

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

5 April 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Reflections on a village: the ideal place to live

A shrewd politician a couple of decades ago claimed it took a village to raise a child – a contention that, at the time, did not go uncontested.

However, I don't think any reasonable person would challenge the assertion that a village is an ideal place in which to raise a family.

Actually, one might add that a village is an ideal place in which to grow old; or, for that matter, to reach middle age, or achieve one's majority, or to spend one's trying teenage years. In short, a village is an ideal place to live.

Not all villages measure up to this standard of course. One village not far from my own, for example, had a rather grisly reputation. One of its claims to fame was that the skin of a Viking was nailed to its church door.

It was an irregularly shaped piece of parchment-like leather about two feet by three feet. I guess it has shrunk some. But as children, we were queasily fascinated by the notion of villagers bloodthirsty enough to skin alive such a very small Dane.

Nor was that the end of it. The village was also home to nine witches. Asked how folks could be so sure, villagers would point to the solid, four square church tower. According to local superstition, if the witches left the village, the church tower would fall down.

Another neighbouring village was less than an ideal place to live for entirely different reasons. It was, effectively, the feudal fiefdom of two vast and sprawling extended families.

This, of itself, might not seem wholly objectionable, but the trouble was they were the English equivalent of the Hatfields and the McCoy's.

One controlled the cricket club and the church choir to the exclusion of everyone else. The other controlled the soccer team and the parish bell ringers to the same end. Only one thing united them: A loathing of outsiders.

That said, the villages in which Charlotte and I have been privileged to live have been wonderful places. Her family hails from Grey Summit, a community on the bluffs overlooking the Missouri.

It was Jesse James country – a land grant, settled in the 1840s by veterans of the War of 1812. It was a place where neighbours could number off your ancestors going back to the flood. Yet it was a community that embraced newcomers, welcoming them into its daily life.

The village where my family home lay was in Dedham Vale on the borders of Essex and Suffolk. The original Saxon Village was burned in a Viking raid during the Tenth Century and never rebuilt. Its site remains as a huge fallow field on the edge of the medieval village – actually the "modern" village.

Today, it is neither as small nor as remote as when I was a child. Wheat fields, pastureland and hedgerows have made shift for factory farming. The horse drawn wagons have given way to BMWs, Jaguars and Mercedes.

Thatched, two up/two down cottages which over the centuries were cherished homes to generation upon generation of working families now serve as weekend retreats for investment bankers. Places that rented for five bob a week (that's about 50 cents) now fetch upwards of half a million pounds (more than \$800,000).

But fifty years ago, it seemed a magical place, surrounded by fields and pastureland, drained by ditches and enclosed by ancient hedgerows, many of which were more than 2,500 years old.

In those days, kids roamed free. We would leave home at seven in the morning – sometimes with a packet of sandwiches, but more often than not with a Boy Scout's billy can and a box of matches to cook what we could dig up, catch or shoot.

Rabbits, hare and pigeon were our usual quarry and the contents of our game bags were a vital supplement to the family diet in an England, where meat was still tightly rationed.

Children enjoyed this extraordinary freedom because everybody knew everybody and watchful eyes were everywhere.

Help was never far away. Fields were never entirely empty: ploughmen, hedging and ditching crews, shepherds and cow-men – there was always somebody at hand to advise or admonish, or simply pass the time of day.

In this respect, the villages of my childhood were little different from counterparts two or three thousand years before. For example, you encounter the equivalent of the annual Parish Treat in the New Testament – in the second chapter of St Luke's Gospel to be precise.

In my day, villagers would clamber into buses outside the parish church and head off on a pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds, the shrine of our best-known local saint – naturally stopping for refreshment at various pubs along the way.

Indiscretions, of which there were many, provided a source of endless giggles and gossip, as well as providing the fabric out of which local legends were cut.

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, Cal, Phyllis, Edie, Bill, Terry, Helen, Jim, Adele, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Rosemary, Robert, David, Jan, Susie, Beth, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Pam

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

In Jesus' day, the people from his home village of Nazareth took off *en mass* to Jerusalem every year for the Passover. Probably they camped outside the city to save money.

It was not simply an occasion for piety. Doubtless there was plenty of feasting, dancing and singing round the campfire. Even the walk there and back was fun: parents and kinfolk gossiping and laughing along the way; the kids running ahead, racing, jostling, playing ball and tag.

Small wonder, then, that when Jesus was 12, Mary and Joseph travelled a full day's journey towards home before realising he wasn't with the rest of the kids. They found him back at the Temple, pestering the doctors with questions and answering theirs in return. You can bet the incident was a topic of village gossip for years.

Weddings were another feature of collective village life. In our village, everybody simply assumed they were invited and contributed something to the celebration in the form of food or flowers.

Provision of the drink, however, was the obligation of the father of the bride. Moreover, the quantities provided – and consumed – were carefully recorded and filed away in village legend.

Things were slightly different at the village of Cana in first century Galilee. There, it was the bridegroom who traditionally paid for the party – and running out of liquor occasioned a serious loss of face.

You can get a remarkable insight into the truly intimate nature of God's love for mankind when you consider that Jesus performed his first miracle in order to save a pair of newlyweds from the embarrassment of running out of wine at their wedding feast. **GPH✕**

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School 2016

St Stephen's Vacation Bible School, for children ages 4–10, will take place once again this summer during the week of 20–24 June from 9am–Noon. The cost is \$20, and there are scholarships available upon request. This year's theme is *Creation Days*. We will explore the seven days of Creation in the Book of Genesis. Please phone the church office on 410 560 6776 and speak to Happy Riley to begin your child's registration. We hope you will bless us with your children, and please have them bring a friend!

FROM THE LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies will lunch on the 20th

The Ladies Who Lunch will convene at the **Outback Steakhouse** on Wednesday, 20 April at noon. The Outback is located 134 Shawan Road, in the southeast corner of the Hunt Valley Towne Centre. Why not join them 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 18th.

FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

March Parish Life meeting recap

- **Security cameras** – Parish Life has underwritten the cost of the new security system with cameras and monitor. Price being secured for one additional camera to cover north parking lot area.
- **Pancake Breakfast** – The Pancake Fellowship Breakfast, rescheduled from Shrove Tuesday evening due to weather, was such a success that we plan to continue these every other month. The next pancake breakfast will follow the 9.15am service on Sunday, 10 April.
- **ACA Meeting** – The Anglican Church in America (ACA) Executive Council meeting will be held at St Stephen's from 12–14 April.
- **Garden Party** – Saturday, 7 May – Entertainment confirmed, jumble donations being accepted after Easter. Adding flower arrangements and potted flower table. Signup sheets available in a few weeks.
- **Helping Up Mission** – Information presented on Helping Up Mission in downtown Baltimore and Assistance Center of Towson Churches as possible future support.
- **Maintenance** – On church grounds, front fence is scheduled for repair. Termite control has been installed and areas treated. Repairs continuing to courtyard area.

Complete meeting notes are available in the Cadwalader room. All are welcome to attend the next meeting held on Tuesday, 12 April at 7pm.

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

Tuesday, 12 April, 7 pm
Parish Life Committee meeting
Wednesday, 20 April, 12 noon
The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Outback Steakhouse
Saturday, 7 May, 11 am–4 pm
St Stephen's British Garden Party & Fête

There will be no Afternoon Teas offered in April or May

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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