

## The Abundant Life

December 21, 2017

For Sunday, Dec. 24th

From the Rector

### When Angels Greet – Ponder

Advent is the holy time of preparation for Christmas. Over the three preceding weeks we have read about the end of the ages and two different perspectives on John the Baptizer/ John the Witness. Only on this fourth Sunday of Advent do we read about preparation for the birth of Jesus. This week we will hear the Angel Gabriel announce God's invitation for Mary to be a partner with God in the birth of the Messiah, and her acceptance.

When she hears the angel's first words - "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." – she is perplexed and ponders. Mary did not have much time to ponder on her own, but engaged the angel directly with her wondering as the story unfolds. "How can this be?" Later, after the birth of Jesus, Mary will hear more that confuses her and will "ponder these things in her heart." Her pondering was not an isolated event.

I want to encourage pondering, like Mary's. In a world where there often seems to be a rush to make decisions, to react, to judge, I see the scripture extending an invitation to slow down and ponder.

In our Service of Lessons and Carols last Sunday, we listened to a dramatic telling of the meeting between Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth. The two women pondered together about their incredible pregnancies. While neither of them completely understood what God intended, each knew that she was not alone. In scripture, they are part of a line of women with incredible pregnancies. Sarah overheard a messenger telling Abraham that she would conceive, and she laughed. Hannah was given a child in her old age, like Elizabeth. Each of these led to pondering and a greater understanding of God's intentions in the world. Each was connected to a promise of new life, for a family or for a people.

As we complete Advent and rejoice in Christmas we are called to ponder the message of Good News from the Angel, and weigh it against the other messages that are part of our life and times. After thinking deeply – pondering – Mary could rejoice with conviction. She came to see her

experience in the context of what God promised to the lowly, how God remembered the ancient promise of mercy to Sarah and Abraham and all their children.

We ponder as we worship, as we pray. We ponder how God's promise to the lowly remains bound. We ponder how God has favored us and weigh what response we can make. Join us.

Fr. Andrew

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### Featured Scripture

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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### Hospitality Ministry

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

This Sunday, coffee hours are sponsored by Michelle Hathaway.

Please consider sponsoring a coffee hour!

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### 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](mailto:epost@edsd.org) or via mail: 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., San Diego, CA 92107.

Many thanks,

Bishop Nominating Committee

[1]Take the Survey

[2]Frequently Asked Questions  
Committee Members

[3]Biographies of Nominating

[4]Convention Presentation

[5]Calendar of Key Milestones

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Tax Note:

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

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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 \$358,000 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 [6]here.

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Christmas Calendar

[7]

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

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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.

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### 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.

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### 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](mailto:brjohncharles@gmail.com)

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### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Book Club marks its first anniversary and will discuss the January selection *Before We Were Yours: A Novel* by Lisa Wingate.

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### 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 [8]here.

For more information on the Winter Festival, [9]click here.

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### St. Paul's New Sexton

Please welcome Hector Jimenez, our new sexton. 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.

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### 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.

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### 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 rpenninger@gmail.com or call her at 513.673.9568. Registration closes on January 14, 2018.

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### 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.

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## 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

12/24 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

12/31 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

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Tuesdays @ 7PM

AT ST. PAUL'S IN THE LIBRARY

December

12/26 NO SESSION Christmas- New Year Recess

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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 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](mailto:jseitman@pacbell.net), 858-793-4555 or the Rev. Janet Wheelock, [jwheelock@edsd.org](mailto:jwheelock@edsd.org), 952-240-8067.

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## 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.

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Print a copy of The Abundant Life?

[10]Print a copy

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## Sunday Worship Childcare

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

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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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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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The Church of St. Paul in the Desert

Local: 760.320.7488 // Fax: 760.416.2441  
Email: [clergy@stpaulsps.org](mailto:clergy@stpaulsps.org) Website: [www.stpaulsps.org](http://www.stpaulsps.org)

125 West El Alameda

Palm Springs, California 92262

#### References

1. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DioceseSanDiego>
2. <http://edsd.org/who-we-are/episcopate-transition/faqs/>
3. <http://edsd.org/who-we-are/episcopate-transition/committee-members/>
4. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Convention-Presentation.pdf>
5. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Calendar-of-Key-Milestones.pdf>
6. <https://stpaulsps.org/pledge-card/>
7. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Christmas-Calendar-nofr.png>
8. <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3201793>
9. <http://www.desertbaroque.com/>
10. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/The-Abundant-Life->

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