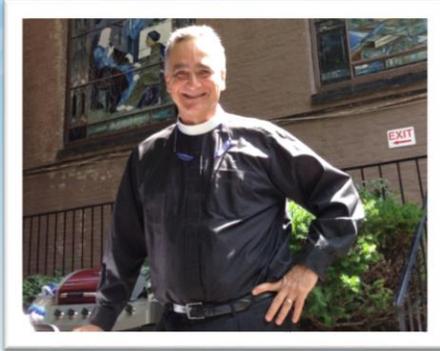


# A JOYFUL NOISE

## A Message from the Rector



Advent I, 2017

Dear Friends and Parishioners:

For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the past year has been a year of reaction. From the Inauguration last January to the #MeToo movement at the end of the year, we seem to be a society in a constant state of surprising upheavals, disturbing any sense of equilibrium. We have also witnessed senseless shootings in public spaces as well as ISIS inspired violence in our own city. To create one more layer of anxiety, we have a small nation across the Pacific

that seems to be developing the potential to mount a nuclear strike anywhere in the US.

It was into a world of these levels of chaos and uncertainty that the baby Jesus was born. With a foreign government forcing dangerous compliance on its citizenry, Mary delivered her child in the most inauspicious of circumstances. From the margins of society, from the rejected castoffs of empire, emerged a presence that was able to inspire hope and confidence in the face of outrageous fortune.

Jesus, born in the squalid shadows of empire, came declaring the infinite value and holiness of every individual. Born in manger and crucified on a cross, he managed to convey the power of love that is hidden in the crevices of culture and exposes the violence barely concealed in human society.

Time and again Jesus told his followers not to be anxious. Although the world was fraught with uncertainty and inequity, those who followed his way of life had the capacity to show forth a different way of being human. In this path, the last are first and the greatest one is the servant of all. In this Kingdom that begins in the darkened shadows of rejection, the light shines the brightest. His way was rejected by the powerful and the religious. Its primary ethic was the compassionate response to human need. He effectively told his disciples that heaven was breaking forth here on earth on the stage of human interactions. He told his disciples that what they loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven and what they bound on earth would be bound in heaven. It seems clear that he understood his mission to show forth that God responded to human need through human compassion.

This Sunday begins a new Church year. We are not so much trying to preserve church as a way of life as to use church to show forth this radical gospel, that heaven and earth are joined in a society that sees the life and teachings of Jesus as its founding principal. When people begin to lose faith in the institutions and practices of culture, it is my belief that they will find in Jesus and his church, the one who calls us out of our anxiety into the royal society of his saints in light.