

# ALL SAINTS CHURCH

*Hear Ye, Hear Ye, The Choir is Coming, The Choir is Coming!*

It is that time of year when school starts and the choir returns and we encourage those who have taken the summer for travel and renewal to come back to church.

Maybe in our increasingly secular world, church can seem a little anachronistic. Many parishioners tell me that they are met with strange looks of curiosity when people find out they go to church. Yes, we read ancient texts, we sing hymns from past centuries, we say prayers many of them that were composed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. But in every case, the texts, the prayers and the hymns reflect human experience of the divine that sustained people through the darkest of times.

The argument for being secular is that the world works just fine without church. But does it?

As human beings we, by nature, look for meaning and purpose. As we establish identities there are countless invisible forces that seek to influence our desires and claim our allegiance and even our obedience. Like sheep without a shepherd, we are pushed and pulled in ways we can barely fathom, we become torn by greed, fear and vanity.

As the church diligently and responsibly seeks to follow Christ into the depths of the soul and into the depths of human culture, people find the way of wisdom that gives definition, depth and purpose. We not only speak about God's love as a transcendent experience, we practice it by forgiving, healing and serving each other in the here and now. We are constantly challenged to see ourselves as we truly are and to find a way forward where confidence, growth and inner peace can replace the damage that this world all too often inflicts.

We are not saying we are better, more holy or smarter than anyone else. Rather we are just quick to embrace our weakness with humility and understand these traits as being access points for transformative grace. In this effort we bear witness to an alternative kingdom or way of life. A life based in loving community rather than aggressive competition. Our ethics are simple, we embrace the infinite worth of every human being and we seek to respond to human need with forgiveness and compassion. We don't come to Jesus for a spiritual life insurance policy but as an example of how to find our true selves by giving ourselves to others. We pray that our desires would be transformed and fulfilled in the desire to fully love our neighbor even as we begin to know ourselves as being loved by the Divine.

Please join us this Sunday as we begin a new season of trying to become disciples of the one who lived and died for others and found his life completely entwined in the presence of the loving God of Creation and our redemption.

On Sunday we will sign up for various tasks and ministries. Come and join us, let your heart be moved, your courage restored and your vision enlarged.

Peace,

The Rev. Steven J Yagerman

*\*Congratulations to Sam and Sherin Frank for the Birth of their daughter Rachel Elizabeth on September 10th.\**

230 EAST 60<sup>TH</sup> STREET NEW YORK, NY 10022 TEL. (212) 758-0447 FAX. (212)758-0448