

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

16 February 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Elections: Time for pols to take God out of the closet

God has been on so many people's lips in recent months – on TV, on the radio, in newspapers and periodicals, and even in the public square – that visitors from outer space might be forgiven for imagining the whole nation is caught up in the fervour of a full-scale religious revival.

There's no fear of that, however. It is simply that we in the midst of a presidential election – a time when politicians would cheerfully invoke the name of Lucifer, himself, if they thought it would bring them just a single step closer to the office they covet.

This being America, there's no need for that. Our politicians have no need to sell their souls to the devil because this is still a nation of people who, overwhelmingly, worship the God of the Old and New Testaments – hence, the unceasing appeals to the faith of our fathers.

Sure it's hypocritical, but hypocrisy, as Oscar Wilde once observed, is the tribute vice pays to virtue. And being routinely humbugged is part of the price we are obliged to pay for democracy.

The trouble is our politicians apparently take us for fools. For once in office, their tone changes. God is once again retired to the closet on the grounds that mere mention of his name in a public place somehow contravenes the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Actually, it's high time our legislators – not to mention jurists, journalists and lawyers – paid a little attention to what the amendment actually says.

It reads: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of a religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or of abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.'

Only by the most perverse interpretation can these simple, unambiguous words be construed as inhibiting our freedom to witness for our faith in public places. The amendment enshrines the American people's right to freedom of religion and freedom of speech as constitutionally-affirmed liberties.

Freedom of speech necessarily means that people are free to express any views they may hold -- religious, political, economic, philosophical or whatever. Exceptions to this rule are few and very narrowly defined.

When an influential political elite arbitrarily interprets the amendment as inhibiting the right to free speech about a topic that it finds objectionable, it is undermining the right to free speech about all subjects.

The amendment's prohibition of the establishment of a religion cannot reasonably be construed as placing any inhibition on a religious group's freedom to proselytise, preach and worship in public places where other forms of free speech are practiced.

Quite to the contrary: The prohibition has to be viewed in its context. And this demonstrates that the whole purpose of the amendment is to ensure that each individual religious and secular group enjoys equal rights with every other religious and

secular group in America's market place of ideas.

Clearly, the intent of the amendment is to prevent government acting – either of its own accord or under popular pressure – to suppress the rights of people to express, propagate and proselytise unpopular ideas. In fact, the whole purpose of the amendment is to protect unpopular speech. Popular notions need no protection.

The funny thing is that the folks who really seem to object to any public expression of religion are politicians – the folks who invoke God's Name so freely at election times.

It only goes to show how human they are. Like the rest of us, they are happy to accept the help God offers, but are not so happy to be judged by his standards. **GPH***

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, Bill, Terry, Helen, Jim, Adele, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Rosemary, Robert, David, Jan, Susie

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; Lt Cdr Emma Hawkins, RN

FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

Pancake & Sausage Supper rescheduled for Sunday

Saint Stephen's annual Pancake & Sausage Supper, originally scheduled for Shrove Tuesday, was postponed due to snow. It has been rescheduled for **Sunday, 14 February** following the 9.15am service.

For a mere \$5 per adult you can feast on scrumptious pancakes and a heaping helping of the finest sausages the city has to offer. (You could manage seconds? Be our guest!) Naturally, there will be lashings of syrup, butter, and apple sauce, with low calorie equivalents for folks watching their weight. Beverages will be available at nominal cost. Kids under 12 can tuck in for half price (\$2.50) for the first two, and the other kids you bring along – your own or anyone else's – eat free.

We challenge you to find a better deal in town than that! It can't be done! We have managed to hold our prices steady without compromising quality because the Pancake Suppers are not fund raisers but family affairs aimed at fostering fellowship and fun. If we make a profit, it's entirely accidental.

THE LENTEN STUDY

The English Church and English-speaking people

This year's Lenten Study will explore the extraordinary influence of the unique relationship between the ancient English Church and people has had not just on our own nation, but on English-speaking peoples throughout the world – even those who do not share our Christian faith.

The first of the five-part series will begin after Evening Prayer at 6.45pm on Wednesday, 17 February, and will continue at the same time on each Wednesday evening until 17 March. Each session will be completely contained so you can miss one but not lose the thread of the story.

As usual we will be offering you both food for both body and soul – not least a choice of hearty soups, beverages and the best bread in Baltimore. If you think that you'll need more than that, just bring a sandwich.

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies Who Lunch will meet at the **Padonia Ale House**, on Wednesday, 17 February. Contact Joyce Perlberg on **410 252 2680**

FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

January Parish Life meeting recap

- **Cookie Walk** – Net profit for 2015 was \$6,041.86
- **Church decorating dates** – Saturday, 19 March for Palm Sunday; Saturday, 26 March for Easter – all are invited to help decorate church.
- **Afternoon Tea** – Next tea is scheduled for Thursday, 10 March from 2–3pm. See Annie Hawkins if you can help make food or serve.
- **Garden Party** – Saturday, 7 May is the day before Mother's Day, so good shopping opportunities; discussed possible changes in format for mailings, postcard vs. multifold flyer; flower arrangements will be sold.
- **Security cameras** – Parish Life has agreed to underwrite the full cost of the security cameras to be installed at the front and rear doors of church. Thanks to everyone who has supported the Parish Life activities which made this donation possible.
- **At Jacob's Well** – Scott Taylor presented a fact sheet outlining the mission of this organisation and the support activities that he is coordinating for St Stephen's.
- **Coffee Hour** – Recognition of appreciation given for all those who recently signed up for coffee hour. It's exciting to note some new coffee hour volunteers on the list.

Complete meeting notes are available in the Cadwalader room. All are welcome to attend these meetings held the second Tuesday of the month.

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 (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

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

Sunday, 14 February, after 9.15 am service

Pancake & Sausage Supper make-up date

Wednesday, 17 February, 12 noon

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Padonia Ale House

Wednesday, 17 February, 6.45 pm

Lenten Studies begin

Thursday, 10 March, 2 pm

Afternoon Tea

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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