

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A PARISH IN THE CLASSICAL ANGLICAN TRADITION

JULY 9TH, 2020

A MEDITATION ON TRINITY IV

## Being a Christian is far, far harder than being green

Kermit the Frog claims it isn't easy to be green. But, actually, compared with us, Kermit's got very little to complain about. It's an awful lot easier being green than being a Christian in the public square.

Kermit doesn't have people trying to ban him from the public airwaves. Lawyers aren't battling to keep him out of the public schools. Courts haven't banned the display of Kermit's picture in public spaces or ordered the removal of inscriptions of his thoughts from court buildings and the like. And nor are they likely to. To do so would be an infringement of the free speech of both Kermit and his creators.

On the other hand, nobody in authority really seems put out when a Christian's right to free speech is infringed. There's not much in the way of protest, other than from Christians, when municipal councils ban the display of crèches at Christmas time. You don't read about the American Civil Liberties Union fighting for the right of Christian students to pray publicly in their schools.

Even in areas of public life where one might imagine Christians would be welcome we encounter antipathy. Military chaplains, for instance, are forbidden to wear the cross in parts of the Middle East that our troops are called upon to defend.

You don't hear the same complaints about atheists proselytizing their religion of the real absence – even though their presence is ever apparent in public. Nor do you hear complaints about the spread of Islam. Indeed, our politicians constantly remind us that – the penchant for terrorism notwithstanding – Islam is a religion of peace.

Nor is the government attempting to ban the Wicca from the military or even from our educational institutions, even though members of the Wicca – whether or not they're aware of it – practice a form of witchcraft invented by the disciple of an infamous Satanist named Alistair Crowley. Indeed, judges have upheld the rights of the adherents of an outfit called the Church of Satan to practice their faith in the United States military.

What's more, you never hear atheism or any of the other anti-Christian religious faiths being ridiculed, sneered at or held up to contempt. That, after all, would be hate speech. It is not hate speech, of course, when Christianity is demeaned and ridiculed.

Now it might seem quite paradoxical that, here in America, religious faiths with far less than savory track records enjoy public protection and general approbation, but Christianity, the faith from which all of our rights and freedoms stem, is treated as unwholesome and contemptible.

However Jesus warned us that the antipathy displayed by so many influential members of our society to the Christian faith is a normal state of affairs. "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," he told his disciples, "... But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. . . "

Thus, the antipathy so routinely shown towards the Christian faith today should in no way surprise us. It has always been there. And the reason for it is not in the least bit

complicated: If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you can no longer call yourself your own master. You are obliged to acknowledge his authority. You are obliged to accept that his way of doing things – In other words, being a follower of Jesus Christ stands in direct opposition to our basic human instinct to do what is right in our own eyes – to be as gods deciding for ourselves what is good and what is evil.

If we are Christians, we cannot follow gods shaped in our own image. Instead we are obliged to submit to the will of the all-powerful God who created us and whose thoughts and ways are so different from our own. We don't always do so, of course. But when we don't, we know, all too painfully, that we have done wrong and that we need to beg his forgiveness.

This is a concept that runs entirely contrary to the spirit of our age. We live in a society which is wedded to the notion of "social engineering." In its most benign form, it involves efforts to eradicate what is deemed socially destructive

## 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, 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:**

**THOSE WHO MOURN:**

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

behavior by means of propaganda, "education" and legislation, while at its most malignant it seeks the wholesale reordering of society. to their failures.

It is never very comfortable to be out of step with society, as Jews and Christians have discovered during the past three and a half millennia. But if in this instance there is a lesson to be learned from the past, it is this: If we try to fight back using our adversaries tactics, we are unlikely to succeed. The Jews tried it at the time of Jeremiah, for example, and were carried away captive to Babylon.

In today's Gospel, Jesus say leave things up to him: "Be ye merciful even as your Father also is merciful. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you."

Jesus' strategy subdued the brutal coercion of Rome's social engineers and utterly transformed the Roman Empire. And, if we are prepared to do things his way, his strategy will prove just as effective in our society today. GPH✕

FROM THE PARISH CLERGY

# Vestry rules on Covid19

The vestry met on June 17<sup>th</sup> – its first meeting since the Corona Virus restrictions were imposed in March this year. The item at the top of the agenda was the manner in which the church should reopen with the gradual lifting of the lock down.

Being Anglicans, there were at least two school of thought. One advocated an immediate return to normal. The other counselled proceeding very much more cautiously. In the end, the vestry decided the most considerate course for the elderly, and those most at risk from the virus, would be to proceed with caution.

It was pointed out that although infections appeared to be diminishing and the worst of the epidemic was believed to have passed, it still presented a serious threat to the elderly and those with underlying health issues.

Therefore in order to encourage those concerned about the possibility of infection to return to church the most kindly and considerate course would be for everybody when congregating in the Cadwalader Room and at the altar rail and to practice social distancing in the sanctuary. It was also decided to that, while organ

music would be permitted, there will be no singing in church until we receive an official go-ahead. Singing is believed to present a greater danger for the spread of the disease than speech as it expels a far greater volume of air from the lungs.

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, 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✂

## St Stephen’s Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093  
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

### 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 Stephens’s Anglican Church  
11856 Mays Chapel Road  
Timonium, MD 21093

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