

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

History is what it is – so suck it up and live with it

The plumber who fixed the leak in St Stephen's utility closet vacationed in Ireland recently. And the thing that particularly struck him about Dublin, the capital of the Irish republic, was that its venerable buildings were largely of a similar vintage to those in Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Actually that goes for much of Europe north of the Alps. While many of the major northern European cities were founded during the Roman Empire, most of their buildings were constructed at the same time as those in the historic cities of America's Eastern Seaboard.

Central Paris, for example, was largely reconstructed in the latter part of the 19th Century. Bath, an architectural jewel in England's West Country, was founded by the Romans, but the city we see today was designed and developed in the mid-18th Century as a health resort.

The famous districts of central London – including Mayfair, Belgravia, Kensington, Chelsea, Bayswater and Islington – were built, largely by speculative developers, in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Even in the "Square Mile" – as the original historic City of London is known – the buildings date back mainly to the 18th and 19th Century. And they are frequently interspersed by less than distinguished replacements to those destroyed during "the Blitz" in the Second World War.

When we as a family emigrated to the U.S. at the end of the 1970s we stayed with an old friend in his gracious manor house on Long Island. The original house dated back to 1680. In other words, it was older than the greater part of the housing stock in Northern Europe.

Sad to relate, a decade later, following the death of our old friend, that charming old house was reduced to a pile of rubble and replaced by five or six hideous "MacMansions."

It had been judged by the preservationists not worth listing as an historic building because it was not "all of a piece" – the original 17th Century building having been enlarged with additions in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Yet since time immemorial home owners have habitually added to and "improved" their properties. As a consequence, there is scarcely an historic building in Britain or the Continent that looks exactly the way its original architects conceived it.

If the Europeans had adopted a similar preservation philosophy to the one apparently prevailing in America, their continent would be as bereft of historic buildings as our Eastern Seaboard.

America's passion for the new, and for tearing down and rebuilding the old – coupled with two centuries of immigration – has left the U.S. with a population with a much more tenuous attachment to its past than its European counterparts.

Indeed, time without number I have heard Americans exclaim: "Compared with Europe, America doesn't have

much history." And every time I'm tempted to respond: "Yes, that's because you keep tearing it down."

Henry Ford might have declared that "history is bunk." But the enormous wealth he was able to accumulate doesn't make him right. Indeed, his attitude to history is not merely pig ignorant, but immensely destructive.

Ford owed his vast success to the two great discoveries that ushered in the 19th Century's new and dynamic industrial age – steam power and electricity. Without them, there would have been no huge power stations, no railroads, no internal combustion engine, no domestic appliances and no cheap consumer goods.

Were it not for those two great discoveries, the vast majority of us would still be living in mid-19th Century urban squalor. There, living was such that the difference between chattel slaves in the southern plantations and the wage slaves in the slums of northern cities was that the

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office (410) 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Daniel, Leona, Charlotte, Bryan, Rachel, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Robert✕, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, Adrian, Tom, Michell, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, Judy, Elizabeth, Wade, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Dan & Scott

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

IN MEMORIAM: The Rev. Canon Roger Rovelstad

THOSE WHO MOURN: Mrs Ardis Rovelstad & family

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt. Col. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

latter were free to swap their back-breaking jobs for others that still paid the same starvation wages.

Indeed, running the average American household today consumes the amount of power that would require the efforts of more than 40 servants and household staff. Were it not for honest history books we would be tempted to forget that it took a full 100 years for steam power and electricity to raise Americans from 19th Century squalor to post World War II prosperity.

This is why the current political taste for purging history – taking it out of its original context, and interpreting it according to modern standards of belief and behavior is to be deeply deplored and fiercely resisted.

There is nothing new about campaigns to rewrite history books to conform with politically correct feelings nor with the removal and/or destruction of statues of historic personages currently out of political favor.

Western history is replete with them: From the Middle Ages to right up to the 21st Century, books have been

burned, works of art destroyed, statues smashed and buildings torn down in the name of religious orthodoxy, revolutionary politics or simply social engineering.

This is not vastly different from the Taliban who blew up monumental statues of Buddha because their religion forbids the depiction of the human form or the Islamic State fanatics who, for the same reasons, destroyed irreplaceable archaeological artifacts in Syria and Iraq.

Yet few American apostles of political correctness would deny that the Taliban and the Islamic State had committed wanton acts of cultural vandalism that deprived the world of great works of art and valuable glimpses into the heart of ancient Middle Eastern civilizations.

When all's said and done, history is history. You don't have to like it, but you do have to live with it.

Henry VIII (he of six wives), Genghis Khan and Ivan the Terrible were not particularly admirable characters. But expunging them from the history books would change nothing. It would merely make it harder to assess their influence on today's society.

Suppressing history, distorting it, misinterpreting it and rewriting it simply robs us of the ability to learn from it.

And as the sage George Santayana so presciently observed: "Those who will not learn from history will be doomed to repeat it." GPH✘

FROM THE TREASURER

Please send in your pledges

Churches, like families, need to plan their budgets, but, also like families, they find it hard to do so if they are unable to forecast what their income will be. St. Stephen's is drawing up its budget for the year, but cannot finalize things until you have all sent in your annual pledges.

We realize that making a pledge is a chore at a time of the year in which there are more than enough chores already. But pledges are our "security blanket" And, like Linus in the Peanuts cartoon, we need our "security blanket." Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year: BOB REYNOLDS

FROM CYNTHIA BAKER

Christmas Pudding Bowls & Jelly Jars

Please remember to bring your Christmas Pudding bowls and jelly jars back to church. We will need them for refills for next year's Cookie Walk. The same goes for the ceramic containers used for Christmas greens arrangements.

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

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar* ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki,

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, The Rev. Robert Ludwig. &

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: Sung Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

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

Noon: Bible Study

Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

TAKE NOTE: CHANGED DATE

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, February 20th, 7.00 pm

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Noon, February 20th

at the Peppermill, Towson

Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Monthly Choral Evensong

Sunday, February 3rd at 6 pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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