

The Abundant Life

May 3, 2018

For Sunday, May 6th

From the Rector

Don't Withhold the Water

Water is featured as a sign of inclusion on the 6th Sunday of Easter. It is a sign that has been featured throughout our celebration of Easter. The water poured into a crystal bowl before each lesson of the Easter Vigil was sanctified as a part of the renewal of our baptism and sprinkled liberally on the congregation. We were reminded of the covenants of God's love for the whole world and for us. That same bowl and water have been featured throughout the 50 days of Easter. In our reading from the Acts of the Apostles last week, an African seeker saw water beside the road and asked what would prevent him from being baptized. (Acts 8:36) This week, Peter asks his fellow Jewish believers if anyone would stop Cornelius and his family from being baptized.

The early followers of Jesus, who had not yet been called "Christians," were figuring out this new life "on the fly." The only framework they had was the one in which they were raised. They were used to being set apart as Jews and needed to be inspired to reach out beyond their own people.

Peter, the Apostle and leader, needed to be convinced that the good news he preached was intended for anyone but his own people. The story we are reading this week is the final scene of Peter changing his understanding and believing that God might call believers from unexpected places.

Cornelius was a Roman Centurion who believed in God and engaged in sincere spiritual practices of prayer and charity. In a vision, an angel told Cornelius to send for a man named Peter. This Peter would have good news for Cornelius and his family. At the same time, Peter was seeing a vision that pushed the boundaries of his spiritual comfort zone. When the messenger from Cornelius came, Peter responded and left immediately.

Cornelius had gathered a large group of family and friends to meet Peter, who was not used to such a willing audience. Peter only seemed to feel out of place in this Gentile home until he began to preach "peace through Jesus Christ." The household responded enthusiastically and were quickly filled

with the Holy Spirit. Peter recognized God's presence and overcame his doubts – almost daring anyone to withhold the water of baptism.

Like Peter, we each have our comfort zone when it comes to sharing God's good news. The example of Peter reminds me that what God is doing in the world is more welcoming than I have imagined, and the people to whom "the peace of Jesus Christ" is offered will often call me out of my comfort zone. As we worship this week may we welcome as God welcomes and not withhold the water from those whom he calls to fellowship, or to the table, or to baptism. Join us.

Andrew

Featured Scripture

Acts 10:44-48 Common English Bible (CEB)

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on everyone who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. They heard them speaking in other languages and praising God. Peter asked, "These people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Surely no one can stop them from being baptized with water, can they?" He directed that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited Peter to stay for several days.

Rogation Sunday

Rogation Sunday is the day when the Church has traditionally offered prayer for God's blessings on the fruits of the earth and the labors of those who produce our food. The word "rogation" is from the Latin *rogare*, "to ask." Historically, the Rogation Days (the three days before Ascension Day) were a period of fasting and abstinence, beseeching God's blessing on the crops for a bountiful harvest. Few of us today directly derive our livelihood from the production of food, yet it is good to be reminded of our dependence upon those who do and our responsibility for the environment.

A prayer for Rogation Day is found on page 258 in The Book of Common

Prayer:

Almighty God, Lord of heaven and earth: We humbly pray that your gracious providence may give and preserve to our use the harvests of the land and of the seas, and may prosper all who labor to gather them, that we, who are constantly receiving good things from your hand, may always give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Ascension of Christ

The Ascension of Christ is the occasion on which the risen Christ is taken into heaven after appearing to his followers for forty days (Acts 1:1-11, Mk 16:19). The Ascension marks the conclusion of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. It is the final elevation of his human nature to divine glory and the near presence of God. The Ascension is affirmed by the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. The Ascension is celebrated on Ascension Day, the Thursday that is the fortieth day of the Easter Season and is a principal fest of the church year in the Episcopal Church.

A Change in How To Send Us Mail

As of June 30th, we will no longer use a Post Office Box to receive mail. All mail should be sent to our street address where we will soon have a locked mailbox. Many parishioners have their pledge payment sent directly from their bank to the Post Office Box. If this is the case with your pledge payment, please notify your bank right away to begin using our street address, 125 W. El Alameda, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

FAITH BUILDING

Sundays at 9:15 AM in the Library

The Episcopal Cafè

May

5/6 A Faith that Overcomes: Reflections on 1 John 5:1-6.
Led by Jerry Di Noto [1]Read about it

5/13 Happy St. Matthias Day: Reflections on Acts 1:15-17, 21-26.
Led by Gary Scott [2]Read about it

5/20 Think Differently About Difference: Reflections on Acts 2:1-2.
Led by Alan Zimmerman [3]Read about it

5/27 Adoption: Reflections on Romans 8:12-17.
Led by Audrey Spencer [4]Read about it

Tuesdays — Accepting God's Gift of Faith

Tuesdays @ 7PM in Library: The Great 50 Days of Easter! This series will celebrate the 50 days of Easter incorporating elements of Lectio Divina, Hymns, and Baptismal Covenant

May

5/8 African Bible Study Lectio Divina based on Ephesians 1:15-23.
Facilitated by Bro. John Charles

5/15 Benedictine Lectio Divina:
Facilitated by Audrey Spencer

5/22 Lectio Divina: Based on John 3:3-5.
Led by Gary Scott

5/29 Lectio Divina: A daily Way of Life.
Led by Audrey Spencer

Hospitality Ministry

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

Please consider hosting a coffee hour.

You may sign up at the West end of the Parish Hall.

St. Paul's PACE

As part of our Easter celebration of diocesan ministries, this week we highlight the work of St. Paul's Program of All-Inclusive Care (PACE). St. Paul's PACE provides a network of social, medical, and spiritual services that foster independence, preserve individual dignity, and enable frail seniors to remain living safely at home.

Episcopal Community Services (ECS)

Operating under its mission of serving God by serving those in need through programs that foster hope, dignity, and independence, Episcopal Community Services inspires children, empowers adults and transforms communities by providing vital, high-quality social services that encourage healthy interdependence. ECS' current programs address homelessness, mental illness, early childhood education, child development and substance use education. Last year, ECS served more than 8,000 people. To learn more, visit [5]www.ecscalifornia.org.

Communion at Windsor Court

The next communion service at Windsor Court is Wednesday, May 9th at 10:15 am. The priest and the residents are always happy to have parishioners attend.

St. Paul's Cathedral will host New Camino

. . . an exciting workshop May 18-19 to encourage and empower members of our diocese to develop and expand ministries with our Latino/Hispanic neighbors. You all know that the Latino/Hispanic population is growing quickly in our region and the future of our diocese will depend in large part on reaching out to these neighbors. This effort is the result of a Multicultural Fearless Love grant. The Cathedral is inviting each parish to send a team of three people to the workshop to learn more and to network about the possibilities. We are blessed to have the Rev. Canon Anthony Guillen, missionary for Latino/Hispanic ministries of the Episcopal Church, leading the workshop, along with members of his team from around the country. If you are interested in attending, please contact Fr. Andrew.

Potluck Dinner! May 24th

Thursday, May 24th - 5:00-6:45 PM in Parish Hall. Let's gather to enjoy a pre-summer feast with our parish community. Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex and Parish Hall. You can also sign up by calling the office at 760.320.7488.

"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." This is a single session class with Fr. Andrew. In this informal setting, you will have the opportunity to ask questions about St. Paul's and learn how to become a member. The next session with Fr. Andrew will be Sunday, May 27th at 9:15 AM, in the Conference Room in the Parish Office.

Icon Writing Retreat

Icon Writing Workshop is a five-day (June 25th-29th) retreat instructed by Teresa Harrison, at St. Paul's Cathedral, San Diego. Participants will learn the prayerful practice of painting or writing a Byzantine-style icon. The emphasis will be on the step by step process of painting an icon, using Jo Sonia acrylic paint and 23 carat gold leaf, as well as on the spiritual practice of allowing God to work in us and through us. The course per-person fee is \$435 and includes all supplies, five full days of instruction, and lunch. To RSVP please contact Julie McMinn, jemcminn@gmail.com.

St. Paul's Camping Ministry

The weekend of July 13 - 15 this summer, our church campers are going up to Hurkey Creek campground near Lake Hemet. Cost is low, \$10 a person, but so are the temperatures - 25 degrees cooler than in Palm Springs! Basic cabins

are available at \$100 and we plan to fish! Contact Bonnie Stroock to reserve – 760.324.7949

Report Clergy 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 John Seitman, 858-793-4555 or Equilla Luke, 760-583-0485.

Compassionate Care Task Force

Our diocesan task force on compassionate care for victims of clergy sexual misconduct seeks to connect with those who have experienced misconduct. If you have reported clergy sexual misconduct and have information about the reporting or post-reporting experience that could be helpful to their work, please refer to the task force members, all of whom are listed on the diocesan website: [6]Task-Force. Information on how to report misconduct is [7]available here.

Church Office Hours

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

If 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?

[8]Print a copy

Sunday Worship Childcare

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

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

125 West El Alameda

Palm Springs, California 92262

References

1. <https://www.sermonwriter.com/sermons/1-john-51-6-faith-overcomes-wagner/>

2. <http://pastorjira.blogspot.com/2009/06/reflection-on-acts-115-17-21-26.html>
3. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-dr-eric-d-barreto/acts-2-1-21-think-differently-about-difference_b_1539115.html
4. https://www.workingpreacher.org/profile/default.aspx?uid=2-johnson_elisabeth
5. <http://www.ecscalifornia.org/>
6. <https://edsd.org/equipping-leaders/safeguarding/task-force/>
7. <http://edsd.org/equipping-leaders/safeguarding/reporting-misconduct/>
8. <https://stpaulsps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-Abundant-Life-Appril-26-2018.pdf>