

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

14 June 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Losing the American mind's capacity for rational thought

Something quite terrifying is apparently happening to the American mind, or at least the more youthful portion of it. It appears to be rapidly losing its capacity for rational thought. Instead of thinking, increasingly it simply seems to "feel."

In short, it looks as if we, as a people, are swiftly devolving from the sapient to the sentient – a baleful prospect for those who cleave to the theory of the survival of the fittest.

A decade or two ago the phenomenon was largely confined to the liberal arts departments of the nation's colleges and universities.

It manifested itself primarily in three forms. (1) A refusal to acknowledge the merit and value of the seminal literary and philosophical works that underpin Western culture; (2) the creation of faux academic disciplines; and (3) a blank refusal countenance even the most moderate dissent.

A recent student petition at Yale University amply illustrates the phenomenon. The portion of it quoted in the Walls Street Journal combines pomposity, priggishness, callowness, an infantile narcissism and pig ignorance in three brief paragraphs – a remarkable literary achievement.

It reads: "We, undergraduates in the Yale English Department, write to urge the faculty to reevaluate the undergraduate curriculum. We ask the department to reconsider the current core requirements and the introductory courses to the major.

"In particular, we oppose the continued existence of the major English poets sequence as the primary requisite for further study. It is unacceptable that a Yale student considering studying English literature might only read white male authors. A year spent around a seminar table where the literary contributions of women, people of color, and queer folk are absent actively harms all students regardless of their identity . . .

"We ask that the Major English Poets be abolished, and that the pre-1800/1900 requirements refocused to deliberately include literatures relating to gender, race, and sexuality, ableism [sic], and ethnicity."

It is, however, not merely a remarkable example of turgid prose, combining an inability to distinguish sex (a biological term) from gender (a grammatical one), the employment of a ridiculous contrivance (ableism) as a euphemism for disability (itself a euphemism for handicap), and the conversion of the word "queer" from an epithet to an apparent term of approbation.

The petition also displays an astounding lack of logic and an extraordinary ignorance of world history.

It does not seem to have occurred to these neo-Philistines that the language they are aspiring to study evolved –from Celtic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse and Norman-French – between AD 50 or so and 1600 in a country populated, by geographic accident, entirely by white people.

Thus it is hardly surprising the authors of the literature written in the period prior to 1800/1900 tended to be almost (but not quite) exclusively white. It was, after all, a white people's language.

They were also primarily, but by no means exclusively, male. That was, after all, the way of the world at the time. Even so, the period between, say, 1400 and 1900 was also the time the English language reached its literary peak.

In other words, they are precisely the authors students interested in learning how to express themselves – presumably the motivation of folks applying for admission to Yale's English Department – would be advised to study.

Then, upon graduation they would then be able to express even the most loony ideas with some degree of eloquence. This wouldn't do much for the intellectual deficiencies of the Yale petition, but at least it wouldn't be so painful to read. Surely,

surely students who aspire to learn about the doings of women, persons of color, homosexuals or the handicapped they would have been better advised to sign on with such departments as African studies, women's studies, biology or sociology.

Certainly their petition demonstrates they are woefully ill prepared to study the great works of English literature. Indeed, if the petitioners had been studying at any respectable university 60 years ago they would have been sent down on grounds of hopeless inanity long before it arrived at the Dean's office.

As it is, a rejection of the petition would no doubt send them running to the nearest "safe space" to curl up in a fetal position with their thumbs in their mouths to be comforted cookies, hot chocolate and images of cuddly kittens and puppies.

If these folks are numbered among "our best and brightest," God help us!

That said, it would be wrong to blame them entirely for this infantile folly. They have, after all, been led down the "primrose path" [*Shakespeare's metaphor, not mine*] by people with a wholly different agenda.

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, 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

The folks who have cultivated this over-weening sensitivity among the young have done so in order to suppress any form to dissent from prevailing radical orthodoxies. What's more, such activities are by no means confined to universities.

In the wider world, those who dissent from the notion that people who were not alive during times of slavery owe reparations to people who were never enslaved are accused of racism.

People who still cleave to the traditional concept of marriage are denounced as "homophobes."

Those who challenge fashionable notions about "climate change" are silenced with claims that "the science is settled" – a thoroughly unscientific assertion. Even worse, they are reviled as "deniers" and campaigns are launched to prosecute them for their views.

Such behavior is about as far from the vision of our founding fathers as it is possible to get. Indeed, if anything can be described as "un-American," this is it. After all, a primary purpose of the First Amendment to the Constitution was to prevent dissenters from being silenced.

Universities are places where all ideas – good and bad, wise and foolish – should be open for exploration. To this end, the wilting violets of the Yale literature department could usefully spend a couple of semesters analyzing George Orwell's prophetic novel "1984." GPH✘

FROM THE PARISH TEA PARTY

Afternoon Teas resumed on 9 June

St Stephen's Afternoon Teas resumed on Thursday, 9 June at 2pm. We left April and May off the 2016 calendar as Holy Week and the Garden Party are busy times for the church. The Afternoon Teas are served on the second Thursday of the month. There is no fixed price for our teas, however free-will donations are accepted. We are only able to comfortably serve 40 guests, so we ask that you please make a reservation using the sign up sheet in the main reception area, leaving your name and a contact number. If you later find yourself unable to attend, please contact the Parish Office immediately so we can offer your place to the next person on the standby list.

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 15 June

This month the Ladies Who Lunch will meet at Barrett's Grill on Wednesday, 15 June at noon. Barrett's is located on the second level of the Hunt Valley Towne Centre. Why not join us for a convivial get-together over a delicious meal? Good food and good fellowship – what more could you want? Please ring Sara Douglas on 410 560 9026 if you are able to attend; she will need a final count by Monday the 13th in order to place the reservation.

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

8am: Said Eucharist

9.15am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –
evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Tuesday, 14 June, 7-8 pm Parish Life Meeting

Wednesday, 15 June, 12 noon

The Ladies Who Lunch meet at Barrett's Grill

Monday-Friday, 20-24 June, 9 am-Noon Vacation Bible School

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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