



# Saint Paul Episcopal Church

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**Rev. J. Patrick Peters**  
**Rector**

*A Jubilee Ministry Center*

**“Together Building the Kingdom of God”**

Christmas 2013

Dear Parish Family and Friends:

At Christmas we celebrate the historic birth of Jesus in occupied Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. I sometimes think that we Christian do not fully grasp the significance of this event because it is all wrapped-up in a little baby so unassuming and humble born in a stable. What we fail to see is that with this birth – God restored the natural balance of nature that was present at creation. Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth – opened the gates of heaven – and established the “peaceable kingdom” foretold by Isaiah. That was, and is, earth-shattering!

The Kingdom of God is the reality of our lives! It is not a myth or a dream or something to be achieved only in death. Jesus established the Kingdom of God here – on earth – and gave us the Way to continue to make that Kingdom more present in our human experience. He gave us the Beatitudes! He reaffirmed the two Great Commandments! He told us to love and forgive our enemies! He told us to be meek and humble of heart, poor in spirit, peacemakers, etc.

Our celebration of the Holy Day of Christmas is an opportunity to ask ourselves how have we advanced the natural order of things? How have we returned our world to the goodness of creation? What have we done to make the Kingdom of God more visible to the world and its people around us? How have we replaced the ephemeral world around us with the reality of the Kingdom of God? The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not unrealistic in our “real” world – it is the only thing that is real in our lives – all the rest of our human experience is “dust in the wind.”

Celebrate Christmas! Be full of joy! Know that you are a beloved child of God! Live your faith!

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Fr. Patrick+