

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

VOL. XXXI, No. 26 A PARISH IN THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN TRADITION JUNE 25TH, 2020

FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

As the 'Lockdown' comes to an end, we are re-opening

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.

While music is permitted, whether singing is allowed is unclear. The governor's order allowing us to reopen subject to "social distancing" restrictions, does not appear to mention a ban on hymn singing, however it is not clear whether or not this was an oversight. We are working clarifying the situation.

Experts at the Centers for Disease Control advised against singing. They claimed that it expels more air from our lungs than talking. It, thus, increases the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus.

The conclusion, however, was based on the experience of a large choir which was rehearsing in a relatively confined space rather than a much more common sanctuary.

Our Sunday service schedule will resume (with or without singing) at 8.00 AM, 9.15 AM and 11.00 AM. We will celebrate the Eucharist at the first two services and resume the Morning Office at 11.00 AM. In view of restrictions on school attendance, Sunday School will be informal.

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**

MEDITATION ON 2nd SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Beatles were right: Love is all you need

In the 14th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel you'll find Jesus' parable of the man who invited all his friends and neighbors to share a big celebratory supper with him. Yet, far from cheerfully accepting his generous invitation, they all made excuses and spurned him.

To understand the full implications of the parable, it needs to be seen in the context of two other readings appointed for the day – one from St John's First Epistle General and the other from St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Both address the centrality of Christian love in relation to our salvation. St John and St Paul state categorically

that the only way we can be sure of salvation is to love our fellow men. In fact, St John says that somebody who hates his fellow men is not just a run of the mill sinner, but rather is a murderer.

Moreover, he says, there is no way we can fake it. We can't just pay lip service to this commandment. We can't just assert we love our neighbors. We need to love our neighbors honestly, both in word and deed. God knows instantly when we are being phony.

This is tough stuff. Most of us can talk the talk and most of us can walk the walk, at least spasmodically. But, above all, God wants us to take it into our hearts and translate it into our lives. And what's really frightening is that St. Paul tells us that if we fail to do so everything else we do is utterly worthless.

Actually, none of this should come as a surprise. These readings are commentaries on Jesus' Summary of the Law: This brings us to the Gospel reading: The audience Jesus was addressing in the parable of the man's Great Supper

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: Bill, 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, Mitchell, 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: Mrs. Joanne Filer

THOSE WHO MOURN: Jeffrey Filer & family

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

did, indeed, include Pharisees. But he was also addressing publicans and sinners – folks who the Pharisees despised as apostates and traitors.

And there is no comfort in his words for any of people he was addressing, or for folks reading the parable today. All of us fare rather badly. You'll see what I mean when I explain the various groups of listeners understood it.

When the Pharisees heard the parable of the man and his supper, they were sure he was talking about publicans and sinners – apostate Jews who had rejected the Law of Moses. They had rejected God's means of salvation by deliberately declining to live by the precepts of the Law. The Pharisees understood that these to be the folks who had turned down their invitations to the great supper.

The publicans and sinners, on the other hand, saw the Pharisees as targets of the parable. They questioned whether Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah, and they contested the idea that he was the Son of God.

What's more, the Pharisees were people who harshly applied the Law of Moses to other peoples – the woman taken in adultery, for instance – while minutely searching for loopholes to free themselves of the Law's more

onerous burdens, such those obliging them to maintain destitute relations.

Both parties were, in fact, correct. The parable condemns both the Pharisees and the Jewish apostates. Both had received their invitations to the Great Supper, but both were making excuses for not attending, because both were pursuing their own agendas to the exclusion of God's agenda.

The publicans and sinners wanted God to stick to the Pharisees, and the Pharisees wanted God to stick it to their Roman overlords, but only after he had stuck it to the publicans and sinners.

Neither of the parties was much interested in loving their neighbors. Nor were they in the least bit interested in showing any sort of love for their enemies. Yet both saw themselves as the honored guests at the feast – the poor and marginalized folks gathered in from the city's streets and alleys and from the country highways and hedgerows. Neither party saw themselves as spurning God's invitation. To the contrary. They were absolutely convinced they had accepted it.

The problem, you see, is that we – like most people – tend to believe we have accepted God's invitation to his Great Supper because we conceive that our terms of acceptance are exactly the same as God's terms of acceptance. We forget

that we don't make the rules. God does. And God's rules are very different from our own. St. John and St. Paul, echo Jesus, himself, in spelling out God's rules for accepting his invitation to the Great Supper with crystal clarity. They make it very plain that the externals of the faith are not sufficient.

Of course, we should attend Church regularly. Of course, we should do our best to spread the good news of the Gospel to our fellow men. Of course, we should give generously to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

But these are not enough. What God really wants is for us to treat everybody we meet as we would treat Jesus.

It doesn't mean we should be undiscerning and lavish everyone, indiscriminately, with things they don't need and we can ill afford. But it does mean that we should treat them with the same consideration we show to our own children.

St. Paul tells us the greatest of all the Christian virtues is charity. So, too does St. Peter, who promises us that charity will cover "the multitude of sins." Love, you see, is the single human quality that begins to approach the perfection that is God. If we have love for humanity in our hearts the rest of the virtues will automatically follow. Much to their surprise, no doubt, the Beatles were right: Love is, indeed, all you need. 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

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11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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