

St. Stephen's News

St. Stephen's Anglican Church,
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

July 19th, 2011

FROM THE RECTOR

Literary vandals are sacking our literature

CHARLOTTE long ago resigned herself to the fact that I will never be a handyman like her father. Sure, I can change light bulbs, do simple electrical repairs, hew wood and carry water. But the more complicated tasks involving carpentry or plumbing absolutely defeat me.

The best I can rise to is the ancient English art of “the bodge” – the leak under the kitchen sink patched up with the aid of a soda bottle and yards of duct tape, for example. A “bodge” is a temporary repair that functions adequately for a time but looks decidedly amateurish and a trifle bizarre.

Americans aren't much into “bodges.” They somehow offend their most unEnglish sense of order. (This sense of order is clearly derived from America's German heritage. It certainly didn't come over on the Dove or with the Pilgrims.)

A craftsman called in by Charlotte to rectify one of my more baroque bodes shook his head disapprovingly when he saw it. “What made you think you could get away with that, you sorry son of a gun?” he asked in the tone people reserve for very young children, village idiots and the parochial clergy.

“It seemed such a good idea at the time,” I explained.

“You need to give up thinking,” he replied, grimly.

In my own defense, I would contend that thinking wasn't the problem. Though I say it myself, my solution had been rather inventive. The problem lay in its execution.

But, then, I am acutely well aware that I have no talent for carpentry, painting and plumbing. I take up hammer, nails, paintbrush and wrench only in desperation, when impelled by dire poverty or a sudden emergency.

I only wish that the bodgers who trespass on my own areas of expertise exhibited a similar degree of humility.

There is, of course, not much one can do about amateur theologians. Theological bodgers have afflicted mankind since the very beginning of time – ever since Adam and Eve parsed God's instructions in the Garden of Eden. They – like the poor – will always be with us. So suck it up we must.

My chief bugaboos are literary bodgers – folks who give themselves license to tinker with the works of some of our greatest literary geniuses.

I'm not complaining about the editing of texts. Most writers – even towering masters of the art – need editors. Indeed, much modern literature suffers from an absence of editing.

Editing, however, is an art where less is more. A truly great editor is a self-effacing soul. The greatest of them usually go unnoticed by their authors. They are craftsmen who, by striking out a superfluous adjective and inserting a punctuation mark, make well-turned sentences sparkle.

Craftsmen of this stature have always been a rare commodity. And in this singularly egotistical age, they are even fewer and further between.

Most of what passes for editing these days is nothing of the kind. Either articles are not edited at all, or as is more often the case, they are rewritten wholesale – and by people even less talented than the original author.

This explains why today's newspapers and magazine are so tediously homogenous and bland. This, however, was by no means always the case. Go to the Enoch Pratt library and leaf

through periodicals of the 1920s, 30sand 40s and you'll see what I mean.

But if it's hard for anyone other than professional writers to get worked up about tomorrow's birdcage liner, just take a look at the crimes the literary bodgers have committed against works of literature which constitute the crucible in which the English language was formed: The Book of Common Prayer and the King James Version of the Bible.

To be sure, by today's standards, these books employ very large vocabularies: 16,000 words or so in the case of the BCP and approximately 20,000 in the case of KJV Bible. Shakespeare, by contrast, has uses a vocabulary of 25,000 words.

Admittedly, this is considerably more than the 400 words the average person is estimated to use in daily conversation.

In former times, however, breadth of vocabulary would have been considered objectionable only by the oafish and uneducated. Most people would have regarded it a valuable educational resource.

Neither the Prayer Book nor the KJV Bible are written in archaic language. The language they use is not alien in the way of, say, Middle English or even Anglo-Saxon. Words like “thee” and “thou” and “wouldst” and “shouldst” are perfectly understandable and they are employed for a purpose – not least to make the language in which we speak to God majestic, meaningful, memorable and timeless.

These days plain, unadorned language is regarded as a virtue and the language used both the prayer book and the KJV Bible can reasonably be described as plain and unadorned.

Our modern liturgies, by contrast, aren't written in plain, unadorned language. They tend to be written in the mawkishly flowery style beloved of political speechwriters. Take this sentence from Eucharistic Prayer C: “At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.”

This sad agglomeration of tired old clichés conjures up memories of the early Star Trek scripts or Lost in Space. It is prose of the kind one used to encounter only in greeting cards and romantic novels. Modern “praise music” is similarly unmemorable and devoid of serious theological content.

What's more, our literary bodgers are proving the truth of George Santayana's dictum: “Those who will not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” They are doing to English literature what the Visigothic emperors did to Latin poetry and prose – purging it of content and cluttering it with banal clichés and meaningless sounds.

If they had stopped there, their efforts might have been written off as inept but well meaning. Far from stopping there, however, they have tried to suppress works of genuine genius. What they haven't been able to suppress they have bowdlerized and vandalized.

Compare the Prayer for the Whole State of the Church in BCP of 1928 with the Rite One version in the 1979 Book. See how the Prayer of Humble Access and post communion Thanksgiving have been crudely expurgated.

This is not being done in isolation. It is a madness afflicting pretty well the entire western world. The Church of England has virtually abandoned the Book of Common Prayer, adopting first the Alternative Service Book and latterly the Book of Common Worship. Neither tome can in any way be described as an improvement on the American 1979 Book.

St. Stephen's Choir of Men & Boys

will sing the
Office of

Choral Evensong

6 pm, Sunday, August 7th, 2011

A reception follows

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR
THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

being Sunday, July 24th 2011

8.00 AM & 9.15 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: I St. Peter 3:8-15

The Gospel: St. Luke 5:1-11

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 65

The First Lesson: Judges 6:11-23

The Second Lesson: St. Luke 5:1-11

The Churches of Ireland, Scotland and Wales have done the same, while Germany's Evangelical Church has long abandoned Martin Luther's translation of the Bible – the book that gave the German people their common tongue. Even tiny Denmark has been rewriting the translation of the Bible that was once regarded as the acme of Danish literature.

None of this is accidental, of course. It reflects the philosophy of the deconstructionist movement which has hijacked so much of academe – a *weltanschauung* that holds that everything is meaningless and that there is no such thing as empiric truth or beauty. This is a foolish, not to say wicked, conceit. The shame is we are letting them get away with it. **GPH**☒

FROM THE PARISH CHEFS

Silly Summer Supper time

THE MOMENT you've been waiting has arrived. St. Stephen's chefs are serving their Silly Summer Suppers again. Join us for good food and fellowship on Thursdays at 5.30 PM sharp..

Truth to tell, its hard to think of a less appropriate name than "Silly Summer Suppers" for these remarkable gastronomic events. The only thing silly about these suppers is the price. Where else can you get a home-cooked entrée, dessert and salad for a meager \$10. Add to that soda for a buck and wine at \$3 per glass and \$5 for two.

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

Please join us on July 20th

THE LADIES Who Lunch will be sampling the food at Christopher Daniel's Restaurant on Padonia Road, Cockeysville at 12 noon on Wednesday, July 20th. Join us for good food, fellowship and fun? To make your reservation is to lift up the phone and call me at Tel: \$10-252-2680 and say you'll be coming. **JOYCE PERLBERG**

✠ 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: Sara, Michael, Sophie, Gracie, Paula, Blair, Jim, Georgetta, Melvin, Noah, Mavis, Heather, Laurie, Diane, Don, Lynn, Helen, Katherine, Hindra, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Linda, Robert, Nancy, Edithann, Doris, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Val, Helen, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erline, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tracy, Tom, Lelillah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Marian, Steven, Jeanne, Tammy; Ellen, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Robert, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, Bryan, Jason, Jane, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Ray, Leslie, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Robert, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Alma, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Gloria, Lee Emily, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Linda, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, 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 and Carol.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Rosa, June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Ned, & Stephen, Rachel, Robert & Renee, Lydia; Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Georgetta, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Doris, Drake, Bobby, Kay & Emma, Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, David, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Tom, Susan, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Jo Anne, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Stephen, Carol, Sandra, John, Mary, Michael and David

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: LTC R.J. Lytle, PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, USA; Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, USN; Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, USAF.

✠ St. Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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Web Address: ststeve.com.

RECTOR: The Venerable Guy P. Hawtin

VICAR: The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley

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

(1st. Sun. of the month: Holy Communion at 11.15am)

(1st Sun. of the month: Choral Evensong at 6.00pm)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday: 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Friday: Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday: 5.00 PM Family Eucharist.

**COLLECTS FOR SUNDAY, TRINITY IV
AND ST MARY MAGDALENE**

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN*

Book of Common Prayer, Page 194

ALMIGHTY God, whose blessed Son, restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection : Mercifully grant that by thy grace we may be healed of all our infirmities and know thee in the power of his eternal life; who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. *AMEN*

Return Service Requested

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