

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

## We celebrated the Ascension with a 'limited' reopening

Thanks to President Donald Trump, we were able to mark the Sunday After The Ascension by reopening the church and celebrating the Eucharist for the first time in more than a month.

The go-ahead to reopen came at the last minute. Until the president announced his challenge to these nations' governors over mandatory church closures, we had resigned ourselves to yet another major Feast Day with an empty sanctuary.

A week earlier we had hoped to reopen — subject to the constraints of social distancing and the like — following Governor Larry Hogan's announcement that the "lockdown" in Maryland would be cautiously lifted. But county executive John Olszewski decreed otherwise.

Our three services on the Sunday After The Ascension — 8.00 AM, 9.15 AM and 11.00 AM — were each restricted to 10 congregants. The Federal Government's guidelines, however, allow congregations of up to 25 percent of a sanctuary's capacity.

We propose to celebrate the Eucharist at all three Sunday services until we are able to resume our normal worship schedule. This will enable parishioners who usually attend the 9.15 AM Eucharist to consider occasionally worshipping at 8.00 AM or 11.00 AM services. In view of restrictions on school attendance, Sunday School will be temporarily suspended.

Meanwhile, we are asking parishioners who wish to attend church to call ahead to reserve a place. (Happy Riley (410) 236-7468; Fr. Novicki (717) 398-6603; Fr. Hawtin (443) 425-2420. Should more people call than can be accommodated at three Eucharists, we will add more services to ensure everybody's needs are met.

For shut-ins and folks still in quarantine we will be continuing our video recordings of Feast Day and Sunday Eucharists. These are posted on the **parish website** ([www.ststeve.com](http://www.ststeve.com)), **Youtube** and **Isaac the Eagle's Facebook** page. You'll find them from 9.00 AM onwards every Sunday and Day of Obligation at [ststeve.com](http://ststeve.com) at the bottom of the Home Page, under "Recent Blog Posts."

A new midweek "broadcast" talk by the rector can also be found on the website every Wednesday or Thursday.

Meanwhile, please remember that in a bid to prevent the theft of checks mailed to the church, we have opened a Post Office Box for the exclusive use of the treasurer. Please mail your offerings to: **St Stephen's Anglican Church, P.O. Box 6161, Timonium, MD 21094**. All other mail should be sent to our street address. GPH✠ & JPN✠

A MEDITATION ON PENTECOST

## Whitsun commemorates the Book of Common Prayer

Whitsunday, the Feast of Pentecost, is the day upon which Anglicans celebrate the publication of the first Book of Common Prayer in the English language. Like that first Pentecost, the publication of the first English language Prayer Book — a work patently inspired by the Holy Spirit — is an event that changed the world.

To be sure, the publication of a mere book is nowhere near as dramatic an event as the coming of the Holy Ghost on that first Whitsunday almost 2,000 years ago. A group

of ordinary people — not so different people we find in the pews: businessmen, a retired tax collector, construction workers, fishermen, academics — were locked in a private house waiting apprehensively for something to happen: Something they knew not what, but something Jesus promised would radically change their lives.

Suddenly, Luke says, the house was filled with a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind. Forked tongues flame leapt about the room — settling on one person's head, then another's.

Soon, they discovered they could speak foreign languages — and not just speak these languages, but preach, debate and exhort in them, too. It was the most extraordinary, most compelling experience, they'd ever had.

By the end of the first Whitsunday, their Spirit-inspired testimony had added three thousand converts to the church's rolls. And by the end of two decades, these very ordinary people had taken the Gospel of Christ from one

## 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:** Eileen, Rebecca, Catherine, Richard✠, Janis, Parisa, Daniel, Leona, 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, Judy & Scott

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

**IN MEMORIAM:** The Very Rev. Mark Siegel

**THOSE WHO MOURN:** Mrs Victoria Siegel & family

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

end of the world to the other — from the mysterious Tin Isles in the North to India in the South; from Spain far in the West over the Silk Road to Asia in the East.

Today it's fashionable to reject with contempt any suggestion that Christianity has played a vital role in civilizing the world, shaping our concept of the worth of the individual and the value we place on human freedom. The history of the Book of Common Prayer gives the lie to that.

Dismissing the publication of Cranmer's Prayer Book as a happening of relatively minor importance — a technical change in the mode of worship in an obscure island off the coast of northern Europe — is the intellectual equivalent of asserting the earth is flat. It is a denial of history.

Four and a half centuries ago, when Holy Spirit inspired Archbishop Thomas Cranmer to put pen to paper to construct an English language Prayer Book, he was not merely creating an easily comprehended liturgy.

His Prayer Book isn't just a liturgy, it is the spiritual expression of a new way of life: a wholly Christian way of life. The Prayer Book gives ordinary people an easy means of talking to God.

In creating the Book of Common Prayer, Cranmer brought into being the English language. Generations upon generations English-speaking people have plundered it for similes and metaphors – and not only preachers and poets and writers and scholars and jurists, but ordinary folk conveying their daily thoughts to those they loved. Male, female, rich, poor, educated and unlettered, all of them, whether they knew it or not, drew inspiration from Cranmer's Prayer Book, and by no means solely in the realm of language and religion.

The thoughts expressed in the Book of Common Prayer have had a major political impact – radically changing the way people think about themselves and the world in which they live. In England, the Prayer Book created a literate people, imbued with the Christian ethic. And they, in turn, used its ideas and concepts to create this nation – and in doing so changed the world.

The ideas that inspired the American Revolution sprang from the Prayer Book. It gave us our concept of universal suffrage. It declared that all people are equally beloved of God so compellingly that slave owners were forced to face the fact that God loved slaves as much he loved their masters.

The concept of all human beings being endowed with unalienable rights by their creator, of equality before the law,

of being innocent until proven guilty all are Prayer Book ideas. But, then, this shouldn't be entirely surprising. For two thirds of our founding fathers were Anglicans, and many of the others belonged to churches that in those days either used the prayer book or liturgies derived from it.

It is no exaggeration to say that today the Holy Spirit working through the Prayer Book still enables ordinary people to do remarkable things. Take as an example the people who founded this parish just over 25 years ago.

They lacked not only a building but most of the basic necessities, but the Holy Spirit, which is the one basic necessity that's essential for building Christ's church. The Holy Spirit takes ordinary people and enables them to do extraordinary things. Not least, he gives them courage to overcome their fears and to act generously and open-handedly when prudence would seem to dictate otherwise.

To be sure, one small parish is hardly likely change the world. But if we keep the faith so sublimely expressed in Cranmer's Prayer Book, and pay heed to the Holy Spirit talking to us through it, we can do the work God has mapped out for us in our corner of Baltimore County. And this should be more than enough to keep us occupied . . . at least for the time being. GPH✠

## St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Office: 410 560 6776 · Rector: 443 425-2420  
Vicar: 410 878-5275 · Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

[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, 6pm: Evening Prayer  
Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist  
Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

## For Our Country.

*ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favour and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honourable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth.*

*In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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