

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH • TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

## It couldn't happen here? You've got to be kidding

For years now I have resisted acquiring an i-phone. My daughters claim it is because I am a "Luddite" – utterly opposed to new technology in all its forms. Actually, that is far from true. I abandoned quill pens in favor of computers more than 40 years ago.

True, I don't like texting. But then it's jolly difficult to do it efficiently on a flip phone – especially if you're used to a "qwerty" key board.

The reason I don't like i-phones is they enable government snoops to follow you everywhere you go. They enable them to track your every move. I'm told it is possible to disable such features, but my naturally suspicious nature persuades me the authorities can over-ride efforts to evade their surveillance at will.

Sooner or later I guess I will have to give in and acquire an i-phone simply because flip phones will go out of production. My only comfort is that the snoops will be bored rigid by the somewhat prosaic nature of a parson's life – no subversive conspiracies; no steamy romances.

My abiding aversion to being spied on by government snoops (or private enterprise ones, for that matter) is a lasting legacy of more than a decade spent reporting on the communist regimes of Eastern Europe.

It was impossible to avoid the snoops. In cities, towns and villages, the necessities of daily living were invariably in short supply, but the things one could always rely upon finding were the omnipresent eyes and ears of the secret police.

In Moscow's hotel corridors, for example, the comings and goings of guests were scrupulously observed and noted by legions of brawny, grim-faced old ladies.

In East Berlin, we were constantly monitored by euphemistically dubbed "*betreuer*" or minders from the hated *Staatssicherheitsdienst* ("Stasi" for short) who had the confounded cheek to shake us down for \$100 a day for the privilege of being watched.

Things were still uglier in Romania where an edict made it a capital offense for anyone to give economic information to foreigners. Terror was so ingrained even bus conductors shrank from speaking aloud the price of the bus tickets they were selling us – for fear of being arrested on espionage charges by the ubiquitous Securitate.

Nor did the surveillance by the secret police end when we crossed the threshold of our homes and hotel rooms. Mostly the telephones were bugged rather than the light fittings. Thus the phones were used not only to record our calls but to listen to the conversations taking place in the rooms. In response, we used to pile pillows over the phones the moment we stepped through the door. That's unless we felt like playing mind games with the snoops – an amusing pastime, though not without its dangers.

In Moscow, it frequently took several hours to get a phone call through to Britain or America. The phone

service, you see, had to locate a suitable English-speaking KGB snoop to monitor the call. This was more than a little irritating, but not without its funny side. Shortly before we married, I placed a call to Charlotte from my hotel room in Moscow.

It took four hours to get through, and when we were finally connected she told me, much to my surprise, she had found a new apartment for us in London at a very reasonable rent. The only drawback, Charlotte explained, was she had to buy some decidedly peculiar furniture that went with the apartment, *viz.* two "mushroom" tables, a huge Danish purple seating stand, etc, etc.

Our snoop on the line clearly detected the amazement in my voice. For upon hearing the fact that we had acquired a table made out of a front door, she broke into the call. "Zat iss enuff!," she shrieked, and promptly disconnected us.

## 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, Ardis, Mavis, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey, Beth & Kath

**IN MEMORIAM:** Mrs. Dorothy Lewis

**THOSE WHO MOURN:** The Lewis 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.

I howled with laughter. She obviously imagined that my new CIA control was passing on to me sinister coded instructions that posed a real and present danger to the Soviet state.

Those mushroom tables, the seating stand and the front door dining room table must have kept a whole team of KGB code breakers busy for a month. The downside was that I couldn't get another phone call through to the outside world for the rest of my stay.

Thirty years ago this sort of surveillance by our own government would have been quite unthinkable. But that, lamentably, is no longer the case. Indeed, the U.S government has systems for snooping on us that would make communist secret policemen green with envy.

Things are said to be by no means as bad here as they are in Britain. Britons, for instance, are constantly monitored by an estimated four and a half million centrally-linked closed circuit TV cameras – one camera for every 15 citizens. A million cameras are deployed in London alone, while the rest are

distributed throughout the country – even in remote rural districts where crime rarely happens.

What is the purpose of all this surveillance? It doesn't do much to solve crime. Even the London Metropolitan Police statisticians admit only one crime has been solved for every 1,000 cameras deployed – and that at a cost of a whopping \$35,000 per crime.

Nor do they seem to deter crime. One crime victim reported that the closed circuit camera overlooking his backyard neither deterred the criminal who invaded his property and viciously assaulted him, nor did it secure a conviction though the assault was recorded on tape.

So what purpose do these cameras serve? First, they raise vast amounts of revenue, automatically recording the slightest traffic infraction – the accidental crossing of a yellow line, for example – for which the authorities levy hefty fines.

Second, they scrutinize people's behavior – how they act, what they do and with whom they associate. They are used to monitor public meetings, demonstrations, smaller protests and even spontaneous gatherings. And they routinely eaves drop on the intimate affairs of the unsuspecting.

Here in the U.S, local, state and federal government agencies are inquiring and applying similar technologies.

Washington is covered with security cameras. And Baltimore, too, is headed in that direction.

Cops routinely electronically monitor the number plates of every vehicle they encounter. Face recognition technology is already reality. Even more astounding, the National Security Administration records every phone call made on earth.

Even worse, private enterprise outfits like Amazon, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. are doing the very same thing – often with even more advanced technology.

Claims that the cameras are merely being used to deter terrorists, criminals, aggressive drivers, speedsters and folks who run red lights are by no means reassuring. If experience in Britain is anything to go by, this is simply the camel's nose under the tent.

Many Britons seem to have persuaded themselves that constant surveillance makes them more secure. But as Benjamin Franklin astutely observed: "Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both."

The problem was defined by the Romans more than two millennia ago. "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*" they asked: Loosely translated, it means: "Who keeps watch on the government watchdogs?" Who, indeed? GPH✘

## 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, March 13th to April 10th, 6.45 pm*

## Ladies Who Lunch

*Wednesday, Noon, March 20th  
venue to be announced!*

*Reservations: Call Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026*

## Cash Bingo Night

*Friday, March 22nd at 630 pm  
Hot dogs and beverages available*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen's Anglican Church  
11856 Mays Chapel Road  
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