

# St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church  
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

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## FROM THE RECTOR

### Today's U.S. is just a bit too much like the Promised Land

SOME 3,400 years ago or so, when the Children of Israel entered Canaan to possess the land that God had promised to them, they were united in a common bond of faith, universally accepted laws and commonality of purpose. Their social vision, of course, was not of their own conceiving. It had been given to them by God, but every one of them held it in the same common esteem.

Yet when we read the Book of Judges, the Book of Ruth, and the First Book of Samuel, the history we encounter is a story of what can best be described as abject failure. Scarcely a generation after they entered the Promised Land their common social vision had evaporated and society was unraveling. As the Book of Judges quaintly puts it, time and time again: "The Children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord."

The history of the Children of Israel in the Promised Land used to exert an extraordinary fascination on the collective American mind. This should not be surprising. The United States was founded upon a social vision similar to that of ancient Israel. It was conceived as a nation united under God; indivisible because of its common consecration to its creator.

The reason for this was because a substantial majority of the people who settled America held fervent Christian convictions.

They felt a shared experience with the Children Israel. They even spoke of America in Biblical terms – the New Jerusalem; a Land of Milk and Honey.

But if they were resolved to establish their new nation on the same footing as the ancient Children of Israel's Promised Land, America's founding fathers were equally determined not to repeat the Israelites' mistakes. After all, they had the Children of Israel's experience to draw upon.

Today, not yet 250 years after the founding of the republic, it should be dawning on us that we have reason to be less than confident about our ability to avoid the mistakes of the ancient Israelites. American society has been utterly transformed in the space of a single generation. Not only have the fundamentals of personal relationships been radically recast, our social and corporate relationships have been altered just as dramatically.

A generation ago, for example, people who disagreed politically still regarded each other as honorable. After all, most people shared the same basic goals and aspirations, but they accepted that it was perfectly legitimate for people to differ about the manner in which the goals should be achieved and aspirations realized. In other words, they understood that it was perfectly normal for generally like-minded people to disagree on individual issues.

Things, however, have changed almost overnight. Civil discourse has suddenly become difficult in both the social and political arenas. Political and social adversaries no longer view each other as honorable but wrong-headed. Instead, they denounce each other traitors, villains, frauds, cheats, rogues and moral degenerates.

This phenomenon cannot be attributed solely to the drastic decline in standards of civility over the past 40 years. The real problem is that as a society we no longer share the same common goals. In the space of a mere 40 years or so, our society has fragmented, splintered, into a broad spectrum of

competing special interest groups -- each one of them with its own individual goals and aspirations.

None of the goals are entirely compatible with anybody else's. And, sad to say, many of them are wholly incompatible with those of almost all of the rest of society. And this is precisely the situation in which the Israelites found themselves a generation or so after their arrival in the Promised Land. What's more, the parallels with modern America by no means ends there.

When we read Judges, Ruth and Samuel, it is plain to see that morality had completely broken down – and in the same way that it has broken down in today's America. A generation ago, for example, people rarely advocated what was, somewhat naively perhaps, called "free love." It was also most unusual for people to live together without what was once coyly known as "benefit of clergy". Divorce was frowned upon and when such events took place, society's usual response was to shun the guilty and to comfort the innocent.

Suddenly things have changed completely. There might be no such thing as a free lunch, but as far as "free love" is concerned, it is quite a different story. Looking back over the Book of

Judges, Ruth and Samuel, we see that much the same conditions existing in ancient Israel. For example, we discover Samson, one of Israel's most respected judges, pursuing an extra-matrimonial affair with a hooker.

We read of Ruth -- a thoroughly nice and decent girl, the great grandmother of David, the ancestor of our Lord – cold-bloodedly seducing a kind, but naive man (whom, admittedly, she later married) simply because it seemed to be the effective way of luring him into marriage.

We also learn that senior church leaders – priests, including the sons of the saintly Levi as well as the sons of

the great Prophet Samuel – habitually sleeping with prostitutes, who, even more shocking, sold sex to finance God's temples. And so on and so forth . . . . In short, may be with the exception of temples employing prostitutes, they got up to much the same sort of shenanigans that afflict American society today.

The Bible tells us that the evil committed by the Children of Israel was abandoning the worship of God for the worship of the local pagan deities, Baal and his consort Ashteroth. They didn't mean to do it. They simply slithered into it, not realizing what they were getting themselves into. God had warned them against striking deals or compromises with the local population. But, people being what they are, compromises seemed an awful lot better than fighting. Why not give peace a chance?

The problem is that the compromises left pockets of paganism all over the land God had declared holy. And, people being what they are, neighbors befriended neighbors. Sons married daughters. And, next thing you know, celebrating diversity seemed a pretty good thing.

It was simply neighborly to pay a visit to the local pagan "High Place", share a holy barbecue and maybe have a bit of sophisticated fun with the temple prostitutes. It was, after all, only reasonable to be broad-minded about things.

However the price of broad-mindedness was the abandonment of the constitution God had given them. And the consequence of that was internecine strife as the folks who had abandoned the law and the faith tried to impose their will on those who had not.

Moreover, the large groups of resentful, unassimilated Canaanites in their midst made common cause with the Israelites' enemies – Philistines and Midianites – and long periods of violence, mayhem and subjugation ensued.

The sad story of ancient Israel graphically illustrates the fact that society can only run smoothly in the context of a common social vision. Competing social visions invariably lead to strife – a principle that is as true for smaller societies such as churches as it is for entire nations. When social factions abandon the

St. Stephen's Choir  
invites you to  
A CHORAL  
EVENSONG  
at 6.00 PM  
at The Parish Church  
Sunday, November 4th, 2012

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

Being Sunday, October 21st, 2012

**8.00 AM & 9.15 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION**

The Epistle: Ephesians 5:15-21  
The Gospel: St. Matthew 22:1-14

**11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER**

The Psalter: Psalm 112  
The First Lesson: Jeremiah 1:1-9, 13  
The Second Lesson: St. Matthew 22:1-14

common goals and seek to impose their wills upon their fellows, they do violence to the entire social compact.

Then society starts unraveling with the inevitable result of civil unrest, government corruption, rampant crime, increased violence, family breakdown and other ills associated with the dissolution of the social compact . . . . As with the Promised Land under the Judges, so with America today. **GPH**✘.

**FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE**

**Something old, something (nearly) new -- our Secondhand Rose sale**

WE'VE collected a wide range of fabulous garments, stretching back from today, through the "Swinging Sixties" to the 1950s. Come ton our "Secondhand Rose Sale" if you are looking for gently used clothing, as well as shoes, accessories, jewelry and purses, not mention curtains and drapes.

The sale, which benefitd of a Sunday School playground, will run on Friday, October 19th, from Noon to 8.00 PM; and Saturday, October 20th, from 10.00 AM to 2.00 PM.

**FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH**

**Why not join us on October 17th?**

THE LADIES who lunch will be meeting at Christopher Daniel's Restaurant on Padonia Road, Timonium, at 12 noon on Wednesday, October 17th. You are heartily invited to join us for

fine food, good fellowship and great fun. To make your reservation, call Joyce Perlberg at 410-252-2680. We are looking forward to seeking you there.

✠ **PARISH PRAYER LIST** ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice & Dr. Bob's Place. 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:** Dawn, Betty Jean, Elliot, Sharon, Paul, Andy, 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:** Hope, JoAnn, 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:** 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.

✠ **St Stephen's Anglican Church** ✠

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093  
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Web Address: [ststeve.com](http://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

9.15 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 XIX AND  
ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which thou commandest; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

*Book of Common Prayer, Page 215*

O GOD, who didst bestow upon thy Blessed King Edward the crown of everlasting glory : grant us, we pray thee; so to venerate him on earth, that we may be found worthy to reign with him in heaven; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *AMEN.*

Return Service Requested

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