

# St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church  
Timonium, Maryland

Vol. XXV, Number 2

Edited by Don Ruthig

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014

FROM THE RECTOR

## Washington's battle with Christianity

DOUBTLESS it is something of an embarrassment to our politically correct Washington elite that the United States military is one of the world's most religious institutions. Even more embarrassing for them, while members of many faiths serve the colors, a vast majority of those in uniform are Christians.

The antipathy of some of Washington's most powerful politicians and bureaucrats towards Christianity has long been manifest in government policy towards Christians in the Armed Forces.

During the first Gulf War, for example, Christian chaplains serving in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were forbidden to wear their regulation Cross insignia in order not to offend the Moslems our soldiers were fighting to free. Prayer services were also restricted ostensibly for the same reason.

Military chaplains have been forbidden to mention the name of Jesus in public prayer. Senior Air Force officers, particularly at the Air Force Academy, have been harshly criticized for allegedly promoting evangelical Christian worship. Efforts have been made to outlaw the tradition of grace before meals at West Point, the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy.

Among the most egregious attacks on the Christian faith took place at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in the fall of 2011, when a memo signed by Col. C.W. Callahan, the hospital's Chief of Staff, banned visitors from bringing Bibles and other religious material into the center.

Headed "WOUNDED, ILL AND INJURED PARTNERS IN CARE GUIDELINES," it laid down new rules for the hospital visitors. While much of the memo dealt with routine matters, tucked away in it was a sentence that read: "No religious items (i.e. Bibles, reading material, and/or artifacts) are allowed to be given away or used during a visit."

Predictably there was an immediate outcry from the overwhelmingly Christian relatives and friends of the patients. Equally predictably, Walter Reed officials rapidly went on the defensive, backing and filling as fast as they could go.

After Rep. Steve King of Iowa denounced the ban on the floor of the House as a gross violation of the First Amendment guarantee of the free exercise of religion, Walter Reed officials announced it had all been a mistake. The policy was incorrectly stated in the memo, they explained. Moreover, it had not been enforced, and had since been rescinded.

Hospital spokeswoman Sandy Dean told the *Navy Times*, the sole intent of the policy was to respect patients' religious practices and preserve their privacy "We want to make sure that visitors are respecting our patients' religious practices and culture," she said.

Patients, Ms. Dean explained, were often visited by volunteers from benevolent organizations as well as strangers, ranging from celebrities, politicians and well-meaning VIPs, and the guidelines were developed to respect patients' own beliefs.

"If the family, if friends, wanted to bring things in, it was fine," she claimed, adding: "The way the policy was written was incorrect. We are rewriting the policy."

It is, however, hard to swallow the notion that the ban was instituted simply to protect patients from hordes of Bible brandishing volunteers, celebrities, politicians and other VIPs. The memo, after all, imposed an absolute ban on even family and friends using Bibles or other religious materials during visits to receptive patients.

Such assurances from federal bureaucrats, moreover, are further undermined by the fact that even the Veterans Administration is engaged in the war against Christianity.

In Texas, for example, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars are fighting a ban by the Veterans Administration on graveside religious services at Houston's national cemetery. Members of Congress as well as infuriated families have denounced the ban to no avail. Similarly, calls for the firing of the cemetery's

## Calendar of Events

Weekly Activities at St Stephen's

**Tuesdays, 7.00 AM:** Breakfast Fellowship at the Nautilus Diner

**Thursdays, 10.00 AM:** Knitting Circle meets in Quimby Hall

**Wednesdays, 6.30 PM:** Bridge Group meets in Quimby Hall

**Fridays, 10.30 AM:** Bible Study in the Cadwalader Room

### Special Events

**Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 7.00 PM:** Valentine's Dinner and Auction, Quimby Hall

**Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2.00 PM - 7.30 PM:** Blood Drive, Quimby Hall

director have been ignored.

Also in Texas, a Dallas VA hospital last month refused to accept delivery of Christmas cards hand made for bed ridden veterans by 51 pupils of Grace Academy, a local private school. The VA declared the cards violated VA policy. In addition to thanking the vets for their service, the cards which included an American flag, wished them (horror of horrors) a "Merry Christmas."

"It really didn't occur to me there would be a problem with distributing Christmas cards," said Susan Chapman, a math teacher at the academy. She's married to a veteran and volunteers with the American Legion and other veterans' organizations.

This antipathy to Christians is by no means confined to Texas. In California, shortly before Christmas last year, the Conservative Baptist Association of America filed suit against U. S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Erich Shinseki. It alleges a leader of a training program for the Department of Veteran Affairs discriminated against two military chaplains because of their Christian beliefs.

The Baptist organization is the endorsing agent for the two chaplains, Maj. Steven Firtko, U.S. Army (Ret.), and Lt. Cmdr. Dan Klender of the U.S. Navy. Both entered a San Diego-based Department of Veterans Affairs chaplain-training program in August 2012. The suit charges that the program's supervisor, Nancy Dietsch, harassed the chaplains about their beliefs, admonishing them not to pray in the name of Jesus in public ceremonies or cite Scripture in class.

She sometimes pounded her fists on her desk, court papers allege, and accused the chaplains of not caring about Veterans Affairs patients and other military members. She allegedly also threatened to fail them and openly ridiculed them and their beliefs in class.

None of this actually comes as a surprise to the clergy of St. Stephen's. You see, Subdeacon Wiley Hawks has experienced the VA's discrimination at first hand.

Last year Wiley spent four months undergoing a VA volunteer training program, expecting when he completed it, to be doing visitations of the sort he routinely undertakes at our local hospitals, hospices, retirement communities and nursing homes.

Not so, Wiley discovered "I had my volunteer badge for only a matter of minutes – just long enough to be told I wasn't going to be allowed to do anything of the sort," he said, "Nor was I going to be allowed to wear my dog collar on VA premises, presumably for fear some poor vet might ask for a prayer."

Wiley was told by an official that the VA never permitted volunteers to perform the work they were qualified to do in the outside world. According to the official, even highly qualified volunteer registered nurses are not allowed to nurse patients at VA hospitals.

Probably the antipathy to volunteers at VA hospitals is partially explained by the fact VA facilities are highly unionized. Even the VA's full time chaplains are members of the union.

An equally plausible motive for the discrimination against volunteers in general is that VA employees are well aware that professionals from civilian hospitals, including nurses and clergy, are far more likely to pick up on patient abuse and other malpractices than the ordinary layman.

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE  
THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE  
EPIPHANY**

January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**8.00 AM & 9.15 AM HOLY COMMUNION**

For the Epistle: Romans 12:16-21

The Gospel: St. John 2:1-11

**11.15 AM CHORAL MATTINS**

The Psalter: Psalm 42,43

The First Lesson: Isaiah 41:8-10,17-20

The Second Lesson: St. John 2:1-11

But this still does explain the VA's implacable antipathy to the Christian faith. Rep. Steve King hit the nail on the head when he said of the Walter Reed Bible ban: "I don't think there's any excuse for it and no talking it away. The very existence of this [ban], whether it's enforced or not, tells you what kind of a mindset is there.

"The idea that . . . soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that have fought to defend our Constitution, and that includes our First Amendment rights to religious liberty – would be denied that religious liberty when they are lying in a hospital bed recovering from wounds incurred while defending that liberty is the most bitter and offensive type of an irony that I can think of." **GUY HAWTIN**✠

**FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE**

## Valentines Dinner and Auction

THE PARISH Life Committee is pulling out all the stops for its Valentines Gala Dinner and Auction on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

The evening will kick off at 7.00 pm with light hors d'oeuvres in the Cadwalader Room followed by an elegant dinner in Quimby Hall. A choice of entrees, beef tenderloin, salmon, or

vegetarian, will be accompanied by wine and a choice of desserts from our dessert cart.

Following dinner, let the bidding begin! Our auction already features many desirable items including a weekend in Ocean City complete with parking passes for the beach, dinner for four deliciously prepared by Annie and Bill Hawkins, a dessert a month for a year prepared by the aptly named Cindie Baker, a handcrafted sterling silver necklace, a handcrafted gold and rhodium pen with matching letter opener, floral arrangements for your dining table to celebrate three special occasions, and a hand-knit lace shawl. And the list keeps growing! If you have a service or item you would like to contribute call Judy Kight at 410-592-9291

We hope you will invite your friends to join you for the evening. What better way is there to celebrate with your valentine and introduce your friends and neighbors to St. Stephen's?

Tickets must be purchased in advance and there will be people at each service selling them. Please be prepared to specify your entree choice when you purchase your tickets. The cost for the dinner, including wine is a modest \$20 per person.

## ✠ 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:** Fr Guy, Donna, Aida, Eunice, Cherry, Ruth, Carolyn, Hilarie, Vivian, Jack, Suzie, Mary John, Charlene, Rodney, Hamilton, Jane, Donald, Annie, Cynthia, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Fran, Tracey, Linda Lou, Edie, John, Beth, Adele, Melba, Lydia, Chandra, Brady, Nina, Baby Charlie, Maryann, Angie, Oona, Josh, Shane, Kim, Megan, Walter.

**LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Connie, Azalea, Stephen, Ann, Paige, Lydia, Remi, Melba, Donna, Josh, Kim, Shane

**ON ACTIVE SERVICE:** Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, Ian Cadwalader serving in Afghanistan.

### ✠ 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](http://ststeve.com)

RECTOR: The Rev. Canon Guy P. Hawtin

VICAR: The Venerable Michael Kerouac

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Happy Riley  
(410- 252-8674)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATORS: Happy Riley (410-252-8674)  
Martha Miller (410-321-9038)

#### 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.

### COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY AND THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

*Book of Common Prayer Pages 111 and 229*

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