

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

Vol. XXIII, Number 34

Edited by Anne Hawkins

September 4th, 2012

FROM THE RECTOR

Reflections on politically correct 9/11 memorials

NOT A YEAR passes, it seems, without the Anniversary of the 9/11 Attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon being afflicted by at least one grotesque example of politically correct posturing.

Last year New York's ban-happy mayor Michael Bloomberg vetoed the participation of clergy from all branches of all faith from participating in the public memorial ceremony at Ground Zero. At the same time, the U.S. Government, in its wisdom, officially discouraged all mention of the Islamic terrorists responsible for the slaughter. Consequently, the speakers at the event were largely politicians.

This year the ever officious Bloomberg has banned the politicians from speaking. Instead, the ceremony will center around the reading of the victims' names. No word yet from Uncle Sam, but, doubtless, the Feds' objections to the mention of Islamic terrorism remains.

Presumably this will be greeted with satisfaction by the American Atheists. The group has opted to mark the 11th anniversary of the atrocity by petitioning a judge to order the removal of the Ground Zero memorial cross, constructed from steel beams salvaged from the site of the attack.

A memorial cross is an injustice to victims who were not Christians, according to the American Atheist. "It is a clear instance of a violation of the separation of church and state in its extreme," claims the group's president, David Silverman,

Silverman says the Ground Zero museum should either remove the cross or acknowledge everybody else who died in the tragedy in a manner equal to Christians.

Political posturing and unseemly squabbling greatly diminishes what should be a deeply reverent and reflective occasion. Similarly, a failure to so much as mention *al Qaida*, the Islamic terrorist organization, that perpetrated the massacre, undermines the significance of the event. It makes no more sense than memorializing the attack on Pearl Harbor, but omitting to mention the Imperial Japanese Navy.

There is no denying that the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center were wholly inspired by religion. For them, butchering innocent people who do not share their religious beliefs is both a salvific act and a sacred duty.

What is more, the massacre took place in a city which plays host to arguably the world's largest concentration of Jews and Christians, faiths the terrorists hate most. To be sure, atheists, agnostics and followers of other religions, including Islam, were also among the victims. But from the terrorists perspective, they were mere "collateral damage."

Trying to make sense of what happened – the declared purpose of the memorial gathering meetings – without involving clergy – Christian, Jewish and, yes, Muslim – dooms the efforts to failure. What theology wrought, only the theology can unravel and heal.

This process demands we confront the religious motive for the attacks honestly, squarely, and without equivocation. At last year's ceremony at Ground Zero straight talk was not exactly the order of the day. Indeed, it was conspicuous largely by its absence. Most speakers -- in obedience to the diktat from Uncle Sam -- cautiously tip-toed around the issue of religion-inspired terrorism. And this year's event promises to be a no less anodyne affair.

Thanks to politically correct timidity, however, the spiritual wounds sustained on 9/11 are still raw, open and bleeding. With religious expression increasingly driven form the public square by the rigid enforcement of grossly distorted, politically correct, interpretations of the the First Amendment, the job of making sense of the attacks has fallen to the political class.

The political controversies surrounding not just the memorial ceremonies and the sorry saga surrounding the creation of memorials to the victims, graphically illustrate the depth of the politicians' failure.

This lack of success should not be altogether surprising. After all, a time hallowed political strategy for dealing with inconvenient truths is to sweep them under the table. This what has happened with the events of 9/11. Not least, we are repeatedly told "Islam is a religion of peace."

This is simply not true. For most of Islam's existence, its primary instrument of conversion has been the sword. The conquest of Mecca in 630 AD was followed by four and a half centuries of jihad during which the Christian communities of North Africa and the Fertile Crescent were wiped out and Islamic rule extended by conquest to Sicily, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula.

The Crusades (from which Muslims derive the epithet for Christians: "Crusaders") were the vicious, blood drenched, but much belated response to more than 450 years of Muslim aggression.

But shameful though they were, we cannot be blind to the long history of slaughter, conquest and enslavement that prompted wicked men to repay evil with evil in the name of Christ. That said, it is doubtless true that many, if not most, Muslims would like nothing better than to live in harmony with their neighbors of other faiths.

Yet our media daily attests to the fact that large numbers of Muslims contemptuously reject pleas for them to assimilate with their nominally Christian hosts in the European Community. And to

reach a solution, we must first identify the cause of the problem.

The political class attributes the Muslim hatred of all things Western to the general poverty of the Islamic world. And, certainly, the Islamic world has for centuries lagged economically far behind the West.

This is unpersuasive. The hijackers who crashed the aircraft into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were among the most privileged members of Muslim society. So, too, were the men who planned and financed the attack. Political correctness aside, the evidence indicates the cause of the hatred lies in the teachings of the religion itself.

To be sure, there is a peace-loving strain of Islam, the adherents of which aspire to live in harmony with their non-Islamic neighbors. In the wake of the defeat of the Ottoman Army by the Austrians and Poles at the Battle of Vienna in 1683, Muslim scholars began to explore Christian thought more openly and in greater depth, introducing humanistic Christian-inspired ideas to Islamic thinking.

This was not received with unbridled enthusiasm by all Muslims. The 18th Century theologian Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, in what is now Saudi Arabia, damned all who abandoned the old violent ways as heretics and urged the purging of Islam of the innovations derived from Christian thought.

Thanks to the Saudi Arabian foreign aid program that uses its oil wealth to fund mosques, schools and social programs abroad to preach its fundamentalist brand of Islam, Wahhabism has become an increasingly potent force in the Muslim world.

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
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Being Sunday, September 9th, 2012

**8.00 AM & 9.00 AM
HOLY COMMUNION**

The Epistle: Galatians 5:16-24
The Gospel: St. Luke 17:11-19

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 92

The First Lesson: Deuteronomy 8:1-14, 17-20
The Second Lesson: St. Luke 17:11-19

We can help the Muslim communities in America that uphold humanistic Islam to confront those who promote the Wahhabist credo of violence. Indeed, we have no alternative but to do so. To win the hearts and minds of the Islamic world, we must first win over the hearts and minds of the Muslims in our midst.

But for this to work, our political leaders must drop their policies of pretense and denial. And whether atheists approve of it or not, faith must confront faith, and in this process there is no room for politics – just straight talking. **GPH**

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.

It's a time for the whole family to socialize over a relaxing meal that you don't have to cook. Afterwards you can visit with friends and even enjoy a light hearted game of Bingo or join in a more intellectually challenging rubber or two of Bridge. What's not to like about that?

✠ 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: Andy, Frannie, Hellen, 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, Erlene, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tom, Lelilah, 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: Larry, 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.

REPOSE OF THE SOUL: Nancy Omohundro

THOSE WHO MOURN: The Omohundro & Hawtin families

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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

8.00 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 XIII AND NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus

Christ our Lord. *AMEN*

Book of Common Prayer, Page 207

IMPART to thy servants, we pray thee, O Lord, the gift of heavenly grace, that the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin may bring deeper peace to those for whom the birth of her Son was the dawning of salvation. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *AMEN.*

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
TIMONIUM MD
PERMIT NO.181

St. Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093