

St. Stephen's News

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

Vol. XX, Number 48

Edited by Anne Hawkins

December 8th, 2009

Come and buy lots of our Cookies

on Saturday, December 5th, from 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM

FROM THE RECTOR

Taking the thanks out of Thanksgiving Day

THANKSGIVING is the one day of the year when all families, no matter how fractured, fractious and dysfunctional, make an extra special effort to get along. It is a time when the most selfish of spouses and hapless of homemakers try to make up for the other 364 days of abject failure -- a time of togetherness, if not in front of an altar then in front of a TV screen.

While, in many respects, this is entirely praiseworthy, there is also something decidedly odd about it. God, after all, should be the central focus of Thanksgiving Day. Yet he comes far behind turkey, pumpkin pie and football. Thanksgiving, in short, has become more a celebration of our secular interests.

Instead of being a time for giving thanks for all the blessings God has showered on our nation, it is for many a day of self-congratulation for having scraped through yet another year. And this is a trifle weird. It is like staging a lavish testimonial dinner and then deliberately excluding the person whose accomplishments are being honored. And it isn't simply bad manners. It is very, very silly -- silly because God's absence makes the celebration entirely pointless.

Yet even in the countryside, God is rapidly vanishing from Thanksgiving. We live in an age of factory farming. Technology is king. We plant two or three crops and grow 'em by hundreds of acres. Farm kids are raised on the same pre-packaged, homogenized, vitamin enriched diets as their town dwelling counterparts, and they, too, probably wouldn't even recognize their foodstuffs in their natural state.

But the truth to tell, we are not a whit less dependent on God's grace for what the Prayer Book calls "the returns of the fruits of the earth" than we were 400 years ago. The fact that most of us can't tell the difference between fields of wheat, barley, rye and hay doesn't make the grain harvest any less important.

Modern pesticides and fertilizers have vastly increased farmers' yields, and advances in food preservation and refrigeration technologies in recent years have enormously improved our storage and distribution capabilities. But this does not diminish the importance of God's role in the process.

There are so many more mouths to feed than there were half a century ago, famine would have been endemic had God not endowed us with powers of invention. Indeed, back in the late 1960s -- long before the now forgotten nuclear winter scare, long before Vice President Al Gore discovered the fortune to be made from global warming -- a professional doomsayer named Paul Ehrlich wrote a book entitled "The Population Bomb." In it, Ehrlich predicted widespread and catastrophic famines would take place, starting in the mid-1970s.

Ehrlich, however, reckoned without our fast developing agricultural technologies -- including genetic engineering. Our God-given resourcefulness has not only granted us an abundant food supply, it has enabled us to ship food to the parts of the world where hunger was once endemic. That is a very real reason for every one in the world to fall on their knees and thank God.

But our God-given cleverness has proved a bane as well as a blessing. It often mutates into an infatuation with the human intellect that prevents many of us from developing any meaningful relationship with our creator and sustainer.

It seduces us into attributing to our own innate cleverness the credit for our ability to grow larger, but far less flavorful, vegetables -- and vaster, but vastly less tasty, turkeys -- than our forebears. It makes us oblivious to the fact that cultivation

and creation are horses of entirely different colors.

We should consider the Thanksgiving Gospel in this light. In it, Jesus explains that if we say we believe in God, we ought to act like it. If we believe, for example, that he really is the almighty, all-seeing, all-loving creator of all things then we ought to trust him to care for us and act in our best interests.

He is urging us to cultivate a childlike faith. The word "childlike" is not to be confused with the word "childish." There's nothing childish about a childlike faith. Nothing could be more mature. After all, Jesus says: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

Children, for example, have no difficulty with the concept of miracles. Children instinctively grasp that, for God, doing a miracle is simply a piece of cake. Adults, by contrast, distract themselves with pointless questions that have no bearing on the real issue. Rather than ponder **WHY** God performs a particular miracle, we try to figure out the unimportant technicalities concerning **HOW** he performs it.

Kids go directly to the heart of the matter -- to the "Why?" not to the "How?" And they have no difficulty accepting that the unsophisticated but entirely correct answer is: "Because God loves us." Knowing the right answer is very important. Until we can accept God's love, we will find it impossible to show him the gratitude we owe him. Indeed, it is the acceptance of his love that puts the "thanks" in Thanksgiving. **GPH**

FROM THE VESTRY

A fond farewell to Howard

HOWARD Sewell, our longtime sexton, has decided to retire after 15 years of loyal and faithful service. If anybody has earned retirement it is Howard. But those who worked with him at St. Stephen's will miss his cheery face and willing

THE SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

December 24th to December 27th, 2009

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday, December 24th

4.00 PM: Children's Christmas Service
& Blessing of the Creche

7.00 PM: Family Candlelight Eucharist

10.30 PM: Choir sings carols followed by
Solemn High Christmas Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday, December 25th

10.00 AM: Sung Holy Communion

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

The Commemoration of St. Stephen &
The Feast of St. John the Evangelist

Sunday, December 27th

8.00 AM: Holy Communion

9.15 AM: Holy Communion

11.15 AM: Morning Prayer

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR
THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, December 13th, 2009

8:00 AM & 9.15 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: I Corinthians 4:1-5
The Gospel: St. Matthew 11:2-10

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 99

First Lesson: Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19

Second Lesson: St. Luke 1:57-79

hands.

Despite his many years at St. Stephen's, his was an unfamiliar face to many parishioners. He arrived early in the morning, did his job and was gone before many folks get out of bed. But all of us appreciated his handiwork -- a clean church, a tidy parish hall and well-kept church grounds.

Let us join together to wish Howard a long and happy retirement. And please consider joining us in expressing our appreciation for his dedication and hard work by sending a donation to Bill Hawkins, the Treasurer. Checks should be marked "For Howard." God bless you all -- **THE VESTRY**

FROM THE WOMEN'S GROUP

Christmas Lunch, Dec. 16th

THE Ladies of St. Stephen's will be meeting for their Christmas Lunch at 12 noon at the Reef Grill, Padsonia Road, on Wednesday, December 16th. Pressure of the season means reservations must be made early. To book your place, call Anne Bonnell at Tel: 410-560-1130 by December 7th.

COLLECT FOR THE WEEK

The Second Sunday In Advent

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by

patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou has given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *AMEN. Book of Common Prayer. Page 92*

✠ 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, Louisa, Perry, Shirley, Deborah, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Val, Helen, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Frank, Carl, Charlotte, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, James, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Doris, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt Bobby, Alexander, Erline, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, Polly, Katherine, William, Betty, Cal, Wendell, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Dorcas, Walt, Bruce, Cien-na, Tracy, Tom. Leliliah, Jennifer, Miriam, Harriet, Karen, Steve, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Mar-ian, Edith Anne, Steven, Jeanne, Tammy; Ellen, Jim, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Robert, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, George, Bryan, Jason, Jane, Joan, Frances, Ernie, Pat, Lynn, Michael, Ray, Leslie, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Rob-ert, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Alma, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, John, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Elizabeth, Gloria, Lee Emily, Elsie, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Ma-dolin, Eudora, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Mackie, Jody, Sheila, Jo Anne, John, Geradine, Thomas, Jeanne, Sister Catherine-Grace, Maxine, Ann Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Rebecca, Dorothy, Joanne, Albion, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Debbie.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Robert & Renee, Lydia; Ri-chard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis,orgetta, Carolyn, 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 ;David

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Col. Scott Taylor, U.S. Army, Alex Bursi, US. Navy; Capt. Charles Bursi & Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, U.S. Air

✠ St. Stephen's Traditional ✠
Episcopal Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Tel.: Office (410) 560-6776; Rectory (410) 665-1278
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.

THE HYMNS FOR THE
THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, December 13th, 2009

PROCESSIONAL: 10 (Winchester New)

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

GRADUAL: 256 (Melcombe)

O Spirit of the living God

SERMON: 595 (Pearsall)

The world is very evil

COMMUNION HYMN: 2 (Veni Emmanuel)

O come, thou Key of David, come

RECESSIONAL: 1 (Stuttgart)

Come, thou long-expected Jesus

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Episcopal Church

St. Stephen's Traditional

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