

# St Stephen's News

## St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

Volume XXVIII, Number 25      *A parish in the classical Anglican tradition*      July 4th, 2017

FROM THE RECTOR

### Time to put the backwoods back into public education

More than any previous generation, we are told, Americans aged 18 and under are thoroughly detached from traditional Christian concepts. By and large they do not believe Jesus Christ is the unique savior of mankind. They do not read the Bible as God's word. And they do not accept the idea of moral absolutes.

"Futurists" (*an abominable word, Ed*) say youth distrusts traditional institutions among which church and synagogue are the most traditional of all. They predict the total decline of local congregations in favor of informal house churches or cyber-churches linked only randomly by computer or totally individual "spiritual behaviors."

Therefore those who look to the churches for the salvation of civic life, and/or political renewal and reformation need to understand that organized religion will have its hands full coping with purely internal issues for at least the coming generation.

The "futurists" who gleefully pass on this message appear to overlook the fact that it is no means solely traditional Christianity that is in trouble. If the 18s and under are utterly out of touch with religion, they are equally out of touch with our literary, cultural, philosophical, constitutional and historical heritage.

In other words, they are totally bereft of the basic tools needed to maintain life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in this great American representative republic of ours.

How they came to be this way was brought home forcefully to me in the handsome little pre-bellum town of Staunton, Virginia, where Charlotte and I are enthusiastic supporters of the Blackfriars Theater – a theatre modeled on the 16th Century Blackfriars Theatre, which stood a stone's throw from what is now Ludgate Circus, London's original West End.

A number of Shakespeare's best known plays were premiered at the first Blackfriars and it is, thus, an apt name for the home of what is arguably the finest troop of Shakespearean players in North America, if not the whole English-speaking world.

Some might think this extravagant praise. After all, it is not easy to upstage the folks at London's Old Vic or the Royal Shakespeare Company's performances in the Bard's hometown of Stratford upon Avon.

But wonderfully polished though such productions are, it is hard for performers in a conventional theatre to reproduce the spontaneity, verve, immediacy and intimacy of the Elizabethan theatre, the medium for which Shakespeare wrote.

The Elizabethan theatre is a medium as different from today's conventional theatres as television is from radio – and it, perhaps, for this reason Shakespeare today lacks the enthusiastic following he enjoyed even three decades ago.

Shakespeare wrote at a time when plays were performed in broad daylight in theatres designed to replicate – albeit in grander style – the courtyards of coaching inns.

Audience and actors lived cheek by jowl. The gentry were seated in the surrounding galleries and on stools on the stage, itself, while the common herd were crowded in "the pit" in the front of the stage. Players, thus, had no alternative but to interact with the audience, and Shakespeare exploited this aspect of the medium to the limit of its possibilities.

The proximity of the audience and the constant interaction between player and spectator make it nigh on impossible for

even the most dim-witted to fail understand what is going on.

This explains why my schoolteachers took my classmates and me as often as possible to this type of performance of Shakespeare's plays. We were enthralled by the high drama of his tragedies, the fast paced action of his histories and the ribald – not to say, downright bawdy – humor of his comedies.

And this gave us a love and mastery of the language that never left us. Indeed, it was much more satisfying to call some one who offended us an "addle-pated clown" or a "lily-livered loon" than a string of expletives deleted.

Yet, sadly, there were few 18s and under shrieking with laughter at the last Blackfriars' production we attended. The audience was composed mainly of gray beards, middle aged and elderly.

I am not saying that 18s and under never attend performances there. Quite to the contrary. I'm sure many of them do, in fact. But it's not something they would do off their own bat. It's more like a trip to a museum.

One reason for this is that Shakespeare's plays and sonnets no longer form a major component of our school students' literary curriculum, if, indeed, they figure in it at all. Shakespeare's language is simply too complicated for them, educators explain.

### 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:** Timothy, Peter, June, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Robert✕, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Cour Marie, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, David, Adrian, Michell, Aida, Mai, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey & Stephen

**FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Stephen, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Erin and Aubery

**ON ACTIVE SERVICE:** Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

Indeed, educators say it is so difficult even the Cliff Notes need Cliff Notes – not so much a criticism of the Bard as an admission of the grotesques failure that is our public education system.

A century ago, Shakespeare played to packed house from the frontiers of the Wild West to the coalmines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. And the audiences -- mainly rough, tough, hard-bitten, hard-drinking, men – hung on every word.

Those rough, tough, hard-bitten, hard-drinking men – unlettered though most of them were – loved the English language and reveled in using to the full their decidedly robust version of it. And if they could master Shakespeare, there is no reason our 18s and under cannot do so.

How refreshing it would be to hear teenagers, instead of putting down each other with a string of expletives, denounce those who offended their sensibilities as "low down, two bit, hornswoggling nincompoops." Would is not be marvelous if, when offended, they took frontiersman Davey Crockett as an oratorical role model?

For example, when rudely challenged by a stranger, Crocket replied: “[I am] fresh from the backwoods, half horse, half alligator, a little touched with the snapping-turtle. I can wade the Mississippi, leap the Ohio, ride upon a streak of lightning, and slip without a scratch down a honey locust. I can whip my weight in wildcats, and – if any gentleman pleases – for a ten-dollar bill he can throw in a panther . . . ”

Not quite Shakespeare, perhaps. But it’s getting close.

The irony of irony arising from the inability of so many to understand the Bard is found today in New York’s Central Park. There the widely admired Shakespeare in the Park Company is performing a version of his play *Julius Caesar* in which President Trump, thinly disguised as the Roman dictator, is brutally and bloodily assassinated.

As a protest, however, it’s simply a case of preaching to very small choir. Thanks to the city’s rotten public education system, the ordinary New Yorkers – folks the thespians presumably aspire to influence – won’t be able to figure out what’s happening on stage.

Hey ho! “It’s an ill wind that blows nobody any harm,” as Grandfather Myall used to say. GPH✂

FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

# Why not join us to sit back, relax and have a ball (of wool)?

Are the cares of the world weighing on your shoulders? Do you lay awake all night worrying about the kids, the grandkids, the out

come of the election? Are you swallowing antacid pills by the hand full? Or do you not give a hoot what the neighbors think and you don't have a worry in the world? It really doesn't matter what your circumstances are, have we got a deal for you.

Here's a way to kick off you shoes, put on your slippers, relax in friendly and interesting company and acquire, or simply improve, a useful skill that not only calms the fevered brow, but immeasurably adds to your popularity with your friends and neighbors.

Bring a ball of wool, a pair of knitting needles and join us in the parsh library on Thursday mornings at 10.00 AM. You can't knit? We'll teach you. Come and join us for fun, fellowship and one of the most relaxing pastimes ever. You'll have a ball.

FROM THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE

# Root around in your yards to beautify the churchyard

The strip of grass along the entrance driveway has been cleared by Scott Taylor and his crew of volunteers. Now we are seeking perennial plants from home gardens to put in that space. Suggestions for plant donations are Stella D'Oro lily or other day lily, dusty miller, corabells, columbine and any other deer resistant plants. Please go out into the yard and root around to help us.

## 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](http://www.ststeve.com)

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*  
The Venerable Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*  
The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki and  
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](http://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

## Parish Youth Play Group

*Every Sunday After the 9.15 Eucharist*

## Independence Day Hymnfest

*Tuesday July 4th 6.00 pm*

## Silly Summer Suppers

*The season starts on at 6.30 PM on Wednesday, July 12th*

## Vestry Meeting

*Wednesday, July 19th 7.00 pm*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Timonium, MD 21093

11856 Mays Chapel Road

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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