

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

Vol. XXXI, No. 25

A PARISH IN THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN TRADITION

JUNE 18TH, 2020

FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

We're open at 50% capacity; Sadly, no singing is allowed

Governor Larry Hogan has implemented the beginning of the end of the "lockdown" in Maryland. This allows us to "re-open: at 50 percent of capacity, but, while music is permitted, we are not allowed to sing

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control believe that singing expels more air from our lungs than talking, and that it greatly increases the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus. Our Sunday service schedule will thus resume at 8.00 AM, 9.15 AM and 11.00 AM subject to "social distancing" requirements.

We will celebrate the Eucharist at all three Sunday services until things return to some degree of normality. 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.

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)**, **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** 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 GOD'S LOVE

With righteousness, it's a case of all or nothing

There is something especially apt about the selection of this passage from the Epistles – The First Epistle General of St. John 4:7-21 -- for the start of the Trinity Season. It is a neatly encapsulated course of study that in modern academic lingo would probably be called "Fellowship with God 101."

St. John's object is to bring us into fellowship with God and to secure us against losing that fellowship. His epistle is, primarily, an exposition of the Christian revelation: "God is love."

St. John immediately gets down to brass tacks. Verses 7 & 8 read: "*Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*"

He reiterates 'God is love' in Verse 16: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is

love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

St. John explains to us that God is perfect love – and not any abstract way. He is love in living, in personal activity and in relationships. Love, according to John, is the highest attribute of God's being. God's love, he says, has been manifested to us in two ways

First, he sent his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem mankind from sin and to give us eternal life in fellowship with him. And in doing so, he has saved us from all the fears that would normally torment us concerning our inevitable judgment.

Second, God has manifested his love to us in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts – engendering in us a love that is not only a response to his outreach to us, but is also a love that is displayed in our love for our fellow men.

Because God loves, John explains, we love; and as he

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: Pam, Eileen, Rebecca, Catherine, Richard, Janis, 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, 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: 1

THOSE WHO MOURN:

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

loves, so ought we to love one another. Our love of our neighbor, he says, is the acid outward test by which we can discover the sincerity of our inward love of the invisible Father, whose nature and purpose were made known to us in Jesus.

The First Epistle General, Chapter 4: Verses 7-21 is quoted with particular approval today. It dovetails with some of the decidedly odd things that are preached in so many an churches these days.

It is employed to advance the dubious notion that God is somehow completely – to use another buzzword – non-judgmental.

But this is not at all what John is saying. Read the Epistle from start to finish and discover John's thoughts revolve around three great watchwords concerning God:

He is perfect light; He is perfectly righteous; and He is perfect love.

The concept of perfection applied to light, righteousness and love is wholly at odds with the idea God is uncritically loving and "non-judgmental." The fact of the matter is

that because God is perfectly righteous, he is, by his very nature, perfectly judgmental. And this, in turn, means that because we, humans, fall exceedingly short of his standards of perfection when it comes to light and love, we are inevitably headed for very deep trouble.

That's the bad news. The good news is that if we examine our consciences and confess our sins, God, as John writes, "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This isn't merely an option. It's an obligation. As John succinctly puts it, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

John tells us that God requires us to strive to be righteous – a word that the dictionary defines as "upright; virtuous; acting in a just, upright manner."

There's nothing passive about righteousness. In order to BE righteous you have to DO righteousness. In short, you can't be a bit righteous, any more than it's possible be just a bit pregnant. With pregnancy and righteousness, it's a case of all or nothing. One cannot be righteous by simply keeping one's nose clean and living carefully. One has to deal righteously

with people which means virtuously, honestly and justly. Nor can we be righteous on a part time basis: righteous towards friends, but not towards enemies – or vice versa.

The stumbling block that confronts us is our basic human nature. Truth to tell, we really don't like being loving and kind – in the way God is to us.

So how can we reconcile God's demand that we walk in his light and in righteousness – in other words, uphold the Christian truth and live virtuously and justly – with his demand that we love our fellow men?

We can't simply ignore the faults, flaws and weaknesses of our fellow men. But it is vital we don't allow this to seduce us into viewing the world in terms of "them and us." We must never lose sight of the fact that we are also sinners.

We have so much sinful baggage of our own to deal with, we can't afford the luxury pointing the finger at others. There is absolutely no virtue to be gained from resisting sins to which one isn't tempted.

According to St. John, the important thing is to consider how God behaves towards us – and then to try to apply the model, as best we can, to our own lives. GPH✠

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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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

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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