

# St Stephen's News

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

Volume XXVIII, Number 30

*A parish in the classical Anglican tradition*

August 8th, 2017

FROM THE RECTOR

### Good healthy guilt vs snivelling self pity

Life would have been bliss when I was a kid if Mother had subscribed to the now fashionable notion that making another person feel "guilty" is the greatest crime a human being can commit.

But mother belonged to what she called "The Pull Yourself Together School of Psychiatry." It espoused a straight and uncomplicated philosophy: Transgressors admitted their guilt, took their punishment without whining or bleating, and all was forgotten.

Today, by contrast, folks might be forgiven for thinking that the "right" not to feel "guilty" is enshrined somewhere in the Constitution or, perhaps, engraved on the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Indeed, the notion that it is evil to make other people feel guilty seems to be accepted as a self-evident truth.

Actually, the fact that this belief has gained such wide currency shouldn't be wholly surprising. Psychiatry, in the popular imagination at least, seems to be a science largely dedicated to eradicating all feelings of guilt.

"Pop" psychological theory is cited to excuse behavior that throughout history has been regarded abhorrent, and even criminal, on the grounds that its practitioners "can't help it."

It's only to be expected that Christianity should encounter open hostility in a society wedded to such beliefs. After all, the Christian Gospel teaches absolute truths about God and the manner in which he has commanded people to behave – both towards himself and their fellow human beings.

Christians who disobey God's commandments and flout his laws, quite rightly, tend to feel guilty about it. Feeling guilty is what repentance is all about. What's more, without repentance, there can be no true freedom from guilt. Repentance, you see, is a prerequisite for absolution – God's forgiveness.

There is, of course, a vast difference between reasonable feelings of guilt -- about things done and left undone for which we are personally responsible -- and unreasonable or irrational feelings of guilt.

Clearly, many people harbor feelings of guilt that are quite irrational. Such feelings are unhealthy and the unfortunates who suffer from them need help in overcoming them. But most of us feel guilty with very good reason. We have, indeed, done things we oughtn't to have done and left undone things we ought to have done.

Such feelings of guilt are healthy. They are good for the soul and, ultimately, good for society. When people mend their ways, their lives tend to improve – both at home and in their communities.

But while a reasonable sense of guilt is an important motivational force for social advance, the corollary is that unreasonable and irrational feelings of guilt undermine social progress: namely, policies that reward the undeserving dis-credit worthy efforts to assist those in genuine need.

The trouble could be that today we tend to overlook something Mother's "Pull Yourself Together School of Psychiatry" regarded as far more unhealthy than guilt. Mother never let us dwell on the wrongs that had been done us or to nurse our grievances.

Nothing, she said, was more crippling than a sense of self-pity. It might not be popular to say so, but, surely, encouraging victims to embrace a sense of victimhood serves only to victimize them all over again. GPH✘

### An odor of sanctity

Most people today have only the sketchiest notions of where their food comes from and how it is produced. Even adults often fail to associate the shrink-wrapped packet of hamburger in the supermarket meat section with something that eats grass and goes "moo."

Thus modern-minded clergymen are wont to shake their heads sagely and observe that the agricultural metaphors Jesus employs to illustrate his message are completely lost on a majority of folks today. Indeed, this is an argument that is frequently used to advance the cause of "modernizing" scripture and making it more "relevant to ordinary people."

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

**FOR THE DERPARTED:  
THOSE WHO MOURN:**

**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.

Frankly, I don't buy it – and not just because "ordinary people" aren't that dumb. The fact of the matter is that familiarity with things agricultural can sometimes make it more difficult to understand quite what Jesus is getting at.

As a small boy, for example, I found it hard to understand why Jesus would want to describe himself as a "Good Shepherd." It seemed a singularly inappropriate metaphor for the Son of God. I was well acquainted with shepherds and they really didn't conform with my idea of Jesus. In large part it was a question of image: The shepherds I knew didn't look at all like the Jesus depicted in my picture books.

My shepherds tended to dress – winter and summer – in a vast assortment of odd knitted garments, topped by an ancient and extremely greasy raincoat and an equally greasy cloth cap. What's more, in their work clothes, shepherds exuded the decidedly unappetizing odor of sheep. For this reason alone, they weren't the sort of folk that people would be inclined to

follow – into a wilderness, up a mountain, or anywhere else for that matter.

Surely Jesus could have chosen a better way of describing himself – “the Good Ploughman," "the Good Dairyman" or "the Good Gamekeeper," for example? Such names had style!

As things stood, I simply couldn't picture Jesus preaching and performing miracles while clad in rubber boots, a mound of unraveling sweaters, a greasy raincoat and a cloth cap.

It wasn't until much later that I discovered how wrong I had been about shepherds and how apt the "Good Shepherd" metaphor is. Shepherds are a tough and dedicated bunch. It takes skill, courage, and a good deal of compassion to handle a flock in a bitter cold lambing season.

Shepherding also requires an element of saintliness, too. There are no dumb animals dumber than sheep. Looking after their wants would, indeed, try the patience of a saint.

And a shepherd's job in First Century Judea was far tougher than it was in mid-20th Century rural England. Its terrain was such that, at any moment, the sheep were at risk of being swept away by a mountain torrent, carried off by hill bandits or ravaged by wolves or the Judean lion.

If the landscape was harsh, so was the weather: pitiless showers, driving snows and parching heat. A shepherd's life was on the line every minute of the day.

In such circumstances, there grows up between shepherd and flock a profound relationship of tenderness and trust. Unlike their European and American counterparts, shepherds in the

Holy Land don't drive their flocks. They lead them and – so complete is the bond of trust – the sheep unhesitatingly follow.

This is the relationship between God and mankind that Jesus is depicting with his "Good Shepherd" metaphor.

Sadly, however, people compare rather badly with sheep. For all their faults, sheep are usually capable of recognizing a good shepherd when they see one. But you can't always say that of human beings. GPH✘

FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

## Have a ball on Thursdays

Knitting is the ideal way to relax in friendly and interesting company. Join us in the parish library on Thursdays at 10.00 AM. You can't knit? Cindie Baker, one of our most experienced knitters, is ready to teach you. So join us You'll have a ball.

FROM THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE

## Plants for the churchyard

The grass strip along the driveway has been cleared and we are seeking perennial plants from your gardens to put in that space. Suggested donations include Stella D'Oro lily or other day lily, dusty miller, corabells, columbine and any other deer resistant plants.

## 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*

## Silly Summer Suppers

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

## The Ladies Who Lunch

*Wednesday, August 16th, 12.00 pm - 2.00 pm*

*at Michael's on York Road, Timonium*

## Afternoon Tea

*Thursday August 24th 2.00 - 4.00 pm*

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