

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM CHUCK STETSON

## Children need the Bible to understand the world

*From time to time, parishioner George Michaels forwards to me articles he has culled from the press and the Internet. All of them are well work reading and passing on. This one, however, deals with a subject we should all find important.*

Most of the recent discussions about teaching the Bible in schools miss the key points. First, teaching the Bible in public schools is important for students because, without knowledge of the Bible, students can't fully understand the English language, English literature, history, art, music or culture.

For example, there are over 1,200 documented references to the Bible in Shakespeare's 36 plays. If you don't know the Bible, you really can't understand Shakespeare. You can't get past the first sentence of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* - "Call me Ishmael" - if you don't understand who Ishmael was in the Bible.

Of the allusions that a student needs to know for Advanced Placement in English Composition and Literature, approximately two-thirds are Biblical allusions, according to AP Literature and Composition. If you don't know the Bible, you won't do well on this part of the Advanced Placement test.

Further, *Essentials in Education*, which has the only First Amendment Safe textbook for teaching the Bible in public schools, did a national survey of high school English teachers.

The results revealed that 96 percent of English teachers believe that young people were disadvantaged when studying English literature if they didn't know the Bible.

At the college level, 39 university English professors supplied an aggregate of 72 books they collectively teach in freshman year that require a knowledge of the Bible.

Second, students in the public schools are kept from religious teaching of the Bible by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in 1963 when Justice Tom Clark, who wrote the opinion, stated:

"It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities.

"Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment."

Further, there is the consensus document "*The Bible & Public Schools, A First Amendment Guide*," which our *Bible Literacy Project* co-published with the First Amendment Center with endorsements from the National School Boards Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association as well as People for the American Way.

Third, in the most recent national survey that we conducted in May 2017, 80 percent of Americans wanted the Bible taught in public schools. However, we know from other surveys that only about 8 percent of public schools do so.

Since Bible courses are almost all electives, where only about 25 percent of a class might take the course, the reach is 2 percent. Given that 80

## 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, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, Rebecca, Catherine, Elizabeth, Tom, Michell, Camillo, Lewey, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, Judy, Elizabeth, Wade, Sifa, Theresa, Lisa, Larry, Dan & Scott

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

**IN MEMORIAM:** Tripp Johnson

**THOSE WHO MOURN:** The Johnson family & friends

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

percent of Americans want the Bible taught and only 2 percent are taught this is an eye-opening disconnect.

Fourth, given the lack of responsiveness of public schools to the documented needs of the students, legislation to encourage the teaching of the Bible academically in public schools has been enormously helpful in several regards.

While schools, for the most part, ignore it, the legislation does provide protection for the school teachers who want to do what is right for students. It also encourages parents to ask the schools to do what is right for their students.

We have led that effort on a bipartisan basis from an academic point of view, starting with the state of Georgia passing legislation to encourage the teaching of the Bible academically in 2006, followed by South Carolina and Texas in 2007,

Tennessee in 2008, Oklahoma in 2010, South Dakota and Arizona in 2012, Arkansas in 2013 and Kentucky in 2013.

We need to shift the conversation on teaching the Bible in public schools to what the students need to learn to better understand the world around them.

Our textbook, "*The Bible and Its Influence*," is currently being taught in 650 high schools in 45 states and has a 10 percent market share in six states. It is the dominant textbook and, as noted above, the only First Amendment Safe one. We need all schools to focus on this.

We are beginning to get a lot more momentum now and believe that we are not too far away from reaching a tipping point where instead of teachers and schools having to find a reason to teach the Bible academically, they will soon have to find a reason not to teach it.

*Chuck Stetson is CEO of Essentials in Education, the parent company of the Bible Literacy Project.*

#### THE LENTEN STUDY

## Story of the English Church

This year's Lenten Series studies the origins and development of the Anglican Church. The first session

which took place on Wednesday, March 13th, dealt with the story of Joseph of Arimathea and the founding of the church in the First Century, as well as its relationship with the Druids, the Romans and the rest of the Christian world.

Future sessions will review the differences between the Church in Britain and the Roman Church and the Orthodox Churches of the East; the development of the English Church in the Dark Ages and Middle Ages, and its influence on civil government in both England and America.

Led by the Rector, the study will also assess the effects of the Reformation as it played out in England in the sixteenth century and the Anglican Church's clashes with Roman Catholicism, as well as the rise of Puritanism in the 17th Century.

The study takes place on 6.45 PM on Wednesdays after the Evening Office and concludes on Wednesday, April 10th. As usual we are offering a hearty bowl (or two) of soup, the best bread in Baltimore and beverages. If you think you are going to be really hungry, bring a sandwich. But rely on us to provide the food for thought.

## 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 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](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

Noon: Bible Study

**Friday, 10.30am:** Bible Study

#### MONTHLY & SPECIAL

## “Our Odd Anglican Ways”

(The Lenten Series)

*Wednesdays until April 10th, 6.45 pm*

## Ladies Who Lunch

*Wednesday, Noon, April 17th*

*venue to be announced*

*Information call all Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026*

## The Evening Choral Office

*Sunday, April 7th at 6.00 PM*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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