

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

Volume XXIX, Number 24

A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

June 26th, 2018

FROM THE RECTOR

Faith in Jesus Christ means that everyone's a winner

St. Paul is not the sort of chap one might expect to meet at the YMCA or the health spa – doing aerobics, or stumbling around on a treadmill, or working out on one of those weird exercise machines. Still less would one expect to see him, clad in shorts and tank top, doing warming exercises up beside a running track.

The reason for this is most people picture St. Paul as an intellectual and scholar – in other words, a bit nerdy. But things weren't always like that. Once upon a time one needed both good grades and a respectable athletic record to get into seminary.

Prowess in at least one "manly" sport – football, crew, track or boxing – was an important qualification for the clergy. Back then (50-plus years ago) educators subscribed to Juvenal's maxim "*Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano*" – "A sound mind in a sound body is a thing to be prayed for."

In fact, educators shared the belief with their Greek and Roman counterparts that a sound mind was actually the product of a sound body -- that physical fitness was a precondition for optimum intellectual effort. When archaeologists unearthed the Lyceum, the philosopher Aristotle's famous academy in Athens, the evidence that persuaded them it was really Aristotle's school was the discovery of its wrestling and gymnastics arena.

St. Paul was a highly educated man in both the Jewish and Greek traditions. While Jews didn't hold physical fitness in great esteem as an educational tool, the Greeks certainly did, and it is hard to imagine that St. Paul managed to avoid the physical side of his Greek education.

I don't know whether he was much of a boxer or a wrestler (both popular sports with the Greeks and Romans), but it certainly seems he had a liking for running races because he uses runners and races as metaphors many times in his epistles. In fact, sometimes he sounds a bit like one of those veteran football coaches who see the whole world in terms of a game of football.

This is exactly what he was doing in the passage from his First Epistle to the Corinthians that reads: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye might obtain."

That's an athlete who's won some and lost some, and knows that winning is better. What St. Paul is saying is that in order to win the prize, you've got to be in the race.

Paul was speaking to his audience in a language they understood. The Greeks of all classes, even slaves, were avid sports fans. They worked out daily at the public baths (the equivalent of our health clubs and spas) and eagerly attended sporting events at their local stadium.

Corinth, like most large Graeco-Roman cities, had a magnificent public stadium and often played host to

international competitions that attracted athletic stars and hopefuls from all over the Roman Empire.

Christianity, Paul says, is like an athletics event. You have got to run in the race if you want to win the prize. Spectators don't expect to win prizes at athletic events and nor can they expect to win prizes in Christianity.

It might seem strange to think of Christianity as a spectator sport. But, in fact, it's a very apt metaphor. There are many people who consider themselves Christians, but who, in reality, are merely spectators. They are as different from real Christians as the fan in the stands is from the quarterback throwing the passes.

The fan might speak football jargon as well as the quarterback; he might have an even better grasp of strategy and tactics; but when it comes down to it, it is the fellow who is out on the field who collects the accolades and the million-dollar pay check.

When all's said and done, the football fan is simply a consumer of football. And the same is true of Christianity: Many churchgoers are not so much Christian as consumers of Christianity. Sad to relate, it's an easy enough attitude

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: Priscilla, Michael✠, 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, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Patsy & Scott

REPOSE OF THE SOUL: Gordon Turner
FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: Mavis Turner and family

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

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.

to slip into. Consumers of Christianity tend to be connoisseurs of religion: liturgy, theology and preaching. They savor the faith more for the manner of its execution rather than what it means. They critique the way things are done instead of practicing the doing of it. In other words, with them style triumphs over substance.

Like football or any other sport, Christianity requires practice. You can't just walk in off the street, take off your coat, run out on the field and throw a winning pass. It takes years of effort – physical and mental effort – to become even a passable professional quarter back. And same goes for Christianity – except, of course, there is no such thing as an amateur Christian. With Christianity, there are no half measures: Either you play the game full time, or you'll find

yourself back in the bleachers, looking on. Being a Christian takes constant effort. Perhaps this explains why we call Christians who take their faith seriously "practicing Christians."

But while there are many similarities between a sporting life and a Christian one, there is one huge difference – and this lies in the division of the spoils, in the distribution of the prizes. In the world of sport, there are no second place winners. Only one athlete gets the gold. With Christianity, the odds are infinitely better: Providing you enter the race, you're guaranteed the prize.

And not only that -- with Christianity there are no second place winners. As Jesus explains in the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, every one who enters the race wins first prize. Unlike the world of sport, with Christianity, quite literally, every one's a winner. GPH✕.

The history behind our sundial

Our English forebears were practical people and their church buildings traditionally served secular ends as well as spiritual needs. Lofty spires served to direct people heavenwards but the foursquare towers which support the spires, however, were built with a rather more secular purpose in mind.

They served as places of shelter in times of war when enemies came to rob and pillage, congregations simply made barricaded themselves in the tower. Similarly, church bells were used both as a call to worship and a means of summoning

help in times of war and civil emergencies. In times of peace and tranquility, church towers continued to serve practical purposes. Time is age-old human preoccupation and in the days before wrist watches were invented, they looked towards the church towers for answers.

Since the Dark Ages church towers have been decorated with sun dials. Often they were very elaborathavee affairs, embellished not only with gilded scrollwork, but also with proverbs and religious texts.

They were a favorite memorial gift among the local gentry because the name of the donor was constantly brought to mind. The clergy favored them because they provided the flocks with a perpetual sermon on the shortness of life and the need to repent before it was too late.

Sundials did not fare well during the Parliamentary Rebellion of the 17th century. The puritan soldiers all-too-frequently smashed elaborately decorated sundials claiming they fostered idolatry.

Many of the sundials that survived this ugly period of English history were destroyed by the arrival of the church clock. In the Middle Ages, only wealthy cathedrals and abbeys could afford clocks, but from the 17th century onwards, parish clocks increasingly displaced the sun dial.

Even so, many ancient sun dials still occupy places of honor on church buildings. There is a breathtaking example at Hampton Court Palace and notable ones at Oxford, Cambridge and, of course, St. Stephen's Church, Timonium.

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*
Associate Rectors: The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, The Rev. Wiley Hawks, The Rev. Robert Ludwig and The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers.
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 Services (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
Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle
Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

The Vacation Bible School

June 25th to June 29th, 1.00 PM - 4.00 PM

Silly Summer Suppers

Wednesday July 4th 6.30 pm

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, July 18th, 7.00 pm

The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Junly 18th 12.00 pm

venu to be announced

For reservations: Call Sara Douglas
at 410-560-9026

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