

# St. Stephen's News

St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church, Timonium, Maryland

Vol. XX, Number 30

Edited by Anne Hawkins

August 4th, 2009

## FROM THE TREASURER

### Bill for break-in at the church yet to be tallied

BY NOW most of you have heard that St. Stephen's was among the eight local churches broken into on or about Monday July 20th. First, let me assure you that the sanctuary was in no way desecrated, that the sacred vessels and church plate was untouched and the week's offertory was already in the bank.

The thieves, however, got away with about \$150 in the petty cash box (it's amazing how much postage stamps, etc. cost these days) and \$100 or so painstakingly collected in dimes by the Sunday School students in dimes, quarters and dollar bills during their weekly services.

In addition to the money, the robbers emptied the church refrigerator, stole a case of wine and rifled the clergy's upstairs office -- making off with the associate rector's insulated lunch box. (A kind-hearted parishioner has presented him with a new one -- complete with lunch.)

Things could have been much worse. But even so the robbery is likely to cost us an awful lot more than \$250 and a few bags of groceries. We will have to replace the kitchen window the thieves jimmied, improve the lighting around the church and

Return of the best value in Baltimore!

### SILLY SUMMER SUPPERS

Every Thursday at 5.30 PM

Menu: Salad, Entree & Dessert -- delicious!

Just \$10 per adult ■ Children \$5

Beverages: Wine, \$3 per glass; Soda, \$1

investigate the cost of installing a burglar alarm. In all the bill could come to several thousand dollars.

Of course the burglary couldn't have happened at a worse time. Thanks to the recession, income for the year is down, while overheads are up -- quite steeply in both cases. What's more, the summer cashflow doldrums have been greatly exacerbated by the recession.

Needless to say, we would very much appreciate it if you were able to help us out this summer by bringing your pledges up to date before you head for the hills or the seaside. What's more, if you can afford to put a little extra in the plate to help us make good the damage and the additional expense occasioned by the burglary, we will be doubly grateful.

God bless you all, BILL HAWKINS

## FROM THE RECTOR

### Discerning "The Church of What's Happening Now"

DURING THE week since my return from vacation I have been inundated with copies of a newspaper column written by the conservative pundit Cal Thomas. It condemns America's mainline churches for embracing ideas that are unequivocally condemned in the Bible.

Mr. Thomas concludes with the assertion that they constitute "a church that has made its bed in the world, and it has as much power to illuminate as a burned-out bulb."

One doesn't need to share Mr. Thomas' opinions about secular politics to agree with his analysis of the state of the churches or his conclusions. But you might wonder how things got to be this way.

Well, the remarkable things about the controversies embroiling America's mainline churches -- partly, but by no means exclusively, about sexual behavior --- is that they involve doctrines invented folks who claim they have God's enthusiastic support for flagrantly flouting scriptural authority.

They claim they can "discern" God's mind because his revelation to mankind was not, as the church formerly taught, completed in the incarnation, earthly ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to them, it is an ongoing affair, continuing apace for ever -- well, at least until they "discern" when God wants them to stop.

Now "discernment" is a very ancient concept. Indeed, since the church's very inception, Christians have been trying to discern the word of God. But until quite recently, for the orthodox, at least, it was a reasonably straight forward process.

Folks who wondered what God thought about something or other, looked it up in the Bible and the scripture told them what God's opinion was.

Today, however, the folks who dominate the leadership of our mainline churches "discern" God's mind by conceiving the most outlandish of notions and then taking a vote on whether or not to implement them. As they are the only folks debating the issues and voting on them, they invariably carry the day.

Judging from the results, however, I can't help feeling that if these people spent as much time reading The Bible as they spend talking about it and voting on what they think it means, the results would be rather different.

After all if you don't read up on the matters you're voting on you are liable to get hold of the wrong end of the stick.

For example, an Episcopal bishop, noted for his enthusiasm for overthrowing doctrines established in the days of the Apostles, claims: "It took the Church 30 years to realize that gentiles could be Christians. [And] it took 1,830 years for the Church to realize that slavery was wrong . . ."

However if he'd bothered to read the Bible before opening his mouth, he might not have made such a fool of himself.

He was wrong on both counts, you see. If he had taken a glance at the Book of Acts, he would have learned that within a couple of years of the resurrection, St. Philip had baptized an Ethiopian eunuch -- a gentile if ever there was one (*Acts 8:16-39*).

And he would also have discovered that St. Peter had his vision on the roof of the house in Joppa and baptized the gentile Roman centurion Cornelius and his entire gentile household (*Acts 10:1-48*) long before the execution of St. James the Great in AD 43 (*Acts 12:2*).

What's more, he would have found out that in AD 43 the Council of Jerusalem decreed, citing Scriptural authority and Christ's revelation, that it was wrong for Jewish Christians to ask gentile Christians to undergo the rite of circumcision. In other words, the Council affirmed that, from its very inception,

Join us to hear

ST. STEPHEN'S  
CHOIR OF MEN & BOYS  
CHORAL EVENSONG

6.00 PM Sunday, August 2nd, 2009

the Church had always been open to gentiles.

The notion that it took the Church 1,830 years to wake up to the evils of slavery is equally ridiculous. Read St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon, a member of the Church at Colossae. It concerns Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, who had gone to Rome, converted to Christianity and devoted himself to helping St. Paul, who, at the time, was in prison awaiting trial.

Rome had a remarkably efficient secret police. As a runaway slave, Onesimus was in constant danger of betrayal, arrest and summary execution by crucifixion. In the circumstances, the only prudent course was to send him to Philemon, with a letter aimed at effecting a reconciliation between master and slave.

This, then, is Paul's Epistle to Philemon. No impartial reader could possibly construe it as evidence that Paul condoned slavery. Far from it. Paul's letter, in fact, so radically redefines the relations between master and slave that both states are rendered utterly meaningless.

Moreover, his message cannot be interpreted as applying only to the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus. Paul reiterates his redefinition of the master/slave relationship in his

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR  
THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**  
Sunday, August 9th, 2009

8:00 AM & 9.15 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION  
The Epistle: I Corinthians 10:1-13  
The Gospel: St. Luke 15:11-32  
11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER  
The Psalter: Psalm 51  
First Lesson: Lamentations 3:40-58  
Second Lesson: St. Luke 15:11-32

Epistle to the Colossians (*Col. 3:22-4:1*).

Perhaps the most important lesson we can learn from St. Paul's injunctions to slaves and their owners is that, on this and many other important matters, Christians by no means always follow The Bible's teachings. This, of course shouldn't be altogether surprising. It is, after all, what sin is all about.

Indeed, people have been routinely breaking the Ten Commandments on a daily basis since God inscribed them on slabs of stone on Mount Sinai some 3,500 years ago.

The difference between then and now is that, until a few of decades ago, people accepted that breaking the commandments was shameful. Today, by contrast, the folks who "discern" that it is A-okay to break God's commandments are quite shameless about it. Indeed, this ability to "discern" God's mind is a very convenient "gift" for folks who worship at the Church of What's Happening Now. **GPH**

**COLLECT FOR THE WEEK**

## Eighth Sunday After Trinity

O GOD, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*  
*Book of Common Prayer. Page 199*

✠ **St. Stephen's Traditional** ✠  
**Episcopal Church**

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Web Address: <http://www.ststephens-md.org>

RECTOR: The Ven. Guy P. Hawtin  
ASSOCIATE RECTOR: The Rev. James V. Johnson, Jr.  
VICARS: The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley, The Rev. Robert Menas

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric  
DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)  
WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)

**SUNDAY SERVICES**

8.00am -- Holy Communion  
9.15am -- Holy Communion (Nursery & Church School)  
11.15am -- Morning Prayer (Nursery)  
(1st. Sun. of the month: Holy Communion at 11.15am)

**WEEKDAY SERVICES**

Wednesday: 6.00pm Evening Prayer  
Friday: Noon: Healing Eucharist  
Saturday: 5.00PM Family Eucharist.

## ✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the office at 410 560 6776.

**RECOVERY:** Rachel, Frank, Carl, Charlotte, Cal, Catherine, Algin, Sam, Rosemary, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, James, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Rosemarie, Debbie, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Doris, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt Bobby, Alexander, Erlene, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, Polly, Katherine, Helen; William, Betty, Cal, Wendell, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Dorcas, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tracy, Tom. Leliliah, Jennifer, Miriam, Harriet, Karen, Steve, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Marian, Edith Anne, Steven, Jeanne, Judith, Angela, Tammy; Ellen, Jim, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Robert, Christine, Ruth, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, George, Bryan, Jason, Jane, Joan, Frances, Ernie, Pat, Lynn, Michael, Ray, Leslie, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Robert, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Rachel, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Alma, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, John, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Elizabeth, Gloria, Lee Emily, Elsie, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Eudora, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Mackie, Jody, Sheila, Jo Anne, Thomas, Jeanne, Sister Catherine-Grace, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Rebecca, Dorothy, Joanne, \*Albion, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Geraldine, Maxine, Ann Sharon & Dennis.

**LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Richard, Donna, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Georgetta, Carolyn, Perry, Suzanne, Tony, Robert, Doris, Drake, The Norris family; Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, David, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Tom, Susan, Debbie, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Jo Anne, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Harriet, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Micki, Stephen, Erik, Carol, Sandra, Elsie, John, Robert, Mary, Michael

**ON ACTIVE SERVICE:** Col. Scott Taylor, U.S. Army, Alex Bursi, U.S. Navy; Capt. Charles Bursi & Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, U.S. Air Force; Lt. Col. R. J. Lytle & PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, U.S. Army.

**THE HYMNS FOR THE  
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Sunday, August 9th, 2009

**PROCESSIONAL: 426 (Aughton)**  
He leadeth me!

**GRADUAL: 522 (Bohemian Bretheren)**  
Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st to men

**SERMON: 301 (St. Denio)**  
Immortal, invisible, God only wise

**COMMUNION HYMN: 199 (St. Thomas)**  
Now, my tongue, the myst'ry telling

**RECESSIONAL: 523 (Russia)**  
God, the Omnipotent!

## St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church

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