it encourage self-satisfied pride?

Test everything.

Our situation is different from the Thessalonians. We have many channels of information available to us. If we choose, we can study scripture with writers from many perspectives. We can watch or listen to dozens of sermons on any Sunday. Does the preaching we listen to, the "prophets" we listen to encourage fear or promise easy solutions to complicated problems?

We still need to test everything.

Advent is when we prepare for God With Us. One aspect of this is that God chose to partner with us for the healing of the world. Being God's partner in faithfulness empowers us to make choices that further the mission of healing and reconciliation. And being God's partner requires us to stay on track with that mission. We need to test everything.

As we worship together and prepare for God With Us, we listen for God to

guide us and invite us, and we test everything against what we know of Jesus.

Join us.
Fr. Andrew

Featured Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (NRSV)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Planning Our Future Together

We invite you to complete Landscape, an online survey that will help our diocese gauge the strength, vitality, and trends in our church today. The information gained from this assessment will be valuable in helping to build a profile of our diocese. The profile is one of the major means we have of introducing ourselves to clergy members who may wish to discern if they are called to be our fifth bishop.

On December 3rd we asked you to go online by clicking on the link provided and tell us about your experiences in and priorities for our diocese. Each adult (16+) member of the household is asked to complete the survey for her/himself, even if there is only one email address for all members of the family. Please do not discuss the survey or your answers with others as this may influence their answers. We want to know what YOU are thinking. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, December 22.

If you do not have access to the Internet or for some other reason wish to have a paper copy of the survey, please contact your clergy person or warden.

All answers are strictly anonymous. We have no way of matching any assessment to a particular person, so please feel free to candidly share your perceptions, opinions and experiences. The confidentiality of your responses is important. Our future together is dependent on your participation and your honest answers.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the nominating committee via email: epost@edsd.org or via mail: 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., San Diego, CA 92107.

Many thanks,

Bishop Nominating Committee

[1]Take the Survey

Tax Note:

End of the year note: All contributions that are intended to count for 2017 must be received by December 31st.

Help Us in Preparing for the 2018 Budget

The budget for 2018 is nearing completion. Only with your support can we sustain the ministries that define St. Paul in the Desert...our beautiful music, our compassionate outreach to the community and our devoted pastoral care. Our principal revenue each year comes from your pledges. Today we have \$???.???. pledged of our \$425,000 goal. If you haven't already, won't you pledge to St. Paul's today so that we can move forward confidently into 2018 with a fully funded budget? There are pledge cards available in the pew rack or you can pledge online at our website by clicking [2]here.

Christmas Calendar

[3]

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

Taizé Service

A Taizé service will be presented on the this Tuesday, December 19th at 7:00 pm 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.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER OFFERING

Donate to Decorate St. Paul’s for Christmas – The beautiful Christmas flowers, wreaths and other decorations in the Church each year are possible due to your donations. There are specially marked envelopes for Christmas flower donations in the pews, or send your check to St. Pauls (address at the bottom of this newsletter) with the note on the check "Christmas Flowers". The deadline for attribution in the bulletin is Sunday, December 17th. Thank you for helping us decorate St. Paul’s.

Help the Homeless this Christmas

With cold weather already upon us, St. Paul’s Social Justice Committee needs your help to raise \$1,000 to buy blankets, gloves and other cold weather gear for our brothers and sisters on the street. Please consider making a generous donation to support this important outreach. Simply drop your check in the Sunday plate, or mail a check to the church address at the bottom of this page. Please write “Social Justice” in the memo line. Contact Chris Kelly (760.406.2978) with any questions.

SWEET AND SAVORY FINGER FOOD ADVENT POTLUCK

At 5:00pm this 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. 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!

Altar Guild & Altar Ministry

Calling all Altar Guild and Altar Ministry members and potential new members – We will be gathering in the Parish Hall for a continental breakfast and light cleaning of the Church on Saturday, December 23 at 9 AM. This is preparing the Church for the Christmas season. If you're not a member of either Ministry, but would like to explore service in them, this is a good way to come and socialize while sprucing up the church. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Br. John at brjohncharles@gmail.com

Our New Sexton

Please welcome Hector Jimenez, our new sexton. He begins his work with us this week. Hector, his wife and children are long-time valley residents. He has worked for hotels and country clubs in Palm Springs and other Valley cities. Presently, he is working full-time at a local hotel and will be with us on a part-time basis.

Parish Life Book Club

Parish Life Book Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 pm in the Library. New members are always welcome. On January 2nd Book Club marks its first anniversary and will discuss the January selection *Before We Were Yours: A Novel* by Lisa Wingate.

Concert!

Renowned Norwegian harpsichordist, Ketil Haugsand, now a resident of Cologne, Germany, will perform in concert, Sunday, January 7th at 4:00 pm in St. Paul's Parish Hall. This program is the headline program for Desert Baroque's Winter Festival 2018 "Fight, Flight and Fantasy" concerts and master classes. Tickets are \$25 general and \$50 reserved, and a reception will follow to greet the artist and each other. Tickets can be purchased [4]here.

For more information on the Winter Festival, [5]click here.

Communion at Windsor Court

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

Save The Date: Saturday, February 10, 2018

A Women's Spiritual Retreat presented by the Daughters of the King at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. For women from St. Margaret's, St. Paul's and St. John's – limited to the first 50 attendees. We will focus on prayer, reflection, journaling, meditation, listening and worship. RSP to Robin Nugent at rpnenninger@gmail.com or call her at 513.673.9568. Registration closes on January 14, 2018.

Save the Date – Bishop's Visit – March 25, 2018

The Rt. Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori will preside at Baptisms/Confirmations/Receptions and Reaffirmations. Instructional preparation for candidates will include seven consecutive Sunday evening two-hour sessions beginning February 4th, 6-8PM through March 18th. If you are interested in more information or wish to become a candidate or a

sponsor, contact Jerry Di Noto at 760 320-7488 ex. 224 or Fr. Andrew at 760 320-7488 ex. 223.

FAITH BUILDING 2017

Sundays @ 9:15 am

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

December

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

12/17 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

December

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?

[6]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

Local: 760.320.7488 // Fax: 760.416.2441

Email: clergy@stpaulsps.org Website: www.stpaulsps.org

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References

1. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DioceseSanDiego>
2. <https://stpaulsps.org/pledge-card/>
3. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Christmas-Calendar-nofr.png>
4. <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3201793>
5. <http://www.desertbaroque.com/>
6. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-Abundant-Life-December-7-2017.pdf>