

# St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

## What gives God the right to pass judgement on us?

There's no denying the fact that God is decidedly "judgmental" – one of the worst sins it's possible to commit these days. And this probably explains why God and his Church are so unpopular with the folks pompously known as our "cognitive elite" – the folks who make up the rules for the rest of us to follow.

They see no irony in the fact that they constantly pass judgment on the rest of us. But, then, they are so much brighter and better educated than we are.. And they utterly resent facing competition from God. After all, he simply doesn't think like they do – not having been educated at one of America's better Universities. Come to think of it, God can't even boast a High School Diploma.

But, despite his lack of formal education, God has strong opinions about just about everything. He isn't just concerned about the face we present to the world, our public lives, so to speak. He also has opinions about the way we should behave in private, in our homes, in our bedrooms, and in our most intimate relationships. No matter what the Supreme Court might say, there is no right to privacy as far as God is concerned. He knows our most inconsequential and fleeting thoughts even before we think them.

But could it be that the politically correct elite are giving God a bum rap. For instance, they claim he fosters tyrannical sexual dominance by men and groveling subservience by women? But when you actually read the Bible it is hard to find many men who can reasonably be described as dominant. More often than not, they are weak, vacillating or otherwise embarrassingly flawed..

The patriarch Jacob is a sniveling, conniving coward. Moses turns out to be a gutless shirker who tries to wriggle out of going to Egypt. Gideon is reduced to a quaking mass of terror just thinking about the Midianites.

Contrast this with the courage and sterling qualities of the women one encounters in Holy Scripture: The rocklike strength of Deborah, the loyalty and persistence of Ruth, the courage of Esther, the faith and devotion of Mary, Martha and the Blessed Virgin. None of these women are in any way subservient – indeed, quite the reverse.

But while it is tempting to write God off as hopelessly reactionary and out of touch, it might be wise to explore why a God who claims he is good, loving and merciful is so darned judgmental. Could it, for example, be that God is judgmental for our benefit rather than his own – that his judgementalism is simply a manifestation of his goodness, mercy and loving kindness?

Consider, for example, what America would be like bereft of God's influence. There are definite downsides to the efforts of our legislatures and courts to expunge his influence from our culture,

One particularly serious drawback springs to mind: Getting rid of God undermines the foundations upon which our individual rights and liberties are based.

The Declaration of Independence declares our Creator has endowed us, as individuals, with "unalienable" rights. To be unalienable, these individual rights necessarily must supersede those of society as a whole.

Indeed, if "society," rather than God, were the source of our rights, those rights would no longer be unalienable. Because what human beings can give, human beings can just as easily take away.

To test this assertion, we have only to look outside our borders and evaluate the sort of individual rights endowed by secular societies. When "common good" becomes the criterion, the rights of the individual fare poorly.

The effects of this can be seen at their most benign in the European Community where government regulations even dictate the content of sausages. The most malevolent effects of "the common good" can be seen in all their brutality and horror in places like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and China.

It would be wrong to assume that belief in the intrinsic worth of the individual is a political concept as American motherhood and apple pie. It is not. It is God's idea. The individual is held in high esteem is because our Founding Fathers based our republic on Christian principles. They crafted a constitution that reflected God's values, not human ones.

All men, for instance, are created equal only in the sight

## 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:** Mavis, Pam, Eileen, Rebecca, Catherine, Bill, 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:** Sam, Cameron, Jim, Diana, Caroline, Karen, Ardis, Mavis, Michael, Ian, Melba, Vinnie, Doug, Chip, Elizabeth, 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.

of God. Take God out of the equation, and all individuals are most certainly not of equal value.

Street people stand very much lower in the pecking order than the social workers assigned to them. Billionaire tycoons wield far more influence than the folks who work for them. The Secretary of State is vastly more important than the secretary who types letters for the commercial counselor in the embassy in Ulan Bator.

The idea "Jack is as good as his master," is, in human terms, pure humbug. It's a notion that leads to only to one place: George Orwell's farmyard, where the signs proclaimed: "All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others."

If we abandon our Christian principles as the animating force of society, the divine logic that underpins our most cherished institutions will disappear. Universal suffrage works only if we believe all men are equal in the sight of God. For in purely human lights, "might makes right,"

In truth we should fall on our knees and give thanks that God is judgmental. The prospect of being judged by God's standards might make us feel a tad uncomfortable. But experience teaches that the alternative – being judged by our own human standards – is infinitely worse. GPH✕

FROM THE PARISH LIFE

# COVID Cookie Walk 2020 and Knitting Auction

Even though we are all limited by the pandemic, the knitting auction will take place starting 1 November 2020 at the church, and end on 19 December 2020.

We have over 50 items to auction. Each is lovingly done by someone in our knitting Circle. There are lots of hats, scarves, sweaters, shawls and mitts for your buying and gifting pleasure. As usual, we will have a "Buy it Now" at the bottom of each bid sheet, so you can get your item immediately.

Each item's starting bid is the cost of the yarn. Each of our knitters has spent hours knitting to bring you this fabulous array of handmade items. The more you bid, the more we can give to our charities, which include St. Stephen's Church ([www.ststeve.com](http://www.ststeve.com)), Christ Child Society of Baltimore ([www.christchildbaltimore.org](http://www.christchildbaltimore.org)) and The Heifer Project ([www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)). We are proud to help support these

worthwhile causes. Please stop by anytime the church is open to view and bid on these lovely items.

## There's lots of Other Stuff

Jellies and Jams have been made and will be available after 1 December 2020. The price is \$6.00 per jar. Our wonderful soup mix will also be available for \$5.00 a package. Jezabel Sauce, that spicy condiment, will be selling for \$5.00 a jar.

Homemade cookies (prepackaged) will be available by the 1 pound box for \$12.00. Cookies will only be available on December 19<sup>th</sup> between 9:00 am and noon.

## Our Sunday service schedule

Holy Eucharist will be said at 8.00 AM and 9.15 AM. Morning Prayer will be said 11.00 AM with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. Sunday School takes place at 9.15 AM

For shut-ins and folks st in quarantine we will be continuing our videos 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.

### St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093  
Office: 410 560 6776 · Rector: 443 425-2420  
Vicar: 717-398-6603 · 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. 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)

11 am: 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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