

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

1 March 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Stay-at-home mother as prophet of doom

My dental hygienist is a kindly, accomplished young woman with a gentle touch and a remarkable tolerance for a mouthful of sadly abused 'British teeth'. During a recent visit, we chatted about the state of the economy and the difficulty the average family faced in trying to survive on a single wage.

'My grandmother was a stay-at-home mom who raised four children. They seem to have lived quite comfortably on my grandfather's salary,' she said, 'Why is it so difficult to get by without two wages today?'

Her question brought vividly to mind a running conversation between my mother and two girl friends of mine that took place over 50 years ago, just when the 'Women's Lib' movement was beginning to gain traction.

It started because the girls were outraged that women who stitched upholstery at a nearby automobile plant were being paid 20 or 25 percent less than men engaged in the same work.

They wanted to meet with the women to urge them to strike for equal wages and sought the advice of my mother – a woman of decided opinion – as to how to go about it.

'You'll need to be really diplomatic,' mother told them. 'These women have not complained about the disparity in wages. Don't assume that they are too stupid to have noticed the wage gap or too frightened of their employers to complain about it.'

'Most of them are likely to be women who are married with children and are working to help pay for a house or a car – something their families couldn't afford on just their husbands' wages. It's unlikely they'll take kindly to young whippersnappers fresh out of college telling them they're being exploited.'

I could see that the girls weren't very pleased with mother's advice. But they set out full of zeal to right the wrongs inflicted on their working class sisters by the capitalist oppressors. They returned, much chastened, several hours later.

The upholstery workers had sent them away with a flea in the ear after giving them a stern lecture on the realities of working life. They explained that they could earn the same wages as men – maybe more, because it was piece work and women were generally more dexterous than men.

However, the men worked three rotating shifts. The women, by contrast, worked only during the day, and their work hours were arranged so they could see their children off to school in the morning and make supper for them in the late afternoon. The convenience was well worth the difference in wage rates, they claimed.

Mother resisted the temptation to say: 'I told you so.' Instead, she headed off in a direction that surprised us all.

'Be careful about where the Women's Liberation movement is leading you,' she said. 'You all have had the benefit of a good education and, if you're fortunate, you can look forward to interesting and rewarding careers. But remember, according to Genesis, work was intended to be punishment, not pleasure.'

'The vast majority of people don't have careers. They have jobs. Occasionally, jobs are interesting, but many, probably most, are dreary and repetitive – simply a means of making enough money to provide for themselves and their families. A majority of workers live just for the weekend.'

'Think about it: From the dawn of human history, families have striven to live on the fruits of the labor of as few family members as possible. By the end of the [Second World] War most had finally achieved the happy state of being able to live on one wage.'

'The real beneficiaries of this have been women and children, because it's usually the man who goes to work. Of course, before the invention of labor-saving devices like vacuum cleaners, washing machines and refrigerators, there used to be plenty to keep women busy around the house.'

'But that's all changed. Now, thanks to all those household appliances, we've got time to pursue our own interests: gardening, writing, politics, social work, even archaeology and church work – whatever stimulates the imagination. That's my definition of liberation!'

'Besides,' she went on, 'There's a flaw in your logic. You seem to be assuming men and women are in competition with one another. It might be true in a few individual cases. But it's not true of most married

couples.

'In most marriages, both partners are working towards the common goal of making the best life possible for the whole family. The man goes to work, but it's the wife who usually manages the money and runs the household.'

'And her work doesn't usually end there: Who do you think runs the civic organisations that hold the community together? It's rarely the men. They usually don't get home from work until 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening.'

'Women, for the most part, run the rate payers' [taxpayers] associations that make sure the local governments are doing their jobs. They play a leading role in organising the local branches of the political parties.'

'They organise most of the local charities. They also play an important role in education – not only sitting on school boards, but providing the backbone of the local parent/teacher associations.'

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

'The WVS (Women's Voluntary Service) does an enormous amount of important social work. And women take leading roles in organisations like the Civil Defence Corps. They also serve as justices of the peace and as local government councillors.'

'Just because they are unpaid volunteers, it doesn't mean to say the work they do is unimportant. In fact, you could argue that, because they are free to volunteer their time, they are able to make a more significant contribution to the welfare of the community than their husbands.'

'And, remember this, if women weren't free to do this volunteer work, the government would be called on to do it. And that means it would cost the taxpayers a lot more money, and it wouldn't be done anywhere near so well.'

'Frankly, in marriage, women have the best of the bargain. They are free to choose what they want to do. If they don't like it or if they get bored, they can stop and take up something different. Men don't have any choice. They have to go to work whether they like it or not. Think twice before you throw it all away.'

I was utterly amazed and not a little disillusioned. I'd always imagined mother to be at the cutting edge of social progress. Yet here she was, sounding like a total reactionary. I guess my girl friends felt the same way.

Looking back on it, I realise mother was not opposing the principle of equal work for equal pay. To the contrary she insisted upon. She was actually pointing out that stay-at-home spouses made an irreplaceable, albeit unacknowledged, contribution to national life.

As things turned out, both went on to enjoy successful careers – one as a senior civil servant; the other as a newspaper columnist. However, in view of the direction in which our society is headed, I wonder if they have ever revised their opinions about what mother had to say. **GPH**

FROM THE PARISH TEA PARTY

Afternoon Teas resume on 10 March

Saint Stephen's Afternoon Teas will resume on Thursday, 10 March at 2pm. We left January and February off the 2016 calendar as inclement weather has presented problems in past years.

Another change to note: The Afternoon Teas will now be served on the *second* Thursday of the month, rather than the third, to avoid clashing with the meetings of the Ladies Who Lunch.

We are so looking forward to our new spring get-together – not just for the fellowship we enjoy, but because your generous donations last year not only funded the Afternoon Teas, but, more importantly, raised \$896 to support At Jacob's Well, our parish's chosen charity.

Lastly, we have decided that rather than set a fixed price of \$10 for our teas, we will continue with an unrestricted free-will donation.

FROM THE MUSIC OFFICE

Now hiring choirboys – apply today!

Saint Stephen's Choir Academy, the voice-training programme which provides the boy choristers for our parish choir, is looking for new recruits. If you know a family member, friend, neighbour, or random

kid on the street who enjoys singing, wishes to receive a *free* classical music education, and who might be interested in getting paid in the process, please contact the Admissions Director, Mrs Cheryl Nickol, on **410 329 6399** or at **admissions@choiracademy.org**

THE LENTEN STUDY

The English Church and English-speaking people

This year's Lenten Study explores 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.

Each instalment of the five-part series begins after Evening Prayer at 6.45pm 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.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

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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

Wednesday, 2 March, 6.45 pm

Lenten Studies

Thursday, 10 March, 2 pm

Afternoon Tea

Wednesday, 16 March, 12 noon

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Padonia Ale House

Sunday, 20 March – Sunday, 27 March

Holy Week and Easter

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11856 Mays Chapel Road

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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