

St. Stephen's News

St. Stephen's Anglican Church,
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

October 4th, 2011

AN EAGLE'S EYE VIEW

Give us your time and we'll give you supper

I SUSPECTED the Parish Life Committee had an ulterior motive when they recruited me as a member. Well, they've inveigled me into doing "write ups" for them in the newsletter. I must say I'm rather flattered. They obviously like my writing style. Anyway, here goes:

The summer is over and it's time to get down to the business of planning the parish's social program for the coming year. For that, we need as many brains on hand as possible. To that end, the Parish Life Committee is inviting everyone to its inaugural meeting for 2011/2012 at 6.00 PM in the Parish Hall on Tuesday, October 4th. That's today, publication day.

No experience is needed, but everybody has talent -- even if it is deeply hidden. As a reward for lending us your brainpower, we'll give you supper. How about a hearty soup and the best bread in Baltimore? Knowing our culinary skills, surely that's an offer it would be very difficult to refuse.

And while I am on the subject, our new Cookie Walk 2011 Cook Book is going to be an encyclopedia of beverages. Well perhaps it is not going to be so much an encyclopedia, but more a comprehensive guide to the art of making and mixing beverages -- both alcoholic and non-alcoholic.

This should be (apologies for my mixed metaphor) a piece of cake. Almost every family boasts a particular dynastic beverage -- whether it be Auntie Vera's Mint Tea or Uncle Cedric's devastating Dry Martini.

Thus we are calling for your recipes for punches, teas, shrubs, smoothies, malts, shakes, hot and cold drinks, and flavored alcoholic drinks. Anything you love that is potable.

Please bring your favorite recipes to church or email our editor Peter Threadgill (that's the best way, actually) his address is petrus@ststeve.com. Thanks. All recipes must be in no later than Sunday November 6th. Thanks for your help! ISAAC EAGLE

FROM THE RECTOR

The Bible: A handy tool for reading God's mind

THE REMARKABLE thing about the controversies embroiling our mainline churches -- partly, but by no means exclusively, involving sexual behavior -- is that they concern doctrines expounded by folks who claim they have God's enthusiastic support for flouting both scriptural authority and catholic order.

Such people claim they can "discern" God's mind because his revelation to mankind was not, as the Church formerly taught, completed in the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. According to them, the revelation process is an on-going affair, continuing apace 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 relatively straightforward business: If you wondered what God thought about something or other, you looked it up in the Bible and the Scripture told you what God's opinion was.

Today, however, the folks who dominate the leadership of our mainline churches are much too sophisticated for that simple-minded stuff. Today's cutting edge theologians "discern" God's mind by endlessly discussing the most outlandish of notions and then taking a vote on the matter.

Since they are the only folks debating the issues and voting on them, they invariably carry the day. Ask how they justify this strangely one-sided practice and they'll tell you the church has been doing this sort of thing since the Apostolic Age.

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 what God "really thinks" and voting on their conclusions, 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, not so long ago an Episcopal bishop, noted for his enthusiasm for overthrowing doctrines established in the days of the Apostles, proclaimed: "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 a year or so after 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, 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 reconciling master and slave.

This, then, is Paul's Epistle to Philemon. No impartial reader could possibly construe it as evidence that Paul

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

being Sunday, Trinity XVI, October 9th, 2011

8.00 AM 9.15 AM
HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: Galatians 6:6-10

The Gospel: St. John 4:31-36

11.15AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 103

The First Lesson: Deuteronomy 7:6-13

The Second Lesson: St. Luke 12:13-31

condoned slavery. Far from it. Paul's letter, in fact, so radically redefines the relations between master and slave that both states are rendered quite 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 Epistle to the Colossians (*Col. 3:22-4:1*).

Perhaps one of the most important lessons to be learned from St. Paul's injunctions both to slaves and to their owners is that, on this and many other important matters, Christians by no means always follow the church's teachings.

This, of course shouldn't be entirely surprising. It is what sin is all about. Indeed, People have been 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 without quibbling that breaking the commandments was sinful and required repentance.

Today, by contrast, the folks in "discernment business" seem to think it is A-okay to break God's rules when ever convenient, and are quite shameless about it.

The ability to "discern" God's mind is a very convenient "gift." Where would the Church of What's Happening Now be without it? **GPH**

✠ 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: Thelma, 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, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erlene, 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, Charles Watts, USN; Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, USAF.

REPOSE OF THE SOUL: Elizabeth Douglas Miller & Jack York
FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: Patrick Miller & family; Dedi York & family.

✠ St. Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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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 TRINITY XV AND ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

KEEP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN*

O EVERLASTING God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant that, as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven, by thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN*

Book of Common Prayer, Pages 210 & 251

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