

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

Volume XXVI, Number 35

A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

8 September 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

Reviewing the revisers – which Bible is the best?

One of the questions clergy are most frequently asked is: 'Which of the many translations of the Bible on the market is the best?' It is a question that invites a further question: 'Best for what?' For if you are looking for a Bible to read privately and to use for general study – with certain notable exceptions – most modern translations will do. Find one that you are comfortable with and have at it.

If, on the other hand, you are looking for a Bible to use academically or to use as a norm for establishing matters of doctrine, the the question of which translation is best is a matter for debate. Since the 4th Century, scholars like St Jerome have been engaged in continual – and often acrimonious – arguments over which ancient texts of the various books of the Bible are the most authoritative.

The King James Version – the translation St Stephen's uses liturgically – is based upon a text known in Latin as *Textus Receptus* [The Received Text]. It is drawn from a family of ancient texts traditionally used by Western and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Textus Receptus went unchallenged from the 16th Century until the middle of the 19th Century when a German scholar named Constantin von Tischendorf discovered a Bible at St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai Desert that he claimed predated the earliest versions of the *Textus Receptus* by a couple of centuries.

It was a find that fueled scholarly debates that continue to this day. The newly discovered book – dubbed *Codex Sinaiticus* – was hailed as the repository of the earliest textual New Testament tradition.

Its champions within the English Church, therefore, demanded a revision of the venerable King James Version. The Province of York took up the challenge and the result was a new translation published in 1881 as the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

The RSV did not meet with total approbation – in part because its leading scholarly critic, The Rev. John W. Burgon, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, and Gresham Professor of Divinity, was excluded from the translation committee.

Sinaiticus is seriously corrupted by errors, affecting not merely words and sentences, but entire passages, and Burgon objected to the revision committee's 'reconstruction' of large portions of the text through inference and extrapolation. He also questioned the committee's use of paraphrase.

Burgon then deployed his vast erudition to cite sources more ancient than *Sinaiticus* – including the writings of the Post Apostolic Fathers – to defend the integrity of *Textus Receptus* and argue for its superior authority as a text.

Other critics of the RSV – pointing to the presence of sectarian scholars on the committee, including a Unitarian – claimed that the translators had been chosen with an eye focused more on sales than scholarship.

In any event, Burgon's critique – which has never been fully answered – was so damning it cast a pall over the RSV's popularity that lasted well into this century.

The RSV text, however, steadily gained adherents in educational institutions, and, in the 1930s, it began to catch on with churches.

Soon publishers were vying with one another to produce newer, more up-to-date versions.

Today, the RSV and translations based on its underlying text are in far greater favour at universities and theological schools than the King James Version. And, doubtless, part of its appeal is that it is acceptable to a wider range of religious denominations and sects than the more demanding King James Version of the Received Text.

Probably as a consequence, an overwhelming majority of the new editions of The Bible are based on the RSV text. Currently, only one major modern language edition of The Bible is based on the Received Text: The New King James Version. But as it also employs paraphrase quite extensively it is not truly a substitute for the old King James.

The problem with the practice of paraphrasing scriptural texts is that it opens the door to sectarian interpretations of the content that cannot be fully supported by literal text. The International Version of the Bible is claimed by some to have a Calvinistic gloss.

The 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. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Jack, Donald, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Edie, Cary, Judy, Julie, Phyllis, Steve, Wendy, Matthew, Adele, Starr, Helen, Emily, Marty, Don, Linda, Elizabeth, Cathy, William, Dan, Lindsey, Shelby, Rob, Dick, Melissa, Paula, Sandra, Diane, Hobie, Nathan, Francine, Susan, Holly, Hayley, John, Nancy, Gloria, Judy

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Charles, Vinnie, Doug, Rusty, Ian, Lisa, Fritz, Carey

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes

Publication just over a decade ago of the full text of the ancient manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls has injected yet another fascinating element to the debate – at least as far as the Old Testament and the Apocrypha are concerned.

According to a number of scholars, the texts found in the scrolls echo more closely the Greek translation of the Bible known as the *Septuagint* that was in use at the time of Christ than either the Received Text or the more modern text derived from *Codex Sinaiticus*.

Actually, as far as ordinary folks are concerned, it shouldn't make much difference which text ultimately comes out on top. They are both quite similar.

The Israeli soldier/archaeologist Yigael Yadin once observed that the Dead Sea Scrolls enable us to say for certain that the Biblical text has been transmitted from generation to generation with amazing accuracy for more than two thousand years. **GPH**✠

FROM THE PARISH CHEFS

Summer Suppers draw to a close

On Wednesday, 9 September at 6.30pm, the chefs of St Stephen's will serve up the last of the 2015 series of *Silly Summer Suppers*.

It's hard to think of a less appropriate name than 'Silly Summer Suppers' for these remarkable gastronomic events. The food is absolutely scrumptious – and there is plenty of it. Actually, the only thing silly about these suppers is the price – entrée, dessert and salad for just \$10. Soda costs a buck, and wine is \$3 per glass or \$5 for two.

If you are handy in the kitchen (or even if you are not) you are welcome to join our team of volunteer chefs.

FROM THE MUSIC OFFICE

Now hiring choirboys – apply today!

Saint Stephen's Choir Academy, the voice-training programme which provides the choristers for our parish choir, is looking for new recruits. If you know a family member, neighbour, or random kid on the street who enjoys singing, wishes to receive a *free* classical music education, and who might be interested in earning a stipend in the process, please contact the Admissions Director, Mrs Cheryl Nickol, on **410 329 6399** or at **admissions@choiracademy.org**

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies will lunch on 16 September

The Ladies Who Lunch will meet at Basta Pasta on Wednesday, 16 September at noon. Basta Pasta is located at 60 West Timonium Road in Timonium. Why not join us for a convivial get-together over a delicious meal? Good food and good fellowship – what more could you want? Please ring Joyce Perlberg on 410.252.2680 to make your reservation; she will need a final count by the 14th.

FROM THE PARISH TEA PARTY

Afternoon Teas need your reservations

Afternoon teas have become so popular that we have had to limit the number of reservations we can accept. We are able to comfortably serve 40 guests. Last month we had 56 sign up, and after having to turn some people away, some of those who reserved places did not turn up. In order to avoid this problem in the future, we will limit seating reservations to 40 guests. We ask that you please make a reservation using the sign up sheet in the main reception area, leaving your name and a contact number. If you later find yourself unable to attend, please contact the Parish Office immediately so we can offer your place to the next person on the standby list. **ANNIE HAWKINS**

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Office: 410 560 6776 · Rectory: 410 665 1278
Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P. Hawtin, *Rector*
The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. M. Wiley Hawks, *Priest · Adric, Magister Chori*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11 am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6 pm: Choral Evensong (as announced: evensong.ststeve.com)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5 pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Mondays, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club

Tuesdays, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursdays, 10 am: Knitting Circle

Fridays, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Wednesday, 9 September, 6.30 pm

The Last Silly Summer Supper

Wednesday, 16 September, 12 noon

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Basta Pasta

Thursday, 17 September, 2 pm

Afternoon Tea

Saturday, 19 September, 6 pm

Parish Picnic

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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