

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

September 11th, 2012

FROM THE RECTOR

Don't begrudge prayers for the politicians you dislike

PRESIDENTIAL elections, these days, tend to be uncharitable affairs. How else can one describe the behavior of political adversaries – mostly decent people who share the same ultimate goals, but differ greatly in the means of reaching them – who accuse each other of wildly exaggerated forms of wrong doing?

With so much uncharity on the air waves, it is a small wonder that Christians, being frail human beings, get caught up in the extreme partisanship. There is, however a difference between being partisan and being hate-filled.

Praying for our political enemies' annihilation certainly satisfies our ugly human craving to strike back. Christians, however, don't have the option of wreaking vengeance on those who offend them. Quite the opposite, in fact.

We are told to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us and pray for those who are spiteful to us and persecute us (*Matthew 5:44*). And this applies just as much to political foes as to enemies, such as the Islamic terrorists, who are trying to do us physical harm.

In short, we don't have the option to stop praying for politicians with whom we disagree. It doesn't matter whether one is a Democrat or a Republican, offering prayers for those who guide the affairs of our nation, whether they share one's view or not, is a solemn Christian obligation.

Indeed, praying for the civil authorities is one of the oldest customs of the Church. Intercessions on behalf of the government, for example, are at the very top of St. Paul's priorities in his instructions to St. Timothy on how he is to conduct services at the Church in Ephesus.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," he writes (*1 Timothy 2:1 & 2*).

Moreover, it doesn't matter in the least whether or not the civil authorities in question are Christian, pagan, or even atheist. We're obliged to pray for them no matter what their beliefs. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," writes Paul of the Emperor Claudius (*Romans 13: 1-7*), "For there is no power but of God ... For he is the minister of God to thee for good...."

Our Prayer Book's "Prayer for the President," thus, has a long and honorable history. It was adapted in 1789 from the "Prayer for the King" in the English Book of Common Prayer. The original was first published in 1547, predating by two years the Book of 1549 – the first official Prayer Book to be published in the English Language.

There was a heated debate among the newly independent American Anglicans as to whether or not it was appropriate for the Church to pray for a U.S. President. The argument seems to have been settled by Bishop William White.

In a letter to Bishop Thomas C. Brownell of Connecticut, in 1822, he observed: "It may be questioned, whether in a government which gives no power commensurate with life, it be congruous to pray for the long life and prosperity of the first Magistrate; but it is contemptible to cavil at the title of "God's servant," as applied to an unbelieving President, when everyone, who understands Greek, knows he is called so in Romans xiii.4." **GPH**

Time to let the Gospel take a bite out of crime

THE CRIME RATE is a major American preoccupation . . . which is hardly surprising in view of statistics which indicate that one in every three of us can expect to become a victim of violent crime at least once in our lives.

Our politicians' response to this has been a stream of legislative measures – boot camps, "three strikes and you're out" sentencing, and mandatory jail sentences for crimes perceived as particularly heinous -- each of which is designed to solve the problem for good and all.

These political nostrums, doubtless, engender a certain sense of *deja vu* in folks with memories longer than that of the average fruit fly. Such feelings are entirely justified. Mandatory sentences, boot camps, weapons control: There's nothing that we haven't tried that the Romans didn't try before us – with similarly disappointing results.

History shows that there is nothing new about crime waves of the sort that we are experiencing today. Indeed, in the 17th, 18th and early-to-mid 19th centuries, rampant crime was the norm in Europe and the Americas. And all the remedies now being proposed were tried back then -- to absolutely no avail.

In desperation, legislators adopted even more draconian measures than we have ever contemplated. Death sentences were meted out as a matter of course to repeat offenders. People convicted of serious crimes were routinely disemboweled and dismembered.

When these punishments signally failed to make a dent in the crime rate, law makers decided the best way to handle the problem was quarantine. So they shipped out those who would not shape up. For best part of a century and a half, England's petty criminals were routinely transported to penal

colonies throughout its growing empire. Nothing, however, seemed to work.

It would be quite wrong to ascribe this catalogue of abject failure to the idea that folks back in the 17th, 18th and early-to-mid 19th centuries were somehow more primitive than ourselves, or less sophisticated. Read their writings on the subject and you'll discover they were at least our intellectual equals. In fact, they had considered (and, in most instances, rejected on practical grounds) some of the remedies we consider most "modern." Read Thomas Moore's *Utopia*, the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*.

By the opening decades of the 19th Century, crime in England had gotten so out of hand that parliament, in desperation, introduced a new London Metropolitan Police to replace the police forces attached to the individual magistrates' courts.

But there was no major improvement in the situation until the 1830s when the Church of England finally realized that a main reason for the moral decay was its sloth in preaching the Gospel.

There followed the most remarkable religious revival the world has seen. A newly-invigorated Church of England launched a crusade to carry Christ into the meanest streets of the inner cities. The Church Army was founded. Religious orders were revived. Magnificent churches were constructed in slums more vile than anything we in modern America have ever known.

Within two decades the tide had been turned. Within four it had been completely reversed. It was not that the Gospel had eliminated poverty. It had not. (The poor, said Christ, are always with us.) But it had eliminated the awful spiritual and

The Ladies Who Lunch

This month the Ladies Who Lunch will be sampling the fare at Barretts' Restaurant in Hunt Valley.

Why not join us at 12 noon on Wednesday, September 19th for good fellowship, great fun and fine food.

To reserve your place, call Joyce Perlberg at 410-252-2680. We are looking forward to meeting you there!

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

Being Sunday, September 16th, 2012

**8.00 AM & 9.00 AM
HOLY COMMUNION**

The Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18
The Gospel: St. Matthew 6:24-34

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 14
The First Lesson: Joel 1:11-27
The Second Lesson: St. Matthew 6:24-34

moral degradation that, absent the Gospel, inevitably accompanies poverty.

As the urban population's spiritual lives improved, so naturally did morality. Crime was never completely eliminated, of course -- it is, after all, a fallen world -- but it declined to manageable proportions.

What worked 150 years ago would certainly work today. Let's pray that we don't have to wait another century and a half implement it. **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: Paul, 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, Leliliah, 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.

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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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 XIV AND THE EMBER DAYS

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.*

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast committed to the hands of men the ministry of reconciliation; We humbly beseech thee, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, to put it into the hearts of many to offer themselves for this ministry; that thereby mankind may be drawn to thy blessed kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

Book of Common Prayer, Page 209 & 260

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