

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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12th July 2016

FROM THE RECTOR

Hooray for the Fourth of July; down with political correctness

The Fourth of July has a special significance for me and, I suspect, most people who, like me, were born elsewhere. It marks the 240th anniversary of the declaration that every living person has the right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' — thus giving birth to the most exceptional nation on earth.

When I was much younger and wet behind the ears, I was persuaded the U.S. Constitution, which sprang from the Declaration of Independence, was greatly inferior to the British version.

It was held that the "unwritten" British Constitution was far more flexible — and thus far more adaptable to changing political, social and economic circumstances — than that of America.

Years spent reporting both in the former Soviet Bloc and Western Europe taught me that flexibility is anything but a virtue. Experience shows that liberty is best guaranteed by government according to the U.S. model, with a constitution that unambiguously limits the muscle and reach of government.

Today, however, it seems that immigrants like me hold the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights in rather higher esteem than many of the folks who were born here. This, at least, appears to be the case from the apparent bland acceptance displayed by so many of our fellow citizens to efforts to modify, erode, distort or alter its meaning.

The relentless assault on the First Amendment is a case in point. Newly-discovered so-called "rights" are being invoked not only to stifle our constitutionally guaranteed freedom to express our religious beliefs, but also to restrict our political freedoms by stifling debate on a wide range of vital issues.

This is a development that is especially chilling for those of us in America who have experienced life in totalitarian societies where Christianity was considered, in Karl Marx's words, to be the "the opiate of the people" and condemned as subversive.

In the early days of the Soviet Union, bishops, priests and deacons faced the firing squad. When the Nazis invaded in 1941, Josef Stalin ordered the reopening of the churches when he saw the unflinching courage and self-sacrifice the Christian faith inspired.

After the war, however, his secret police cracked down on the faith once again. Bishops, appointed by the party, were essentially Communist stooges. Troublesome priests were routinely packed off to the Gulag, and congregations were largely composed of KGB agents and the impoverished elderly with little to lose.

Christians were not the only one crushed by the heel of the state. Everybody, even avowed Communists, was under constant surveillance.

The secret police throughout the East Bloc raised telephone tapping to an art form. It was common practice for people to cover their home telephones with a pillow because the secret police used the telephone as an eaves-dropping device to monitor "subversive" speech.

Even so, conversations about "sensitive" subjects were generally held in bathrooms with the water taps running in both sink and shower stalls for fear of the ever-present official eaves-droppers. Thoughtless or unguarded remarks were ruthlessly punished. Minor transgressors were often demoted or denied privileges such as the right to travel. More serious offenders were deprived of their livelihoods, their liberty and even their lives.

A Polish acquaintance, for instance, applied for membership of the Communist Party. He was not a convinced Marxist, but he wanted permission to travel to America. He was turned down on the grounds his dog was named *Bossa Nova*, after the popular dance.

Vainly, he explained that the dog was named *Bossa Nova* because he was constantly wiggling and jiggling. The cadres were not amused. The mere mention of a "decadent" Western dance was taken as evidence that he was hopelessly bourgeois and unqualified for party membership.

In Nazi Germany an off hand remark at a cocktail party had lethal consequences for a friend's aunt, a glamorous social butterfly with an acerbic tongue. She was overheard to remark that the Nazi leaders were so coarse and uncultivated they would never be welcome at her dinner table..

For this mild insult, she was arrested, brutally interrogated by the Gestapo and shipped off to a concentration camp to die in the gas chambers.

During Stalin's purges of the 1930s, an architect then employed by the Soviet dictator and his henchmen told me that he and his wife rarely enjoyed a night's sleep. Every day neighbors were whisked away in the dead of night by the secret police and the couple lay awake, terrified that the next knock on an apartment door would be for them.

This regime of fear was typical of the communist world right up to the Soviet collapse. The East German secret police, the Stasi, for example, directly employed around

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, Warren, Cary, Courtney, Jason Richard, John, Marie, Tom and Alan.

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

IN MEMORIAM:

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN:

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, Lt Col. Harry Hughes; & Lt Cdr Emma Hawkins, RN

274,000 agents with another 500,000 or so working as unpaid informers. At a ratio of one Stasi to every 166 citizens, it was a surveillance network that, on a per capita basis, far outstripped the Soviet KGB and Hitler's Gestapo.

In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge made even the fearsome Stasi look like pussycats. The Cambodian communists actually executed people who owned eyeglasses for the crime of being "intellectuals."

The morbid of intellectuals is reflected in the cynical Russian question. "Why do KGB men always work in threes?" The answer: "One to read, one to write, and one to keep an eye on the two intellectuals."

Actually, the repression of "intellectuals" — shorthand for people who think for themselves — is common to tyrannies of both the Left and the Right. That's because people who think

freely are liable to challenge political orthodoxy.

Sadly, in America the suppression of free thought is growing by leaps and bounds. Political correctness is, in fact, symptomatic of a “soft and creeping” tyranny. It is a stratagem for shutting down debate — preventing challenges to controversial political agendas by making discussion of them off limits. In short, it is the very antithesis of the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

In 1787, at the close of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was asked: “Well, Doctor, what have we got – a Republic or a Monarchy?” “

A Republic ...” replied Franklin, “If you can keep it.”

Timidly submitting to political correctness is a surefire way of losing it. GPH✘

FROM PRISCILLA HUFFMAN

Here’s what happened at Parish Life

Treasurer Cindie Baker reported that the Garden Party gross receipts totaled \$6,129.55. Expenses of \$3,459.97 left a net profit \$2,669.58. The June 9th Afternoon Tea free-will offerings, after reimbursements, amount to a \$150 profit to be donated to At Jacob’s Well. This is in addition to \$126 in cast donations placed in the basket in the font and \$200 in donated goods.

It was decided that Silly Summer Suppers would be held on Wednesday evenings from June 22nd through September 7th following the 6:00 PM service. The Committee desperately need volunteers to help prepare the suppers. Sign-up sheets are available on the bulletin board

It was agreed that the Church picnic will be held on Saturday, September 24th following the 5:00 PM service

Meanwhile the parish is to host the Diocesan Synod, the annual gathering of diocesan clergy and lay representatives. It will take place on Tuesday, October 4th through Friday, October 7th

Members were informed that flowers have been added to courtyard. It was also decided to seek quotes for tree removal from landscaping companies as well as to explore the feasibility of overall landscaping plan.

The committee is planning join a “Back Pack Program” to support 14 needy children at the local Mays Chapel elementary school. Walmart is to be asked donate backpacks for parish to fill with “back to school” necessities.

There will be no Parish Life meeting in July. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 9th at 7:00 PM. *All are welcome!*

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

Wednesday, 6th July, 6.30 PM

The Weekly Silly Summer Supper

Thursday, 14th July, 2 PM to 3 PM

Afternoon Tea

To reserve, call the Parish Office:: 410-560-6776

Sunday, 17th July, 6.00 PM

Choral Evensong

Wednesday, 20th July, 12.00 Noon

The Ladies who Lunch

at the Macaroni Grill, Padonia Road, Timonium

To reserve, call the Parish Office:: 410-560-6776

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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