

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

Volume XXVI, Number 47

A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

1 December 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

Diary of a Church Mouse

by Sir John Betjeman

(In England, 'Thanksgiving' is known as the 'Harvest Festival'. In towns and villages throughout the country, churches are lavishly decorated with produce – sheaves of wheat, barley and oats; heaps of cabbages, turnips and parsnips; festoons of onions; and huge loaves of bread baked in the shape of wheat sheaves, lambs, cows and chickens.)

It inspired the late Sir John Betjeman, poet laureate and keen churchman, to write this poem. My mother knew Sir John when she worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation, where he was a frequent guest. She was a great admirer of his poetry and, indeed, they were the last poems I read to her during her final illness.

When we were children, mother would frequently read us Sir John's poems. And at this time of year our favorite was 'The Diary of A Church Mouse'. Charlotte and I, in turn, read it to our children, and I would hope it becomes a family tradition.)

Here among long-discarded cassocks,
damp stools, and half-split open hassocks,
here, where the Vicar never looks,
I nibble through old service books.
Lean and alone I spend my days
behind this Church of England baize.

I share my dark forgotten room
with two oil-lamps and half a broom.
The cleaner never bothers me,
so here I eat my frugal tea.
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;
my jam is polish for the floor.

Christmas and Easter may be feasts
for congregations and for priests,
and so may Whitsun. All the same,
they do not fill my meagre frame.
For me the only feast at all
is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
when I can satisfy my want
with ears of corn around the font.

I climb the eagle's brazen head
to burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
and gnaw the marrows hanging there.

Christmas Services

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday, 24 December

4pm: Children's Crèche Service

7pm: Family Candlelight Eucharist

10.30pm: Choral Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday, 25 December

10am: Sung Eucharist

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, Cal, Phyllis, Edie, Will, Adele, Linda, George, Elizabeth, Shelby, Melissa, Sandra, Ralph, Nathan, Hobie, Hayley, John, Nancy, Jon, Gloria, Judy, Pam, Neal, Aida, Julie, Samantha, Jorge, Francine, David, Betty

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Ned, Cindy

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

It is enjoyable to taste
these items ere they go to waste.
But how annoying when one finds
that other mice with pagan minds
come into church my food to share
who have no proper business there.
Two field mice who have no desire
to be baptized, invade the choir.
A large and most unfriendly rat
comes in to see what we are at.
He says he thinks there is no God.
And yet he comes ... it's rather odd.

This year he stole a sheaf of wheat
(It screened our special preacher's seat),
and prosperous mice from fields away
came in to hear the organ play,
and under cover of its notes
ate through the altar's sheaf of oats.

A Low Church mouse, who thinks that I
am too papistical, and High,
yet somehow doesn't think it wrong
to munch through Harvest Evensong,
while I, who starve the whole year through,
must share my food with rodents who
except at this time of the year
not once inside the church appear.

Within the human world I know
such goings-on could not be so,
for human beings only do
what their religion tells them to.
They read the Bible every day
and always, night and morning, pray,
and just like me, the good church mouse,
worship each week in God's own house.

But all the same it's strange to me
how very full the church can be
with people I don't see at
all except at Harvest Festival.

Cookie Walk at a Glance

Now

- Bring donations for gift and children's tables
- Bring cut greens for wreaths and centrepieces
- Volunteer sign-up sheets are posted — *Please sign up!*
- Bidding is now open for the Knitters' Silent Auction

Now through Friday, 4 December

- Drop off cookies

Tuesday, 1 December (10am & 5pm)
and **Wednesday, 2 December** (10am)

- Volunteers needed to make wreaths and centrepieces

Thursday, 3 December and **Friday, 4 December** (10am)

- Volunteers needed to set up and decorate

Saturday, 5 December: Cookie Walk

- Volunteers needed from 8am–3pm

Sunday, 6 December

- Silent auction bidding ends following 11am service

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS

To make a contribution towards the Church Christmas decorations in honour or memory of a loved one, please complete this form and return it with a cheque—payable to **St Stephen's Anglican Church** and marked for **Christmas Flowers**—by 21 December.

Name of Donor: _____

Poinsettia colour (*circle one*): RED · WHITE · PINK

Single (6 inches, 5–8 blooms) @ \$12 · # of plants: _____

Double (7 inches, 10–12 blooms) @ \$18 · # of plants: _____

Triple (RED only, 8 in., 12–18 blooms) @ \$27 · # of plants: _____

Total # of plants: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

My gift is... (*circle one*):

IN HONOUR OF · IN MEMORY OF · IN THANKSGIVING FOR

(*dedication*): _____

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, The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*

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 (1st Sunday) – evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5 pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10 am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Saturday, 5 December, 9 am–1 pm

Cookie Walk

Sunday, 6 December, 6 pm

Choral Evensong

Wednesday, 16 December, 12 noon

Ladies Who Lunch: Christmas Lunch at Bluestone

Thursday, 17 December, 2 pm

Afternoon Tea

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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