

**Come To Our Silly Summer Suppers on Thursdays at 5.30 pm sharp**

# St. Stephen's News

**St. Stephen's Anglican Church,  
Timonium, Maryland**

**Vol. XXII, Number 35**

**Edited by Anne Hawkins**

**September 6th, 2011**

## AN EAGLE'S EYE VIEW

### Hurricane Irene and a new theology of sin

FORGET about pride, envy, gluttony *et al.* Over the past three decades, the Seven Deadly Sins have gotten as outmoded as last summer's beachwear. They have been replaced with an all-embracing pantheon of sins against which the whole gamut of ancient of sins pales into insignificance.

I've seen a lot in my two centuries or so, but nothing quite like this. Even so, it has come to my attention that many Christians are still carrying on as though nothing has happened. Thus, in view of the recent Hurricane Irene, I ought to update you on the new theology of sin, and particularly the sins of "negativism" and its cousin, "judgmentalism."

These two sins regularly raise their heads during disasters. "Negativism" frequently manifests itself in phrases like this: "(Fill in the blank) company is doing its usual lousy job of getting the power back on."

"Judgmentalism" is similar, but subtly different. For example: "The politicians aren't doing anything about (Fill in the blank) company. They are much more interested in campaign contributions than constituents."

Both statements might be entirely true, but be warned! In many quarters these days, sins of this type are apparently regarded as much worse than any sins you have hitherto encountered.

Practitioners of "negativism" and "judgmentalism" can end up in a whole heap of trouble. They might even face expulsion from their health clubs.

Indeed, things are so serious, it would probably be useful if I explained this new wave of theological thinking in greater detail.

"Negativism" is, basically, a predilection to be critical about the human race. "Negativism" is frequently committed in sermons, homilies and parish newsletters, but it can also creep into casual conversations around the dinner table. "Judgmentalism" is probably most accurately described as a predisposition towards "negativism."

People who have read The Bible recently – admittedly a rapidly shrinking proportion of the population – doubtless realize that churchgoers who subscribe to the new theology need to restructure their attitudes towards "The Good Book" in order to accommodate the newly revised pantheon of sins.

Indeed, if the new theology is correct, it would no longer be proper to regard The Bible as "the good book." Even the most casual appraisal of its contents indicates that – in the light of these new sins – it would be more appropriate to call it "The Bad Book."

I don't mean to be "speciesist" (another new sin), but read the Bible and you'll see that God doesn't have a very high opinion of the human race. Quite the

opposite, in fact. He seems to think that humans can be pretty horrible. Indeed, by the end of the third chapter of Genesis, he has kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden – no second chances, no probation before judgment, no pleas in mitigation.

Don't even think about Miranda Rights as far as The Bible is concerned, or the right to a trial before a jury of one's peers, or time off for good behavior. The Genesis justice system, by the standards of the new theology, is completely antediluvian. (*nudge, nudge*)

God zaps the entire world except Noah simply because people don't want to play the game his way. And, what's more, things don't get any better after the flood.

The Ten Commandments, for example, are pure "negativism." All but two of them are "thou shalt nots." And the two "thou shalts" require people to honor their parents and keep the Sabbath day holy – which, as the new theologians would point out, is not only no fun at all, but there's not a pretense of democracy about it?

The New Testament is simply more of the same. Jesus lectures folks about this. Jesus lectures folks about that. Jesus tells folks they don't understand. He never says how great they are – never gives them a pat on the back.

Look at St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19, verses 16-22 – the story of the rich young man who asks Jesus what he must do to have eternal life. Jesus tells him to keep all the Commandments and the young chap says he has done so since childhood – not a bad record, one might think.

But instead of congratulating him on a job well done, Jesus tells him to sell everything he has and to give the proceeds to the poor. From the point of view of the new theology, this is the ultimate put-down. **ISAAC EAGLE**

## FROM THE RECTOR

### Choosing between the new sins and the old

ISAAC is a very wise old bird and we can all benefit from his briefing on the new theology of sin. It has become virtually "conventional wisdom" among our "opinion makers" and, thanks to them, it has insinuated itself into almost every aspect of our lives -- education, the media, politics, as well as some of our churches.

The new theology, however, runs contrary to three thousand-plus years of human experience. It is an article of Judeo-Christian belief that God created the heaven and earth and all there, and, consequently, he knows very much more about it than human beings do.

Both devout Jews and Christians understand that it is their duty to do God's will and that this means they should do their best to understand Holy Scripture not "deconstruct" it or otherwise pull it to pieces.

The Bible, moreover, records the terrible things that happened to the children of Israel in ancient times not to afford their spiritual descendants an opportunity to

## THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

being Sunday, September 11th, 2011

**8.00 AM & 9.15AM**

### HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: II Corinthians 3:4-9

The Gospel: St. Mark 7:31-37

### 11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalms 32

The First Lesson: Isaiah 29:18-24

The Second Lesson: St. Mark 7:31-37

gloat, but in order to help them to avoid similar pitfalls.

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that Christ's Gospel helps his followers to live happy, hopeful, fulfilled lives, and, ultimately, enables them to attain eternal life.

When churches decline to reaffirm the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures in all matters of faith and morals, they are actually severing their connection with the Christian faith. Unless one makes such an affirmation one cannot call oneself Christian. One might well be a very nice person (as far as human beings go), but one will not, in fact, be a very nice Christian. One will, in fact, be a very nice heathen. GPH\*

### FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

## Burnham returns as James I

FOUR hundred years ago the King James Version of the Bible was published. But in just four weeks, you can learn about the man behind the book! To mark the 400th anniversary of the KJV, St Stephen's proudly presents **Howard Burnham's** characterization of the King who ordered the most famous English version of the Book of Books. Burnham's acclaimed characterization gives an entertaining, amusing, and accurate portrait of the quirky king—the first to rule both Scotland and England—who

gave us the inestimable treasure of the KJV. Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, September 27th, at 7:00 PM.

## ⊕ 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 prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

**RECOVERY:** Mary, Adele, Reta, Sara, Michael, Tammy Sophie, Gracie, Paula, Blair, Jim, 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, Cál, 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, Leliliah, 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, 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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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 XI

### & ST AIDAN OF LINDISFARNE

O GOD, who declarest thy almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

*Book of Common Prayer, Page 204*

O LOVING God, who didst call thy servant Aidan from the peace of a cloister to re-establish the Christian mission in northern England, and endowed him with gentleness, simplicity and strength; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, following his example, may use what thou has given us for the relief of human need, and may persevere in commanding the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

Return Service Requested

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