

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

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FROM THE RECTOR

Jesus commands we pray for politicians we despise

The nation has rarely been so politically divided, and this, sadly, has once again rekindled debate over our obligations as Christians to pray for the men and women who pilot our ship of state.

Indeed, many more liberally inclined churches today have ostentatiously abandoned praying for the President of the United States. Others merely pray for the "Office of the President."

Whatever the route taken, the intention is the same – to demonstrate publicly a disavowal on religious grounds of a person they oppose in the realm of secular politics.

Kicking one's political adversaries out of one's prayers certainly satisfies the ugly human craving to punish those one holds in contempt. The problem, however, is that Christians don't have the option of wreaking vengeance on those who offend them. Quite the opposite, actually.

Jesus tells us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us and to pray for those who are spiteful to us and persecute us (*Matthew 5:44*).

Similarly, we don't have the option to omit from our prayers the political leaders with whom we disagree or despise. It doesn't matter whether one is for a policy or against it, offering prayers for those who guide the affairs of the country, whether they see things our way or not, is a solemn Christian obligation.

Indeed, praying for the civil authorities is one of the oldest customs of the Church. Intercessions on behalf of the government, for example, are at the very top of St. Paul's priorities in his instructions to St. Timothy on how he is to conduct services at the Church in Ephesus.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," he writes (*1 Timothy 2:1 & 2*).

Moreover, it doesn't matter in the least whether or not the civil authorities in question are Christian, pagan, or even atheist. We're obliged to pray for them no matter what their religious convictions.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," writes Paul of the Emperor Claudius (*Romans 13: 1-7*), "For there is no power but of God ... For he is the minister of God to thee for good . . ." And nobody can reasonably contend that Claudius was a liberal or a friend of the Church.

Our Prayer Book's "Prayer for the President," thus, has a long and honorable history. It was adapted in 1789 from the "Prayer for the King" in the English Book of Common Prayer. The original was first published in 1547, predating by two years the Book of 1549 – the first official Prayer Book to be published in the English Language.

There was a heated debate among the American revisers as to whether or not it was appropriate for the Church to pray for a U.S. president, who holds office for a limited term, in the same way as it prays for a monarch who holds office for life.

This wasn't a mere matter of semantics. The English Prayer Book contains no "Prayer for the Country" because the prayer for the reigning monarch is deemed to cover this need.

Canon Norris, a 19th Century Liturgical expert, explained: "It should be remembered, in all our prayers for the Queen, that

we are praying for a blessing, not only on one whom we revere individually, but also on one who represents to our minds our unity and majesty as a nation." he said.

"When we speak of the head we speak of the whole. In praying God to bless the Sovereign of this realm, we intend to pray for a blessing on our land and nation. Were this not so, it might seem strange that nowhere in our Prayer-book is there a prayer for England."

The argument over prayers for the U.S. president seems to have been settled by Bishop William White. In a letter to Bishop Thomas C. Brownell of Connecticut, dated February 8th, 1822, he observed scornfully:

"It may be questioned, whether in a government which gives no power commensurate with life, it be congruous to pray for the long life and prosperity of the first Magistrate; but it is contemptible to cavil at the title of 'God's servant,' as applied to an unbelieving President, when everyone, who understands Greek, knows he is called so in Romans xiii.4."

Holy Week Schedule

25 March through 1 April

Palm Sunday

8 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Choral Eucharist

11 am: Choral Eucharist

Holy Monday

6 pm: Said Eucharist

Holy Tuesday

6 pm: Said Eucharist

Spy Wednesday

6 pm: Said Eucharist

Maundy Thursday

7pm: Choral Eucharist & Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday

12 noon: The Seven Last Words from the Cross

3.30 pm: Children's Way of the Cross

6 pm: Communion of the Presanctified

Holy Saturday

7pm: The Great Vigil of Easter

Easter Day

8 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Choral Eucharist

followed by Easter Egg Hunt (for children 9 and under)

11 am: Choral Eucharist

The prayers for the president remained in the Prayer Book. And Americans apparently regarded them in precisely the same way the English viewed the prayers for the monarch – as prayers not just for an individual, but for the well-being of the nation as a whole.

Indeed, it was not until the 1928 revision that the Church felt it necessary to include a "Prayer for the Country" in the Book of Common Prayer.

That the prayers for the civil authorities also encompass prayers for the community as a whole raises the question of whether it is appropriate to pray for the civil authorities by name: Donald, the President of the United States; Lawrence, the Governor of this state, etc. The fact of the matter is that this was a time hallowed Anglican custom – at least until political partisanship abolished good manners. GPH✳

FROM PARISH LIFE

Potted Plant fundraiser

The Parish Life committee is having a fund raiser this spring for St. Stephen's Church. Order forms for potted plants for the garden, patio or balcony are in the Cadwalader Room. Order by April 9, and pick up at church on May 4th and May 5th 10:00 am to 2:00

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, Bryan, Dorothy, 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, Elizabeth, Wade & Michael

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

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.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

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: Sung Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)
(3rd Sunday Choral Eucharist)
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

Lenten Series continues

Wednesday, March 21st 6.45 pm

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, March 21st, 7.00 pm

The Ladies Who Lunch

Barrett's Grill - Hunt Valley Towne Centre
Wednesday, March 21st 12.00 pm
Details: Call Sara Douglas 410-560-9026

Easter Flowers For St Stephen's Altar

Here is a selection of beautiful spring flowersto decorate the church for Easter Please make your choice and return this form to the church office with your check by Wednesday March 28th. Flowers may be taken home after the 11.0 am Service

Your Name:
Lilies Small elite 6" 4-6 blooms @ \$10 (# of plants.....) Field Azalea @ \$15 (# of plants.....)
Hydrangeas Four plus blooms @ \$20 (# of plants.....) Hiacynths @ \$10 (6" pot) (# of plants.....)
Tulips @ \$10 (6" pot) (# of plants.....)
Total # of plants Total amount enclosed
My gift is IN HONOR, IN MEMORY OF, IN THANKSGIVING FOR (please circle)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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