

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

VOL. XXXI, No. 2 A PARISH IN THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN TRADITION JANUARY 29TH, 2020

FROM THE RECTOR

## A royal judicial murder that appalled England

The English Church marks the martyrdom of King Charles I every January 30<sup>th</sup>. He was beheaded on a scaffold erected just outside the elegant Banqueting House of the Palace of Whitehall in London on that day in 1649.

Charles had been tried before a “rump parliament” stacked only with his political enemies and convicted of being “a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy to the good.”

It had been a bitterly unpopular trial, and his execution, originally scheduled for the morning, had to be postponed until 2 PM the afternoon because it had been impossible to find an executioner willing to behead “the Lord’s Anointed.”

Richard Brandon, the official “Common Hangman,” and his assistant publicly refused to do the job despite being offered the anonymity of masks and an inducement of 100 pounds cash – and enormous sum, worth more than 10 years wages for a skilled craftsman.

A headsman was finally persuaded to wield the axe for a rumored fee of 300 pounds. The revulsion with which the execution was regarded is reflected in reports that as the axe fell “a great groan” arose from the vat crowd that had gathered in silence to witness the execution.

To this day nobody knows for certain the name of the executioner or his assistant. However it was widely suspected that, having initially refused the job, Brandon’s greed ultimately overcame his scruples. Not so his official assistant, however. Instead, Brandon is believed to have been assisted by a soldier named Lieutenant Colonel George Joyce.

Neither man publicly confessed to a role in the king’s execution. Even so, long after Brandon’s death he was still being reviled as the man who killed the king. Meanwhile Joyce’s decision to flee the country upon the restoration of the monarchy was widely interpreted as a tacit admission of his guilt.

Born in Fife, Scotland, on November 19, 1600, Charles I was the second son of James VI of Scotland and Anne of Denmark. In 1603 James was invited to succeed Elizabeth I as king of England. Charles became heir to both the English and Scottish thrones when his older brother Henry died in 1612.

Charles, who spoke with marked Scottish accent all his life, was crowned king in 1625. Three months after his accession he married Henrietta Maria of France, a Roman Catholic. Theirs was a happy marriage and the couple had five surviving children.

Unfortunately for new king, he came to the throne in an age bitterly divided by religious strife. Charles was a lifelong devout Anglican. Parliament, by contrast, was dominated by Puritans, who included most of London’s wealthy magnates and a significant number of the nobility.

At the outset of his reign tensions with the Puritans in Parliament arose because his foreign policy involved England indirectly in the religious strife taking place in Europe. Frustrated by struggles with the legislature, Charles dissolved parliament three times between 1625 and 1629.

Then, in 1629, he resolved to rule alone. This obliged him to raise revenue by extra-parliamentary means, which increased his unpopularity with the wealthy Puritans. At the same time, a crackdown on religious dissent drove numbers of both Puritans and Roman Catholics to seek refuge in America.

Ultimately, Charles was forced to call parliament to obtain funds to quell unrest arising from efforts to introduce a new Scottish Prayer Book. In November 1641, disagreements over who should command an army to suppress an uprising in Ireland further exacerbated tensions.

When his attempt to arrest five members of parliament failed, Charles responded militarily. In August 1642, he raised his royal standard at Nottingham. The civil war that followed was known as the Great Parliamentary Rebellion.

Despite early Royalist successes, hostilities finally ended in 1647 with their’ defeat – a consequence of 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:** Catherine, Richard, Janis, Parisa, Daniel, Judy, Leona, Charlotte, Rachel, Elizabeth, Kim, Dorothy, Donna, Skip, Dan, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Heidi, Alan, Terry, Helen, Linda, John, Neal, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Jan, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Marie, Jim, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John Tom, Michell, Jack, Lewey, Stephen, Pamela, David, Wade, Sifa, Eileen, Ravi, Theresa, Lisa, Larry Ricard & Scott

**FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE:** Caroline, Karen, Ardis, Mavis, Michael, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Chip, Elizabeth, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Jacob, Casey, Beth, Kath, Rebecca, Colin, Christian, Catherine & Elizabeth

**IN MEMORIAM:**

**THOSE WHO MOURN:**

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

Parliament’s alliance with the Scots and the creation of a formidable fighting force — the New Model Army — largely the brainchild of the future self-declared “Lord Protector” Oliver Cromwell.

Charles’ trial in the Great Hall of Westminster began on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1649. As there were no precedents in English Common Law for prosecuting a monarch, a Dutch lawyer named Isaac Dorislaus was commissioned by parliament to write an order to provide a framework for the trial.

As English Law provided no guidance, Dorislaus was obliged to draw upon an utterly alien legal system for his order – a statute in Roman Imperial Law that empowered Rome’s military to overthrow leaders they deemed to be tyrannical.

Under this order, Charles was accused of being a “tyrant, traitor and murderer; and a public and implacable enemy to the Commonwealth of England”.

Many members of Parliament were unhappy about putting the king on trial for his life. Eventually, a majority were removed from the legislature by the army in

December 1648 in what became known as Pride's Purge.

The lack of public support for trying the king can be judged from the fact that of the 46 radical MPs that remained in what was dubbed the "Rump Parliament, only 26 actually voted in favor of a trial.

The degree of outrage was so great that it terrified John Bradshaw, acting as the Chief Justice, into wearing a steel-lined hat as a precaution against assassination.

Moreover when the trial got underway, Westminster's Great Hall was lined with soldiers more to assure the safety of the MPs than to prevent the escape of the king.

The charge against Charles read: "*Out of a wicked design to erect and uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people of England.*"

His conviction, followed by the imposition of the death sentence, was an a foregone conclusion.

There followed 11 years of joyless Puritan tyranny under the iron fist of Oliver Cromwell. Sports such as dog-fighting and bear-baiting were banned not because they were cruel, but because people enjoyed them. London's theaters were shuttered by law and the nation's church doors were barred to worshippers. Celebrations of Christmas and Easter were

suppressed and it was forbidden to hold weddings and funerals in church. The sacraments including Baptism and the Eucharist were declared illegal.

However, in 1660, English commoners and nobles alike rejoiced to see Charles II, the martyred king's easy going son, restored to the throne.

The Puritan regime was so detested that the surviving men who signed the king's death warrant were arrested and executed, while the deceased were exhumed and exhibited in chains. What's more, for three centuries Cromwell's nickname "Old Noll" was invoked by parents to scare recalcitrant offspring into behaving.

Charles I was a kind, courteous and gentle man, but he was not a strong ruler, nor a particularly wise one. Moreover, he subscribed to a governing philosophy – the divine right of kings – utterly antithetical to an English political culture that ultimately evolved into Parliamentary democracy.

However, while this period of English history is not widely taught in America today, the trial of Charles I and its unhappy aftermath stand as a timely warning about the unforeseen consequences that can arise from partisan political prosecutions. GPH\*

## St Stephen's Anglican Church

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[www.ststeve.com](http://www.ststeve.com)

The Very Rev. Guy P Hawtin, Dean & Rector  
The Rev. John Novicki, Vicar ·

Associate Rectors:

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. C. Daniel Bursi,  
The Rev. Dr. Norman Flowers,  
The Rev. M. Wiley Hawks & The Rev. Mark Newsome,  
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, 6 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5 pm: Family Eucharist

## Calendar of Events

### WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club  
Thursday, 10 am: Knitting Circle  
Noon: Bible Study  
Friday, 10.30 am: Bible Study

### MONTHLY & SPECIAL

#### The Vestry Meeting

*Wednesday, 7.00 PM, February 19th*

#### Ladies Who Lunch

*Noon, Wednesday, February 19th*

*Venue: To be announced*

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

#### The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

*5.00 PM to 7.30 PM, Tuesday, February 25th*

#### Choral Events

*As announced*

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