

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

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FROM THE RECTOR

Self-deception is the cause of grotesque delusions

Experience teaches us that human beings have an infinite capacity for self-deception. This leads us to put our trust in the most untrustworthy ideas, both great and small.

I first came to this realization when I was quite a small boy – not, I hasten to add, that I was then, or am now, entirely immune to the tendency, myself.

The first time I remembering encountering it was while talking to an elderly gentleman in our village. He was an old sailor, who constantly chewed tobacco, and I was utterly fascinated by his ability to spit over vast distances with remarkable accuracy.

I had secretly practiced spitting myself, but was nowhere near as accomplished as the old sailor, so I asked him to what he attributed his great skill. “Chewing tobacco” was his reply and he commended the habit to me both to improve my spitting and on health grounds.

“Chewing tobacco is really good for the teeth,” he explained, earnestly, “I don’t need to brush my teeth because chewing tobacco keeps them healthy. I’m 82 years old and I’ve chewed ‘baccy all my life and I’ve never had a tooth pulled. Just look at them.”

With that he opened his mouth to demonstrate the veracity of his statement. To be sure they were all there – as far as I could tell – but they were just as black as the ace of spades, and his breath would have paralyzed a polecat. The evidence, I decided, simply didn’t support his claims.

I next encountered the phenomenon while chatting with Sam Walker, my grandfather’s gardener. He had been a soldier in the South Africa War and in the First World War, too. He attributed his survival to always having a rabbit’s foot in his pocket.

“Nothing like a rabbit foot for bringing you luck and keeping you safe,” he assured me.

Even at the time it was uttered, it struck me there was something wrong with the logic of this assertion. After all, possession of a rabbit’s foot hadn’t done much for the rabbit’s survival. The prayers Sam said might have had more to do with it, I concluded.

Later, I learned that people deceive themselves about much more important things than chewing tobacco and rabbits’ feet.

In the 1930s, for example, large numbers of people in Europe deluded themselves into thinking Adolf Hitler’s intentions were essentially peaceful despite the fact that he had openly revealed quite the opposite in his book *Mein Kampf*.

Similarly, during the same period, a vast majority of people on the political left took Soviet show trials orchestrated by Josef Stalin seriously. They actually believed the poor souls hauled before his kangaroo courts were guilty of the grotesque crimes to which they had been tortured into confessing.

In the wake of the Vietnam War it was a common self-deception to regard the Soviet Union as somehow the moral equivalent of the United States. Now that the Iron Curtain has fallen, it is an equally common self-deception to regard post-Soviet Russia as a natural ally.

Today people are deceiving themselves with delusions that are even more grotesque – not least with the fashionable notions about the sexes.

Certainly, intellectually speaking, women are the equals of men, but, no matter how often some might assert it, women and men are not interchangeable. Biological identity is established in the womb. Sex cannot be “reassigned.” Plastic surgery and hormone injections do not

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, Charlotte, Rodney, 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, Pamela, Isobel, Judy & Aileen

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.

change an individual’s chromosomes.

However, perhaps the most serious self-deception of all has been the belief that the 60-year-long campaign to banish the moral teachings of the faith of our Founding Fathers – the Christian faith – from the public square is without baleful consequences for our nation.

In fact the origins of our present political and social upheavals arise directly from efforts of activist atheists – aided and abetted by politicians, the judiciary and business leaders – to exclude God and his Commandments from the nation’s public life.

It has among other evils given birth to the notion that competence trumps character – to the destruction of the American family, the coarsening of personal and public behavior, and widespread dishonesty, the spheres of politics, business and religion. Thus when NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick “takes a knee” during the National Anthem to

protest alleged racism he is said to be exercising his First Amendment right to free speech, while a referee who does the same to give thanks to God is deemed to be acting unconstitutionally. Go figure! GPH*

FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

Join us for 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 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 at 10.00 AM. You can't knit? We'll teach you. Join us for fun, fellowship and one of the most relaxing pastimes. You'll have a ball.

FROM THE PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

Lawn mowing opportunity

St. Stephen's brand spanking new Model 140 John Deere tractor/mower needs some friends to help it keep the lawn pretty. The current operator now needs 2 or 3 helpers so that each team member need only mow once a month. (more often is OK if desired). Mowing takes about 1 1/2 hours. Call Dick Huffman for details or chat at 9:15 coffee hour. Cell: 443-764-6554 or email huffdad1@verizon.net

FROM THE CLERGY

Come to the Harvest Festival on Sunday, September 24th

Giving thanks for a bountiful harvest is a tradition that dates back to the founding of the English Church in the First Century AD. Sadly, in recent years it has fallen into disuse. In recent years St Stephen's has revived this time hallowed custom. This year the Harvest Festival will be celebrated at all three services on Sunday, September 24th. Please join 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

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Venerable Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*

The Rev. Michael Belt and The Rev. John Novicki

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: Sung 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

The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, September 20th. Pappas Restaurant, 550 Cranbrook Road, Cockeysville. To reserve: Call Sara Douglas 410-560-9026

Vestry Meeting

Wednesday September 20th 7.00 pm

Afternoon Tea

Thursday September 21st, 2.00 pm

Harvest Festival

Sunday September 24th

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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