

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

Diary of a Church Mouse

by Sir John Betjeman

In England, "Thanksgiving" is known as the "Harvest Festival." In towns and villages throughout the country, churches are lavishly decorated with produce – sheaves of wheat, barley and oats; heaps of cabbages, turnips and parsnips; festoons of onions; and huge loaves of bread baked in the shape of wheat sheaves, lambs, cows and chickens. It inspired the late Sir John Betjeman, poet laureate and keen churchman, to write this poem.

My mother knew Sir John when she worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation where he was a frequent guest. She was a great admirer of his poetry and, indeed they were the last poems I read to her during her final illness.

When we were children, mother would frequently read us Sir John's poems. And that this time of year our favorite was "the Diary of A Church Mouse." Charlotte and I, in turn, read it to our children. I hope you enjoy it.

Here among long-discarded cassocks,
damp stools, and half split open hassocks,
here, where the Vicar never looks,
I nibble through old service books.
Lean and alone I spend my days
behind this Church of England baize.

I share my dark forgotten room
With a broken chair and half a half a broom.
The cleaner never bothers me,
so here I eat my frugal tea.
My bread is sawdust mixed with straw;
my jam is polish for the floor.

Christmas and Easter may be feasts
for congregations and for priests,
and so may Whitsun. All the same,
they do not fill my meagre frame.
For me the only feast at all
is Autumn's Harvest Festival,
when I can satisfy my want
with ears of corn around the font.

I climb the eagle's brazen head
to burrow through a loaf of bread.
I scramble up the pulpit stair
and gnaw the marrows hanging there.
It is enjoyable to taste
these items ere they go to waste.

But how annoying when one finds
that other mice with pagan minds
come into church my food to share
who have no proper business there.
Two field mice who have no desire

to be baptized, invade the choir.

A large and most unfriendly rat
comes in to see what we are at.
He says he thinks there is no God.
And yet he comes ... it's rather odd.
This year he stole a sheaf of wheat
(It screened our special preacher's seat),
and prosperous mice from fields away
came in to hear the organ play,
and under cover of its notes
ate through the altar's sheaf of oats.

A Low Church mouse, who thinks that I
am too papistical, and high,
yet somehow doesn't think it wrong

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: Diane, 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, Maxine, Theresa, Larry Richard, 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: Ardith Curran.

THOSE WHO MOURN: Stacey Lindsey & family.

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

to munch through Harvest Evensong,
while I, who starve the whole year through,
must share my food with rodents who
except at this time of the year
not once inside the church appear.

Within the human world I know
such goings-on could not be so,
for human beings only do
what their religion tells them to.
They read the Bible every day
and always, night and morning, pray,
and just like me, the good church mouse,
worship each week in God's own house.

But all the same it's strange to me
how very full the church can be
with people I don't see at all
except at Harvest Festival.

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), Christ Child Society of Baltimore (www.christchildbaltimore.org) and The Heifer Project (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. Jezebel 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 19th between 9:00 am and noon.

Our Sunday service schedule

Holy Eucharist at 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), **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.

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

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

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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