

# St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church  
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

August 7th, 2012

## FROM THE RECTOR

### Shopping about for politically correct sin

NOT EVEN our churches are immune from the effects of today's consumer culture. Shopping is by no means confined to the mall and the Internet. "Church shopping" is also a popular pastime.

People today, it seems, approach the business of finding a church in much the same way that they would go about buying a car or a house, or even the weekend's groceries: They shop around for the best deal . . .

Aesthetic considerations rank high on some folks' shopping lists. There are those who seek a certain flamboyance -- colorful vestments, smells and bells, armies of acolytes. Others, by contrast, are into stark austerity. For them, the Geneva gown and unadorned Holy Table reign supreme.

That's cool, as my kids used to say. Tastes differ. But it is worth remembering that it is God we are trying to please in our acts of worship. Thus, it is his taste that counts -- not our own. Shopping for liturgical satisfaction is one thing. Shopping for convenience of belief, however, is quite another.

Even so it is what large numbers of people seem to be doing. It might be reasonable enough if the "belief shoppers" were actually seeking enlightenment -- a clearer understanding of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

A few probably are engaged in such a quest. But experience shows that most of them are doing nothing of the sort. Most, in fact,

are hunting around for the best deal on sin. Clergy can usually recognize them by their first question: "Do you think adultery/sexism/lying to a federal grand jury/eating tofu/membership in PETA/cruelty to animals/gun ownership/etc., etc. is a sin?"

It is important to note that these people don't actually want to know what the Scriptures have to say on the matter. They aren't seeking enlightenment. They have made up their minds already. What they're looking for is a parson who will agree with whatever they deem to be "sinful" or "non-sinful."

Come up with the wrong answer, that's the last you'll see of them. They are off once again on the eternal quest for an obliging pastor who thinks the way they do.

This consumer-oriented approach to the faith offers rich fields of endeavor for clergymen with none too many scruples. Sadly, however, honest parsons have a much tougher time. The problem is that defining sin isn't the clergy's job at all. Nor, for that matter, is it the job of the Church. It is God who defines sin -- and He did that many thousands of years ago. You'll find His ideas on the subject in a handy little consumers' guide called The Bible.

The truth is that it doesn't matter a hang what I, or any other human being, thinks about sin. The only opinion we need to worry about is God's. If God approves of something, there's

no need to ponder any further. But if he says that something is sinful, believe me, there is nothing that I, or anybody else can say -- or do -- to change the situation.

The Church hasn't got the job of identifying sin. Its business is the forgiveness of sins -- and that's a horse of an entirely different color. Perhaps it's time to stop trying to do God's job and get on with our own assignments. **GPH**

### A virtue you can't do without

SOMEBODY recently asked me why my sermons so often end with a reflection on our Christian obligation to love our fellow men. I replied that it is the subject of the most frightening passage in the whole of the Bible: The 13th Chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Some might find it odd to contend that this passage -- the Epistle appointed for Quinquagesima Sunday and found upon Page 122 of the BCP -- should strike terror into our hearts. It begins with the words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal . . ." And it expresses such beautiful thoughts about the centrality of love to the Christian message and the importance of love in the human experience that many take it as a comfort rather than the contrary.

In fact it is such a favorite that, in modern translation -- "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love" -- it has become a favorite scripture reading at weddings.

Probably the best explanation for our failure to recognize the frightening nature of the message encapsulated in I Corinthians 13 is our modern inability to read,

mark, learn and inwardly digest what we read.

We skim everything we read -- the Bible included -- as casually as we skim the back of a cornflakes box. If ever we bother to pause and ponder, the things that we read can frequently take on quite a different meaning.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in I Corinthians 13. To be sure, St. Paul is talking about the importance of Christian love -- "charity" as the King James Bible translates it. But his message is by no means a First Century version of the Beatles' song "Love is all you need." Bereft of charitable love, all of our other Christian virtues are absolutely worthless he says. It does not matter, for example, how hard we work to spread the Gospel; if we are not acting in a spirit of love for our fellow men, our endeavors are useless. It doesn't matter how great we are as preachers, teachers, singers and church builders. If we do not have love towards our fellow men our talents are valueless.

In other words, if there is one ability we need above all to cultivate, it is the ability to love our fellow men, no matter how unlovely they might appear. This is not an option. It is a solemn obligation. Nothing else we have to offer can make up for its lack. It is a thought that should rightly terrify us whenever we find ourselves griping about other people, even truly horrible ones. **GPH**

### St. Stephen's Flowers

This year we tried using a "Flower Diary" instead of the traditional "Flower Chart" for those who would like to dedicate Sunday's altar flowers. But the experiment has been an abject failure! Folks seem unable to find the miserable thing.

From now on "A Flower Chart" will stand in the reception area, together with a book to record your dedications. Your \$40 donations should be left in the box by the chart or the church office.

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

Being Sunday, August 12th, 2012

**8.00 AM & 9.00 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION**

The Epistle: I Corinthians 12:1-11  
The Gospel: St. Luke 19:41-47a

**11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER**

The Psalter: Psalm 43  
The First Lesson: Lamentations 1:1-12  
The Second Lesson: St. Luke 19:41-47a

**FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE**

**Lifeline Screening tests**

The results of the Life Line Screening tests at St. Stephen's last month lead us to believe you are a pretty healthy bunch. Here below are the results of the tests:

**Carotid Artery Disease:** Total Screened: 72; Normal Range: 22; Moderate: 49; Findings of Possible Significance: 1; Required Immediate Followup: 0. **Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm:** Total Screened: 67; No Aneurysm: 66; Aneurysm: 1; Required Immediate Followup: 0. **Peripheral Arterial Disease:** Total Screened: 72; Normal: 64; Abnormal: 5; Critical Arm Pressure: 2. **Atrial Fibrillation:** Total Screened: 70; No Atrial Fibrillation: 69; Atrial Fibrillation: 1; Critical Heart Rate: 0. **Osteoporosis:** Total Screened: 43; Low Risk: 35; Mild to Moderate Risk: 8; **High Risk: 0**

**FROM THE PARISH CHEFS**

**Silly Summer Suppers**

THE MOMENT you have all been awaiting has arrived. Each Thursday the chefs of St. Stephen's are serving the 2012 series of "Silly Summer Suppers." Actually, it's 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 -- entrée, dessert and salad for just \$10. Soda costs a buck and wine at \$3 per glass and \$5 for two. Afterwards you can visit with friends. enjoy a light hearted game of Bingo, or even -- it is rumored -- make up a foursome for bridge.

**✠ 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:** Michael, Rosina, Timothy, Donna, Diane, John, Robert, David, Richard, Bill, Charlotte, Leo, Riley, Mary-Ann, Linda Lou, Cynthia, Nancy, Judith, Deborah, Dorothy, Dr. Devadadson, Thelma, Mary, Adele, Linda, Jan, Liz, Bob, Wyatt, Jim, Reta, Sara, Tammy Sophie, Paula, Blair, Melvin, Heather, Laurie, Lynn, Katherine, Hindra, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Edithann, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erline, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tom, Lelillah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Ray, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Steven, Jeanne, Tammy; Ellen, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, Bryan, Jason, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, 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, Maxine, Ann, Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Joanne, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Doris, Carol, and Suzie.

**LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Aaron, Hope, Tom, Jennifer, Brendan, Rosa, June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Ned, Stephen, Rachel, Robert & Renee, Lydia, Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Drake, Bobby, Kay & Emma, Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, 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, 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, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt. Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, Lt. Nicholas Clouse USN, Major Benjamin Hawkins, British Army.

**✠ 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**

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.00 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.15 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

**WEEKDAY SERVICES**

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

**COLLECTS FOR TRINITY IX AND  
LAMMAS DAY (THE WHEAT HARVEST)**

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

*Book of Common Prayer, Page 200*

O GOD, who hast made heaven and earth and all that is in them: We humbly beseech thee to bless and hallow these first-fruits of wheat, and to multiply them abundantly for us who offer them; and grant such seasonable weather that this year's harvest may be plentiful, and we, rejoicing in thy gifts, may pay our thanks to thy divine majesty; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

Return Service Requested

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