

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

Heroes Ancient & Modern: a Memorial Day meditation

The Hollywood stereotype of hero rarely holds true in real life. Whatever you might see in the movies, heroes are by no means invariably young, confident and athletic. Sometimes they are old and wrinkly: Moses, for example, was nearly 80 years of age when God called him to lead the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt.

If you think Moses was a bit long in the tooth to be a hero, he did, too. In fact, he spent best part of that day trying to talk God out of the whole notion. Oddly enough, he didn't plead that he was too old – vanity, I expect. But he tried just about every other excuse in the book to wriggle out of the job. "They won't believe a word I say." "I haven't studied theology." "I'm no good at public speaking."

But God wouldn't take no for an answer. And, much to Moses surprise, when he was put to the test, he passed with flying colors.

Search human history, and you won't find a more courageous leader than Moses or a leader with more grit and determination. And it took all of these qualities to transform the children of Israel from a cowardly, self-centered rabble into a disciplined, self-confident nation, dedicated to the service of God.

These great accomplishments, of course, were not entirely Moses' doing. The Lord told him before he set out for his first big showdown with Pharaoh: "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

In other words, Moses submitted himself entirely to God's will, and the Lord gave him the strength and the courage and the wisdom to see the job through.

Curiously enough, the first British naval captain to engage the German fleet in the Second World War was a man who, to his much younger colleagues, must have seemed almost as old as Moses. He was a Royal Navy reservist who'd been recalled to the colors to augment an officer corps desperately lacking both in numbers and experience.

Captain Kennedy was in his late sixties: While most of his contemporaries were playing with their grandchildren or working in their "Victory Gardens," he had been put in command of a superannuated destroyer and given the task of protecting a small convoy of merchant ships in the North Atlantic.

The crews of those merchant ships reported that Captain Kennedy must have known his ancient vessel didn't stand a chance against modern warships when the German battle group was first sighted.

But to their amazement, instead of turning away from the German warships, Kennedy ordered his helmsman to steer straight at them. After breaking out the battle ensign, he ordered his gun crews to open fire.

Kennedy knew his ship's guns were hopelessly out-ranged and out-classed. But he knew something else: that until the enemy had dealt with him, they could not feel safe to attack the merchantmen under his protection.

German intelligence reports stated that Kennedy's

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

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

IN MEMORIAM: Our Nation's Fallen Heroes

THOSE WHO MOURN: America's Gold Star Families

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

gunners failed to score a single hit on their adversaries. Every shell fell short. But the longer the ancient vessel stayed afloat, the better the chance the merchantmen had of getting away.

Within an hour, Kennedy's old ship had gone down with all hands. All that was left was flotsam and jetsam: There wasn't even an oil slick. The old ship had been a coal burner.

But Kennedy's sacrifice of himself and his men saved the life of every soul on the convoy. Kennedy was not a man who had nothing to live for. He'd married late in life and had just become the proud father of a son, who was never to know him. But he was a professional sailor and he knew his duty.

Gideon, who led the children of Israel in a battle to the death against the Midianites, on the other hand, was anything but a professional soldier. When

the Angel of the Lord first spoke to him, he was threshing his wheat in wine press so that the Midianites wouldn't find it and steal it. Nothing very brave about that – something the Angel made clear with his ironic greeting: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

Gideon wasn't a man moved by irony, urging, or insults, but he was a man of deep abiding faith. He understood that if God gave him a task, God would give him the means to carry it out.

Some 32,000 men flocked to his banner, but. God wanted to demonstrate that what matters is not numbers, but whether or not he is with us. So God told Gideon to take the men to quench their thirst, and to take with him only those who lapped the water like animals, keeping their weapons to hand. By the time God's winnowing process was complete only 300 men remained. But with God's help they vanquished the Midianite host.

The story of Gideon has echoed wherever people have readied themselves to lay down their lives for their fellow men: His example inspired the fighting men at Brooklyn Heights, at Yorktown, Chancellorsville, Antietam, Paschendale, Dunkirk, Corregidor, Guadalcanal, on the beaches of Normandy, in the Ardennes, the Pacific, Korea, in the jungles and paddy fields of Vietnam, the deserts of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan.

When we give thanks for the sacrifice of the brave men and women who have kept and preserved us a nation, we should also give thanks to our God who gave them the strength and the courage they needed.

The reason we who are alive today are enjoying life in this great land has to offer is that God has inspired ordinary men and women to love their fellow men more than they love life, itself. And as Jesus Christ said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." GPH✠

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Very Rev. Guy P Hawtin, Dean & Rector
The Ven. Michael Kerouac, Vicar ·
Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki,
The Rev. M Wiley Hawks
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)
11 am: 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

The Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, 7.00 PM, June 19th

Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, Noon, June 19th

Reservations, call all Sara Douglas at 410-560-9026

Summer Choral Events

As announced

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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