

# St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

Volume XXVIII, Number 39

*A parish in the classical Anglican tradition*

October 10th, 2017

FROM THE RECTOR

## Discourtesy is to blame for bitter partisanship

In recent years we have been treated to much wailing and gnashing of teeth in the media about the bitterly partisan atmosphere in Washington where the political denizens have elevated it to the level of an art form – albeit a notably ugly and intellectually dishonest one.

Actually, it's hard to believe the media hasn't noticed that a bitter political partisanship has been afflicting social relationships here since at least the late 1970s – by no means solely in Washington but throughout America. After all, the media is largely responsible for fomenting it.

Indeed, the media has been so successful in doing so that bitter partisanship is by no means confined to the political arena. Rather it has insinuated itself into virtually every aspect of American life.

Political partisanship is no longer solely related to the people to whom we give our vote. It now extends to the choice of the people with whom we elect to associate. Even the places where we worship seem to be divided along partisan lines – liberal or conservative.

Truth to tell, the media's feigned horror at the bitterness of the partisanship in Washington calls to mind the scene in the movie *Casablanca* where Captain Renault (Claude Rains) declares he is "shocked, shocked" to discover people gambling in Rick's Café.

Hypocrisy, as Oscar Wilde so pithily observed, is the tribute vice pays to virtue.

Sad to say, partisanship seems to be the rule in every aspect of daily life. Even the products we buy inspire partisanship: Several years ago we needed to replace Charlotte's ancient SUV. After much research and deliberation, we decided on a Subaru.

"I never put you down as tree-hugging lefties," sniffed an acquaintance on learning of our purchase. It seems Subarus are regarded in some quarters as the "badges and tokens" of left wing political leanings.

Every cloud, however, has a silver lining – thus I hope our Subaru will protect us from the wrath of the proletariat when the revolution comes: My Toyota truck, you see, is apparently an unequivocal expression of patriarchal, white supremacist, gas-guzzling, anti-environmental, rightwing extremism

In truth – not that truth matters much when it comes to political correctness – both vehicles were purchased for entirely practical reasons: price and utility.

Given our 'druthers, we would much rather drive a 1931 Stutz Bearcat, a 1954 Aston Martin, a 1963 Cadillac convertible or 1966 Ford T-Bird – all, I confess, regarded in leftist partisan quarters as politically incorrect. To which, I would respond: Things of beauty are a joy forever. But I digress . . .

No matter: There is no place whatsoever, it seems, for the moderate, the neutral, or the apolitical on the battlefield of American social relations. Indifference to the vehement political disputes merely excites the antipathy of all sides.

Yet hard though it might seem to believe, there was a time when politics were by no means a cause of social division. Political views were simply treated as personal opinions of no particular interest except at election time.

Back then a circle of friends was composed of folks of various political and religious persuasions united by common interests such things as the PTA, books, art, music, freemasonry, amateur dramatics, automobiles, sports and the like.

Politics and religion in no way hampered people's mutual enjoyment of each other's company. On occasion, however, such differences actually contributed to interesting and informative discussions because, back then people were expected to treat each other with civility and respect.

Our London dinner parties were tremendous fun, albeit occasionally raucous fun. In those days, dinner guests were usually invited for their different political persuasions – on grounds that too much uniformity of thought on any subject made for dull conversation.

All that had changed by the end of the 1970s. In New York,

### 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.

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**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

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

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**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.

dinner parties, in the media world at least, had become relentlessly, not to say drearily, political. Parties even at friends' homes were either deadly dull gatherings of the like-minded or arenas for hand-to-hand political combat.

Weird though it might seem, dinners, cocktail parties and social gatherings in the Soviet Union and most of its satellites in the 1960s & 70s & were a good deal more friendly and enjoyable than they tend to be in today's London and Washington.

Sure, the political divisions between us were profound, but away from the negotiating table debates were generally good-natured, respectful and civil. Folks on either side of the divide who were anything less than courteous were not invited again.

What has changed here in America is not the profundity of political opinion – far from it. Compared with yesteryear, what passes for political thought today tends toward the derivative and the banal.

In the past, however, political opinions were as strongly held

as they are today. But the thing that has changed is our regard for civility, courtesy and tolerance.

Sad to say, we have become a society where rudeness and boorishness reign supreme. And the source of this ugly disregard for common courtesy is the gross self-absorption fostered by our legal system, our body politic and, yes, the very media that bemoans its consequences.

All three have combined to drive the wellspring of courtesy and tolerance in our society – the teachings of the Christian faith – from the public square.

As a consequence, “do as you would be done by” has been replaced by “do what you will.” (And for Christians, the originator of that particular doctrine should not be hard to identify.)

In sum, however, Washington’s bitter partisanship is merely a symptom of our problem. And the only way to cure it is to treat the underlying disease. GPH\*

FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

## Buy a poppy in honor of those who gave all

The armistice that brought an end to "War to End All Wars" was concluded at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. To honor the dead of that horrific conflict, and to provide some comfort to the injured survivors, hand

made poppies -- simulating the flower that covered so many of the battle fields -- were sold to the public in remembrance of the sacrifices that had been made. Since then, the poppy has been worn in honor of all who have laid down their life in the service of our country. Please help us honor the dead -- and raise funds to help the wounded -- by buying one of our beautiful hand knitted poppies. They are on sale in the Cadwalader Room, priced at \$5 each.

AN APOLOGY FROM THE RECTOR

## My phone number has changed to 443-425-2420

Boy, is my face red! Recently, as many of you already know, Charlotte and I moved house. I doing so, we left our old telephone number behind. This was something of a relief as the answering service had never worked satisfactorily. We forwarded the calls made to the old number to the new number: 443-425-2420. Whether because of my ineptitude or that or the phone company, the system didn't work. The calls were not forwarded. To those of you whoe calls I missed, I sincerely apologise. From now on, however, you can reach me, day or night, at my new number. If I am unavailable, leave a message and I'll get back to you.

### St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Office: 410 560 6776 · Rectory: 443-425-2420

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 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](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

Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

#### MONTHLY & SPECIAL

### Parish Life

Sunday, October 15th, 12.00 pm

### The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, October 18th. 12.00 pm

Barrett's Hunt Valley Mall

To reserve: Call Sara Douglas 410-560-9026

### Vestry Meeting

Wednesday October 18th, 7.00 pm

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