

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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*A parish in the classical Anglican tradition*

28 July 2015

## FROM THE RECTOR

### Rumours of my retirement are decidedly premature

Just as reports of Mark Twain's death were decidedly premature, so are rumours of my imminent retirement as rector of the parish. Indeed they are a timely reminder that the prophetic track record of analysts in the field of *parsonology* is no better than that of those working in the spheres of economics, politics, foreign affairs and the weather.

True, we have had a number of ordinations at St Stephen's during the past couple of years. And true I have in the recent past experienced a couple of serious illnesses (from which, I might add, my doctors tell me I have made a complete recovery). But even taken together, this surely cannot be construed as evidence that I am ready to retire.

So let me set the record straight: I have no plans to retire, nor do I believe the Vestry or Bishop Vaughan (the people who should certainly be the first to advise me to do so) want me to retire.

What's more, no matter what Church Canon Law might say on the subject, in reality I serve at the pleasure of you, the parishioners. And as far as I can determine, relatively few of you want me to retire – if only on the basis of better the devil you know than the devil you don't.

This, of course, does not mean that some day I won't retire, but I do hope that God plans for it to be a long way off.

That said, I certainly hope I don't end up like the incumbent of a rural English parish I knew in my youth. He had been in his mid-twenties when called to the parish, and some 70 years later he was resisting any suggestion the time had come to retire.

The problem was dumped in the lap of the auxiliary bishop of the diocese, a prelate noted for diplomatic skills. 'Dear Father \_\_\_\_\_,' he wrote, 'Congratulations on your 96th birthday. What a splendid record of service to your flock. However, I suspect you are probably thinking of retirement. If the diocese can be of any help in this regard, you have only to ask . . .'

He received an outraged reply by return of mail. It read: 'Dear Bishop, when I was called to this parish some 70 years ago I was under the impression it was a permanent position . . .'

Actually, how he managed to last so long working alone in his parish is something of a mystery. It takes a lot of intestinal fortitude to be a parish priest – a calling recognised by the insurance industry as 'a high stress occupation.'

Priests are constantly dealing with the human problems of everyday life and, moreover, those who spend long periods in the same parish inevitably end up burying most of our friends.

Serving a rural parish is no less arduous than one in the big city. The problems are the same. Only the settings are different. Thus the workload in his parish must have been unusually light or else he might have been rather less than conscientious.

I'm very fortunate in that I have been able to share my ministry with an assistant for much of my time at St Stephen's. To be a parson can be a lonely life and collegiality is a sovereign remedy for burn out.

It is balm to soul to have a colleague with whom to share ideas and work out frustrations at the end of the day. This is why so many most clergy eagerly look forward to such gatherings as synods. And I must admit it is one of the reasons I've welcomed the ordinations that have taken place at St Stephen's over the years.

However there's much more to commend the recent ordinations than that. Not least, it is a great tribute to St Stephens that over the years so many men of the parish have over the years sought Holy Orders. Only genuinely Christian institutions are able to inspire such aspirants to the priesthood.

The recent ordinations, however, will not be solely a blessing to St Stephen's. They will also benefit the Church at large. Without such ordinations, there would be no new generation of clergy to take up the torch when the present generation goes out to pasture.

However, all newly ordained clergy need a considerable time serving under more experienced men in order learn the skills they will need to lead a parish – for there is a vast difference between spiritual leadership and its secular equivalent.

Even so, it is unlikely St Stephens will enjoy its abundance of clergy for long. Other parishes have been quietly assessing the potential of

recently ordained parsons, and who knows when offers will be made that can't be refused?

Meanwhile the new clergymen recently appointed to serve the parish have enabled us greatly to expand our ministry at very modest cost – for all of them are serving as non-stipendiary volunteers.

Last month, for example, our pastoral care team – led by Fr Wiley Hawks and Director of Pastoral Care Happy Riley – conducted services for more than 400 residents of nursing homes and retirement communities. In addition, they made visitations to well over 200 people too sick to attend church.

Relatively few of these people are actually members of our parish, and our work among them represents a vitally important outreach by a small church to a largely overlooked and under-served segment of society. Outreach on such a scale would be completely impossible without our non-stipendiary clergy.

The church's young people are also benefitting from the increase in clerical staff. In addition to celebrating Saturday's Family Eucharist, Fr. John Novicki, a highly qualified teacher, is now acting as director of youth services. As such, he will be developing programs to enhance our outreach both to our own youngsters and those in the wider community.

A retired U.S. Army officer, Fr Novicki is also chaplain to a group of re-enactors who recreate the actions of the Canadian military in the Second World War. In this role, he conducts Church Parades and counsels group members – often reaching more than a hundred people over a weekend.

### **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, Ned, Paula, Sandra, Diane, Hobie, Nathan, Francine, Susan, Joanne, Holly, Hayley, John

**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

Increased outreach invariably marches hand-in-hand with an increase in administration, and here Fr Robert Ludwig has imposed a greater degree of order on our scheduling and record keeping. He also shares in the celebration of weekday Eucharists and with pastoral care activities.

Fr Michael Belt, who shares the Friday Healing Eucharist with Fr Ludwig, has joined Fr Kerouac and myself in the Sunday preaching rotation. While inevitably folks will always have their favourite preachers, a variety of voices from the pulpit helps keep the Gospel fresh and thought-provoking.

It also enables each of us once in a while to spend a Sunday in the pews with the parishioners – not only as worshippers, but as critics and as what is dubbed in industry as 'market researchers.'

Lastly, our new helpers in the parish enable Fr Kerouac and myself to devote a little more time to diocesan business. Fr Kerouac is Archdeacon and Diocesan Placement Officer, and I am the diocesan Chancellor, Vicar General and a clerical member of the church's National Council.

All of these duties take time, but the smooth-running of the diocese and the National Church are vital to the health not just to St Stephen's, but to all of our sister parishes. If you want to learn more about what we do in this regard, just give us a call. **GPH\***

FROM THE PARISH TEA PARTY

## August Afternoon Tea arrives early

We continue to serve our popular Afternoon Teas throughout the summer months on the Third Thursday of the month at 2pm. Next month, however, the Tea will move ahead two weeks to **6 August**. A sign-up sheet will be available in the church office, or you can contact Anne Hawkins on **410 913 7405** or [anne.hawkins@me.com](mailto:anne.hawkins@me.com)

FROM THE PARISH CHEFS

## Silly Summer Suppers are in full swing

Each Wednesday at 6.30pm through September 9th the chefs of St Stephen's are serving 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.

By the way, if you are handy in the kitchen (or even if you are not) you are welcome to join our team of volunteer chefs. In fact, if you decide to do so, you'll be welcomed with open arms. When you come to think about it, cooking your way to heaven isn't such a bad idea.

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**ChoirAcademy.org**

## St Stephen's Anglican Church

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*Pastoral Care:* 410 252 8674

**[www.ststeve.com](http://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. Mr M. Wiley Hawks, *Deacon* · 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)

**6pm:** Choral Evensong (as announced: [evensong.ststeve.com](http://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)

**Wednesdays, 6.30 pm:** Silly Summer Suppers

**Thursdays, 10 am:** Knitting Circle

**Fridays, 10.30 am:** Bible Study

### MONTHLY & SPECIAL

**Thursday, 6 August, 2pm:**

Afternoon Tea (*two weeks earlier!*)

**Wednesday, 19 August, 12 noon:**

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Pappa's

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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