

# The S. Stephen

ADVENT ♦ CHRISTMAS ♦ EPIPHANY

2015—2016

Vol. 15, No. 2

*From the Rector*

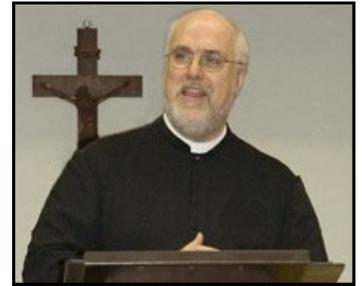
My Dear People,

The Episcopal Church continues its numerical decline. Recently released figures show that in the five years from 2010 to 2014, the US dioceses of the Episcopal Church suffered a 3.5 percent loss in congregations, a 9.4 percent loss in active baptized members, and a 12 percent loss in average Sunday attendance.

In part, these losses reflect the withdrawal of the Diocese of South Carolina from the Episcopal Church in 2012 – the only diocese to leave during this period – but only in part. Interpreting the statistics in an essay posted on the Covenant blog ([livingchurch.org/covenant](http://livingchurch.org/covenant)) on November 6, 2012, Neal Michell writes: “Overall, our churches continue to decrease in membership and attendance. Small churches generally are getting smaller, and large churches are becoming fewer.”

Declining membership and attendance at the local level are part of a national trend, and not just in the Episcopal Church, but also in North American and European Christianity at large. Many church-affiliated writers diagnose the problem in terms of *institutional failure* of one sort or another: the Church has failed to evangelize, to address its members’ spiritual and pastoral needs, or to relate adequately to changing contemporary culture. Such self-examination is not a bad thing; there is much truth to these criticisms, and much room for fresh approaches all around.

But that’s only part of the story. Over the past few years, I’ve become convinced that ups and downs in church membership and attendance most often reflect much larger sociological and cultural cycles, spanning decades and even centuries, of a magnitude and complexity that make them difficult if not impossible for those living through them to understand. To invoke the traditional image of the Church as a ship sailing through rough seas, sometimes we’re riding high, on the peak of a wave, and sometimes we’re riding low, still afloat but down in a trough.



The opening decades of the twenty-first century appear to be a period when increasing segments of American culture have no use for religion in general and for Christianity in particular. Books by “the New Atheists” (whose arguments are distinctly old, tired, and unoriginal) enjoy widespread popularity. A couple of years ago, the phenomenon of the “nones” – the growing numbers of those who mark “none” on surveys and questionnaires in the place asking for their religious affiliation – was much remarked-upon. More recently, attention has focused on the “dones” – former church members who proclaim themselves “done” with Christianity and the Church. Such are the signs of the times.

We might find all this more alarming except for the realization that *it’s all happened before*. Fluctuations in church membership and attendance are cyclical. Contrary to the “secularization hypothesis” advanced by many sociologists, decline in religious practice over one generation, or even over several, is neither inexorable nor irreversible.

Phoebe Pettingell’s excellent series on the Ritualists highlights this point indirectly. Anglo-Catholicism profoundly renewed and revitalized nineteenth-century Anglicanism. In the opening years of the nineteenth century, many observers predicted that the Church of England was dying. In 1832 Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School, wrote, “The Church as it now stands no human power can save.” Ironically, the following year, John Keble preached the Assize Sermon (July 14, 1833), traditionally reckoned as the beginning of the Catholic Revival. Despite Arnold’s dire prediction, the second half of the nineteenth century saw an amazing

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resurgence of religious practice in England, especially within Anglicanism.

The more recent period of the 1920s and 1930s witnessed another revival of Christianity after decades of decline. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many had come to believe that Christianity was no longer credible in an intellectual world dominated by such figures as Darwin, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, and Durkheim. Then, in the years following World War I, something remarkable happened. A number of leading scholars, writers, poets, and artists – T.S. Eliot, C.S. Lewis, Grahame Greene, Evelyn Waugh, W.H. Auden, Dorothy L. Sayers, Evelyn Underhill, and Eric Gill, to name just a few – re-embraced Christianity in its more Catholic forms. This cultural trend paralleled a re-discovery within the Church of more traditional approaches to theology – neo-orthodoxy in the Reformed tradition, and neo-Thomism in Roman Catholicism – in place of the liberal Modernism that had seemed the wave of the future at the turn of the century. In hindsight, one factor precipitating this revival was the rising tide of totalitarian movements: Soviet Communism in Russia, Fascism in Italy and Spain, Nazism in Germany. Against these threats, many European and American intellectuals recognized and embraced Christianity as an integral component of the civilization they were called to defend and preserve.

That has all changed now, but it can change again. When we're in a trough, it's critical to remember that these trends are cyclical. We need not despair. Periods of decline are followed by periods of revival and renewal. We may or may not live to see them. In the meantime, we are called simply to be faithful to our Christian vocation "to be still the Church," even if in the form of a faithful remnant.

The great temptation during the periods of decline is to cast about frantically for new methods of evangelism, church growth, spiritual renewal, and engagement with social issues that promise to solve all our problems if we can only find the right formula, the right set of buttons to push. But that is an illusion. Ultimately our hope lies not in any humanly devised technique – that is the heresy of Pelagianism – but rather in Christ's promises. No matter how deep the troughs, he will not let his Church go under.

In his essay on the Covenant blog, Michell reminds us of what the statistics of numerical decline do *not* tell us. A Church declining in numbers – especially in times when churchgoing is becoming more countercultural – is not necessarily a Church declining in spiritual health and vitality. On the contrary, the opposite is often the case. One valid insight from the sociologists of religion is that larger churches with broad social appeal often comprise many lukewarm and nominal members, while smaller and more countercultural churches tend to comprise those who are more committed, faithful, and active.

I'm told that during the 1950s and into the 1960s preachers in American churches often gave sermons complaining that many in the congregation were coming "for all the wrong reasons" – to mingle in the "right" circles, to gain business contacts, to fulfill social expectations. We may be thankful that there is little occasion for these sermons anymore. Those who come to church today are clearly not here for any social advantage but for genuinely religious and spiritual reasons.

During our Sung Requiem Mass this year on the evening of All Souls Day I looked out at the relatively small congregation in the nave and felt an unexpected sense of warmth and gratitude. A larger congregation would have been nice, to be sure, but those who were there were clearly the committed ones. Together, the altar party, choir, and congregation were fulfilling the Church's obligation to offer the holy Sacrifice for All Faithful Departed. The ability to do that, "to be still the Church," remains an enormous blessing.

This letter comes with all prayers for a holy Advent and a blessed Christmastide. I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest,  
Fr. John D. Alexander

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## FR. YOST'S LETTER

Never is the Church so clearly out of step with the world as during the coming season of Advent. While the Church calls us to watch and wait quietly in order to make a space for God, a world that already has little time for God becomes even more agitated and unquiet. To be sure, I rejoice that the the world not only takes notice (for once) of a Christian festival, but even seems for a short while to revolve around its celebration. Yet the world mostly gets Christmas wrong, focusing on what is sentimental and mundane, rather than on the astounding fact that Time has been intersected by Eternity, that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

Soon the tinsel and trinkets of Christmas will be in the stores (if they are not already!). In stark contrast, it is just now that the Church pares back, her altar and clergy robed in somber purple, the sanctuary unadorned but for the beautiful Advent wreath, a sign of hope and expectation. As we enter the Advent season, with all its austere beauty, to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord, the world will already have started celebrating something it does not understand, a celebration of which it will have grown weary by Christmas Day. Then, when the world is done with the “holiday season” and ready to chuck all the trappings, we shall celebrate a *Magnum Mysterium*: “That God was man in Palestine / And lives today in Bread and Wine” (John Betjeman). Only in keeping Advent can we know the true joy and wonder of Christmas.

As Christians, we do well to take notice of what the Church is saying to us at this time, rather than let the world set the agenda. Let us seek to hear, despite all the noise, God’s voice speaking to us in the Scriptures and in the liturgies of this season. Let us not be *disoriented* by the chaos and darkness. Rather, let us keep our eyes fixed on the Permanent Things as we pray daily, “Thy kingdom come.”

To be “oriented” is, literally, to be turned towards the east. From Christianity’s very earliest days, east has been the direction of prayer, priest and people facing the altar together, turned towards the rising of the sun that symbolized the coming of Christ. That is why the sanctuary of the church building is

referred to as the “east end” (no matter what the actual direction of the compass). Christians are to be oriented—turned towards the Lord. So don’t let the absurd “holiday season” disorient you. As a wonderful contemporary carol puts it:



People, look east. The time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Guest is on the way.



**ADVENT QUIET DAY**  
**SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER**  
**9 AM - 2 PM**

**Addresses:**  
**The Rt. Rev. Daniel Martins**  
**Bishop of Springfield, IL**

## CIVILITY IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE PART TWO; “YOU CAN INVITE US TO DINNER, BUT...”

By Fr. Alexander

As the forces of the Islamic State (IS or Isis) advanced within sixteen miles of Baghdad Airport last year, Canon Andrew White sent their leaders an invitation. White was the Vicar of Saint George’s Anglican Church, just outside the Green Zone in Baghdad, until Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby ordered him to leave for his own safety. He now lives in Jordan. (He was also a guest speaker at the Rhode Island Diocesan Convention in 2010.)

Interviewed by Cole Moreton in the November 2, 2015 edition of *The Independent*, White recounted how Isis had killed members of his congregation, including four boys who were beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam. Now they were coming for him. “So Andrew White did what he always does when faced with an enemy. I invited the leaders of Isis for dinner. I am a great believer in that. I have asked some of the worst people ever to eat with me.”

The response he received was simple and straightforward: “You can invite us to dinner, but we’ll chop your head off.” So, White added with a laugh, “I didn’t invite them again.”

Reluctantly and sorrowfully, White concluded that the only way to deal with Isis is to wage war and destroy them: “You can’t negotiate with them. I have never said that about another group of people. These are really so different, so extreme, so radical, so evil.” A bit further on, he added, “It really hurts. I have tried so hard. I will do anything to save life and bring about tranquility, and here I am forced by death and destruction to say there should be war.”

Reading this story reminded me of the first part of this two-part series in the last issue of *The S. Stephen*. There I argued that one of the plagues of our time is a rising level of intemperate rhetoric culminating in *ad hominem* attacks and demonization of oppo-

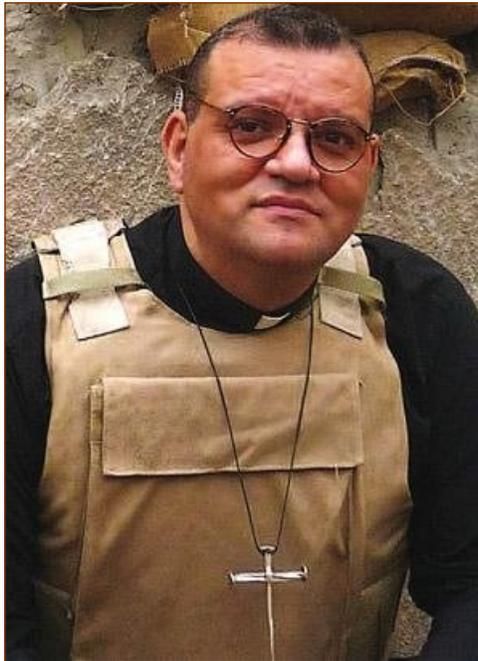
nents in debates both within the Church and in the wider society. I suggested that a gift of our Anglican tradition worthy of retrieval today is the virtue of civility in public discourse: listening, engaging, trying to recognize and acknowledge the value in the opposing point of view, searching for common ground despite continuing differences.

Then I acknowledged that the attentive reader was apt to object: It’s one thing to avoid demonizing your opponent, but what happens when one encounters an opponent whose worldview, thoughts, statements, and actions are in fact demonic? Is civility in public discourse possible with those who are genuinely evil? Andrew White’s comments bring these questions into sharp focus. “You can invite us to dinner, but we’ll chop your head off.”

My research and writing in the past few years has exposed me to the writings of a number of Anglican theologians and church leaders active in the 1920s, 30s and 40s: including William Temple (Archbishop of York 1929-1942; Archbishop of Canterbury 1942-

1944) and George Bell (Bishop of Chichester 1929-1958). Faced with the rise of Nazism in Germany and the growing likelihood of another World War, these Anglican writers articulated a theology of history that may offer fruitful insights as we seek to respond to today’s challenges.

Unlike some of their contemporaries, these theologians were not pacifists. In line with the Christian Just War tradition, they believed that every effort should be made to seek reconciliation and avoid war, but that nonetheless in a fallen world waging war against an implacable aggressor is in some circumstances a regrettable necessity – and indeed a requirement of justice.



Canon Andrew White  
Former Vicar, Saint George’s  
Anglican Church, Baghdad

At the same time, they were determined that the Church of England should avoid any repetition of the war hysteria and jingoism that had accompanied British participation in the First World War. At that time, Anglican leaders such as Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London had toured England passionately exhorting young men to enlist in what he described as a holy war against God's enemies. Of such bellicose excesses, the young Anglo-Catholic theologian Eric L. Mascall, Principal of Lincoln Theological College, wrote in 1939, "This must never happen again."

One theme almost completely absent today from mainstream Christian public theology pervades these writers' reflections: namely, the idea of God's judgment in history. In 1941, the scholarly Anglican priest Alec Vidler published a book describing World War II as – the book's title – *God's Judgment on Europe*.

For what was God judging Europe? In *Christianity and World Order* (1940) Bishop Bell writes, "War descends as the judgment of God." By the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty, the Allies bear a large share of the responsibility for the rise of Hitler and Nazism. Nonetheless, if Hitler prevails, the freedom, order, and morality upon which civilization depends will be overthrown. The present war, Bell concludes, is a judgment of God on the British people taking the form of the stern duty to resist the aggressor forcibly at the cost of great suffering.

Some years later, Arthur Michael Ramsey (Archbishop of Canterbury 1961-1974) developed a similar theme in his book *The Christian Priest Today* (1972). In times of disaster and catastrophe, Ramsey writes, God may seem to be absent when he is in fact *present in judgment*. But, Ramsey hastens to add, God's judgment always contains within itself the offer of redemption and new life to those who respond in repentance and faith.

Several critical qualifications are necessary to avoid misunderstanding. The proponents of this theology of divine judgment were emphatically *not* saying that the victims of war deserve their sufferings. On the contrary, the great tragedy of war is that the innocent suffer on account of the sins of others. Nor were they saying that God sent the perpetrators of war, such as Hitler and Mussolini, as agents of divine judgment. No, their theological message was far subtler than that. It was that the entire international political, economic, and military situation that brought

about the war was sinful, and all parties to the conflict were to some degree complicit in it. So, as Bishop Bell put it, the very necessity of fighting an evil adversary was *God's judgment on a sinful situation*, calling for profound repentance even as the nation dutifully took up arms against Nazi aggression.

Nor must this theology of divine judgment in history be confused with that of the leaders of today's religious right, such as Pat Robertson who suggested that the stock market losses of August 2015 were "a taste of God's judgment" for the government's refusal to defund Planned Parenthood. The key difference is that contemporary right-wing extremists point the finger at what they consider the sins of *others* – principally their ideological opponents. By contrast, the mid-twentieth century Anglican theologians were completely prepared to confess their own complicity in the collective sins of the nations, governments, political parties, and social classes that had brought the world to the brink of disaster.

Equipped with such a theology, Anglican leaders such as Archbishop Temple and Bishop Bell taught that when war against an evil adversary becomes a duty, Christians must approach it with grim determination, regret, and penitence. Absolutely to be eschewed is any glorification of war, hatred of the enemy, or lust for violence and revenge. Under the influence of the American theological ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr, Temple in particular emphasized that

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Archbishop William Temple  
(1881 – 1944)

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it is impossible to act in history without incurring guilt; in a sinful situation our duty presents itself as the lesser of evils, which remains at the same time a sinful course of action *and* our duty. Hence, we need constant repentance and reliance on God's forgiveness. (Less influenced by Niebuhr's Christian Realism, Bishop Bell was perhaps a bit more hopeful about the prospects of acting morally even in war.)

Taken together, the approach of the Anglican theologians of the 1930s and 40s to fighting evil can be summarized in three main points.

First, acknowledge our own complicity, however indirect, in the evil we now find it necessary to oppose. This recognition of our own corporate sin is crucial in preventing the self-righteousness that engenders hatred and triumphalism. In present-day Iraq and Syria, Isis does embody an unimaginable evil that must be fought and contained, if not destroyed, but it is an evil whose flames we unwittingly fanned in the torture chambers of Abu Ghraib.

Second, pray for our enemies *and* their victims. Temple, Bell, and other Anglican leaders were insistent on this point during World War II. It is difficult if not impossible to sustain hatred against those for whom we are praying regularly, even as we take up the duty of opposing and fighting them. Our Lord teaches as much in the Sermon on the Mount: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). In another context, those who feel called to fight against, say, racism in America today do well to pray not only for its victims but also for the racists themselves.

Third, to the extent possible, observe standards of lawful and right conduct in warfare and other forms of conflict. Down through the centuries, the Christian tradition evolved moral guidelines for the conduct of war – including noncombatant immunity and the principle of using no more violence than necessary to achieve legitimate military objectives – that have subsequently been incorporated into inter-

national law. In World War II, Bishop Bell spoke out repeatedly against the British obliteration bombing of German cities, culminating in a speech in the House of Lords on February 9, 1944, which many historians speculate cost him any chance of being appointed Archbishop of Canterbury when William Temple unexpectedly died in office later that year. Such can be the price of Christian witness.

"You can invite us to dinner, but we'll chop your head off." That statement encapsulates the evil that is abroad in today's world. From time to time, Christians can and do find themselves called to participate in the fight against it. The Anglican theologians who struggled with the necessity of going to war against Hitler and Nazism offer invaluable counsels in approaching such conflicts in a Christian spirit of repentance, faith, and charity – a spirit which Canon Andrew White himself embodies and exemplifies today.

ans who struggled with the necessity of going to war against Hitler and Nazism offer invaluable counsels in approaching such conflicts in a Christian spirit of repentance, faith, and charity – a spirit which Canon Andrew White himself embodies and exemplifies today.

#### Postscript

I wrote this article before the revelations concerning Bishop Bell's alleged paedophilia were made public on October 22, 2015 with a settlement by the Diocese of Chichester and a public apology by the current Bishop of Chichester to an accuser whose identity remains undisclosed. If the allegations are true, the crimes committed are wholly to be deplored and condemned. Since Bishop Bell

died in 1958, we shall probably never know what really happened.



The Rt. Rev. George Bell  
(1883 – 1958)



### Society of Mary



Join us for the Holy Rosary, breakfast and an informal meeting at 10 am on the following Saturdays: **December 5, January 2, February 6**

[www.somamerica.org](http://www.somamerica.org)

**ADVENT  
LESSONS & CAROLS**

Sunday 29 November  
5:30 pm



*Reception to follow in our Great Hall.*

**THE EPIPHANY**

Wednesday 6 January 2016  
High Mass 6:30 pm



St. John the Evangelist  
Newport, Rhode Island

Preaching:  
*The Rev'd John D. Alexander, SSC*

**Annual  
New Year's Day Dinner  
for Those in Need**

Friday 1 January 2016  
12 noon

**All are welcome.**

**You can help.**  
Start the New Year by lending a helping hand. We provide a hot meal, toiletries, socks, scarves, mittens, and hats.

*Christmas Services*

**Christmas Eve  
Thursday 24 December**

Pageant & Family Mass  
5:30 pm

Solemn Mass of the Nativity  
10:30 pm

**Christmas Day  
Friday 25 December**

Morning Prayer  
9 am

Low Mass  
9:30 am

## RITUALISM: PART TWO ROMANTICISM AND THE MEDIEVALISTS

*By Phoebe Pettingell*

The Enlightenment worldview held that the Middle Ages represented a decline in civilization from the glories of Ancient Greece and Rome. The Italian Renaissance poet, Petrarch (1304 - 1374), often called “the father of Humanism,” first divided history into Ancient, Middle, and Modern periods, the middle being a “Dark Age” when the light of Classical learning dimmed. Initially, a distinction was made between the early centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire and the High Middle Ages when the study of Plato and Aristotle revived, but the Protestant Reformation had little use for that era, either, so by the eighteenth century, “the Dark Ages” were habitually portrayed by many historians, and Protestants in general, as a time of feudal oppression, scholastic nit-picking, and suppression of free thought by the Catholic Church which sent thousands to their deaths in Crusades against the more civilized Muslims (whose influence helped revive ancient learning, and who reformed a cumbersome mathematical system with Arabic numerals); a Church armed with the Inquisition, ruling through fear and encouraging ignorance and superstition. The eighteenth century considered itself “the Age of Reason.” Neo-Classical architecture flourished, and human progress seemed to allow mankind to rely on ingenuity and resources, without resorting to faith in the supernatural.

Every action has a reaction, so by the late eighteenth century, new trends were challenging this mindset. One of the earliest signs was the sudden passion for “gothic” novels—the term connoting “medieval.” The genre began in 1764 with Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, a story teeming with horror tinged with the supernatural, mistaken identity,

and death. Walpole called it a “romance,” after the medieval story form in which heroes encounter a series of adventures on a quest to right some wrong or to win back something that was lost. The form quickly spread to France, Germany, and eventually Russia. In 1749, Walpole began building Strawberry Hill, his neo-gothic house, which, in turn, created an interest in gothic architecture.

By the nineteenth century, the fascination with the medieval period was turning into a passion for its values. The German poet and essayist, Heinrich Heine, remarked wryly that romanticism was nothing less than “the revival of the life and thought

of the Middle Ages.” In fact, the term “medieval” itself replaced the earlier term, with its pejorative association denoting a dark period of history. Instead, it evoked the age of Christendom, of chivalry, of craftsmanship and guilds, of people living in harmony with nature.

Inevitably, this newfound fascination with a once despised period set the stage for the

Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England. A number of different groups were suddenly ready to argue that the roots of the Church were not Reformation Protestantism, but an unbroken chain from Augustine of Canterbury and the early missionaries to the British Isles to the present. It was only *after* the Middle Ages, they argued, when Rome became overbearing and national politics increasingly influenced papal decisions (as with the refusal of Pope Clement VII to grant Henry VIII an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon because of the influence of her nephew, the King of Spain) that England reverted to an earlier model where the local monarch had more say in the affairs of the local



Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, England  
Built by Horace Walpole, 1749-1776.

Church. Two men in particular helped bring this era back to life for thousands: John Mason Neale (1818-1866) and Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924).

In 1839, three young undergraduates at Cambridge founded The Cambridge Camden Society, devoted to the restoration of gothic churches, and the erection of new ones along the same lines. A text by the thirteenth century Dominican philosopher, Durandus of Saint Pourçain, inspired their understanding of the symbolic significance of ecclesiastical decoration:

The glass windows in a church are Holy Scriptures, which expel the wind and the rain that is all things hurtful, but transmit the light of the true Sun, that is, God, into the hearts of the faithful ... The piers of the church are bishops and doctors: who specially sustain the Church of God by their doctrine ... the bases of the columns are the apostolic bishops, who support the frame of the whole church. The ornaments of the capitals are the words of Sacred Scripture, to the meditation and observance of which we are bound ... The tiles of the roof which keep off the rain are the soldiers, who preserve the Church from the paynim [non-Christian], and from enemies ... Bells to signify preachers ... The hardness of the metal signifieth fortitude in the mind of the preacher ... The wood of the frame on which the bell hangeth doth signify the wood of our Lord's Cross ...

And so on. Neale, as one the Society's founders, outlined his ideals in the following words:

A Church is not as it should be, till *every* window is filled with stained glass, till every inch of floor is covered with encaustic tiles, till there is a Roodscreen glowing with the brightest tints and with gold, nay, if we would arrive at perfection, the roof and walls must be painted and frescoed. For it may safely be as-

serted that ancient churches in general were so adorned.

This rich language of pictorial images was complemented by Neale's return to the medieval custom of symbolic Biblical interpretation in his preaching where, for instance, the Holy Trinity could be discerned in the opening chapter of Genesis: God the Creator; the Word who brought all things into being, not yet incarnate as Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters. He also reveled in stories of the early saints. If they fought dragons or carried their decapitated heads a mile to the place their shrine was to be built, this could be interpreted mystically as showing the relentless struggle against the forces of the devil or the power of martyrdom. Neale made no attempt to explain away miracles, or to rationalize them. Instead, he attempted to bring his hearers into a world in which the miraculous was yet one more perception of the coming of the kingdom of God. Similarly, gothic architecture and full catholic liturgies were not to be



John Mason Neale  
(1818-1866)

seen as aesthetic glories, but as a language in which congregations were brought nearer to the vision of God. Think of the way our rood screen at S. Stephen's shows Christ's passion on the cross. Yet when we walk under it into the sanctuary to approach the altar rail, we see on the reredos Christ crowned in glory, with the Virgin as Queen of heaven, surrounded by the saints. It is thanks to the Cambridge Camden Society that this powerful symbolism once more came to speak to Anglican worshippers. Neale, in particular, understood, as the Tractarians did not, that to form Catholic hearts in Victorians raised with Enlightenment values, it would be necessary to recreate the fabric of a Catholic world that appealed to the senses and that formed a new way of thinking about and experiencing Church.

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It is hard to imagine what Anglo-Catholicism would have been without John Mason Neale. In the 48 brief years of his life—he was always sickly—he published 130 books, translations, and tracts. Thirty more were published posthumously. His interests ranged from Church architecture to liturgy and hymnody, from the European Middle Ages to the history of Eastern Christianity. He wrote novels and hymns, and he founded the Society of St. Margaret, an Anglican Order of nuns, to nurse the poor. It remains active on three continents and in Haiti to this day, and we have been fortunate here at S. Stephen's to have some of the Sisters from the Duxbury Massachusetts House worship with us from time to time and to augment our Schola Cantorum with the beautiful voice of Sister Kristina Frances SSM. For Neale, as for all the most dedicated Anglo-Catholics, it was not enough to enrich the beauty of holiness with restored churches and splendid liturgies. All this went hand in hand with the relief of the poor. He established soup kitchens, his Sisterhood educated orphan girls, and both he and they tended the sick who were too poor to have anyone take care of them—even through deadly outbreaks of highly contagious diseases like typhus.

Neale's poor health prevented him serving a parish. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as it gave him the opportunity to travel extensively on the continent to get away from the damp English winters, studying Church architecture and ceremonial. At home, in his position as warden of Sackville College, an almshouse with a private chapel, he used his gifts as a linguist and poet to translate ancient hymns and early liturgical texts. He also wrote a number of hymns of his own composition. Before him, hymnody had been largely the provenance of Evangelicals, and at first some Anglo-Catholics were resistant, associating congregational singing with a more Protestant atmosphere than they wished to create. But Neale prevailed, and much of the rich heritage of our hymnals comes from him, including the Palm Sunday processional, "All Glory, Laud and Honor," "Jerusalem the Golden" (translated from Bernard of Cluny, twelfth century), "O Come, o come, Emmanuel" (based on the Advent "O Antiphons"), "Good Christian Men, rejoice," and "Good King Wenceslas." These hymns from the Church fathers and others written in their style

helped bring Catholic worship alive in parishes where they were sung.

The continuing popularity of many of his hymns, together with the rapid growth of the Society of Saint Margaret, might suggest that Neale's career was one long success story, but in fact he was the focus of extreme conflict. His passion for all things medieval, his early use of vestments, and his Sisterhood seemed "popish," especially to Evangelicals. At one point, the family of a pensioner at his almshouse refused to allow him to bury her, and carried off her body. Later that night, a mob gathered on the lawn outside his house, lit bonfires, and sang rude songs, threatening to set the building on fire, much to the alarm of his sick children and wife. Similar incidents followed, culminating in a riot in 1857 that disrupted the funeral of one of the Sisters of St. Margaret. An adult woman, she had joined the order against the wishes of her father, a Low Church cleric, who accused Neale of deliberately sending her to her death in nursing typhus patients in order to get his hands on her money. He and the Sisters had to seek refuge from rioters throughout the village in houses and sheds. Many of the nuns were manhandled and their dresses torn, while Neale was knocked down and bruised. The inimitable Mother Kate, whose memoirs offer vivid pictures of the Order, its work, and many of those priests who served it, describes this debacle with an amazing *sang froid*, as though it had been an adventure for these intrepid women. Neale's bishop chose to inhibit him from all priestly functions for a number of years, in part because he placed two candlesticks on the altar of his chapel and had a cross embossed on the front of his Prayer Book; this inhibition was not lifted until five years before his death.

Neale's love for the history of the Church gave him an appreciation of the fullness of the Catholic faith. While increasingly, many Anglo-Catholics started to imitate Roman Catholic styles, so that by the end of the nineteenth century they were scorning the gothic for continental baroque architecture, and modeling their liturgies on the Tridentine Mass of the Counter-Reformation, Neale chose to become as versed in Byzantine liturgies as in Western rites, and his writings laid the groundwork for Anglican ecumenical relations with the Orthodox. His breviary for the Society of Saint Margaret—revolutionary at the time—followed the Latin pattern—but he wanted people to understand and value both East and West, lest their vision

become too narrow, and they end up converting to Rome as Newman and others had. He had no wish to be an innovator, but merely to reconnect people in his own day with the living past.

Neale was not in sympathy with the Tractarians. He and Newman never saw eye-to-eye, even when the latter was an Anglican, and after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, Newman took a swipe at the principles of the Cambridge Camden Society in his novel, *Loss and Gain*, being himself a devotee of the baroque. Neale particularly objected to Pusey's stress on principles at the expense of liturgy, vestments, music, architecture and what today we would characterize as *ethos*. If Church could recreate the culture of medieval Christendom, he believed, people of all classes would absorb its values and lead lives closer to God because the ritual and symbolic language of the building would speak as eloquently as sermons, and reinforce them. Furthermore, this Catholic way of worship stressed community rather than merely concentrating on the individual's personal relationship with God, so that Christians would become more

committed to caring for the poor and helping one another. In his brief life, through personal suffering and tribulations, John Mason Neale nonetheless gave himself wholly and cheerfully up to glorifying God in the manner of those saints he so loved.

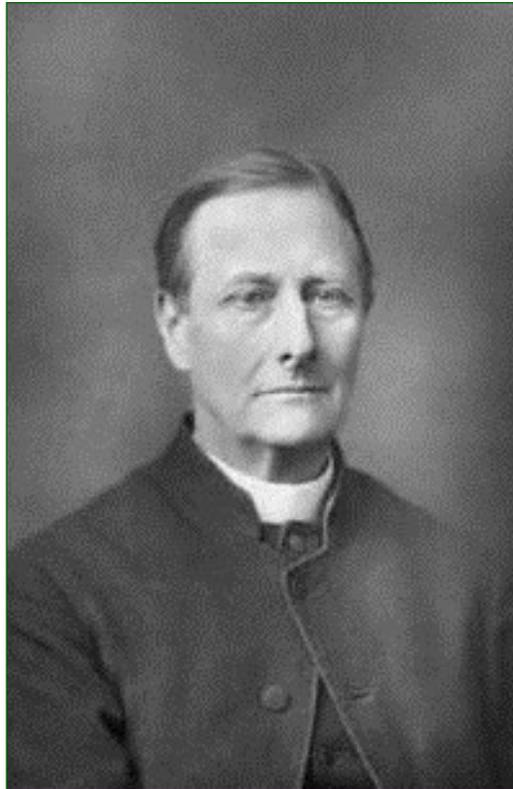
Sabine Baring-Gould was born into the second generation of the Anglo-Catholic revival, carrying on Neale's tradition of making the Middle Ages come alive for his contemporaries. Like Neale, his interests were polymath; like him he was an eccentric and suffered from ill health all his life (though unlike Neale, he lived to be 90), and like him is primarily remembered in the Church as a hymn writer. Go to Amazon.Com, however, and you will discover literally hundreds of his books, and even these are not his complete output. He wrote works on folklore—

one of his perennial best-sellers is *The Book of Werewolves* (1865), closely followed by *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (1866-1868)—a fascinating compendium well worth reading—a 16-volume *Lives of the Saints* (1897-1898), novels, stories for children, Church histories, sermons, guide books, tomes on church architecture, along with anything else that captured his fancy. He made invaluable collections of folk songs and folk

tales, and was an amateur archeologist. A sickly child, his father carried him off to the continent so that he received little formal education before going up to Cambridge in 1852, but he already spoke five foreign languages fluently. Despite his father's agnosticism, he was a pious young man, and ultimately prevailed on his family to allow him to seek holy orders, although he was an eldest son and would eventually inherit his father's estate, whereas clerical careers were usually reserved for younger brothers.

At Cambridge, Baring-Gould founded a "Holy Club," devoted to attending the highest liturgies available, reserving hours for prayer, giving alms, and avoiding the student debauches that were a feature of much student life. His academic career was undistinguished, partly because his background in Classics was weak, and

partly because he spent his time in the college libraries reading what interested him rather than what his tutors considered the necessary syllabus. Upon graduation with a Master of Arts in 1860, instead of choosing one of the prestigious "public schools" at which his father wished him to teach, if teach he must, he chose the choir school at St. Barnabas, Pimlico, in London, living in the clergy house so that he might learn from the senior curate there, Charles Fuge Lowder, already a "fighting saint" of the Ritualist Movement, soon to be vicar of St. Peter in the London Docks. (The next piece in this series will cover Lowder and his fellow "Christian Soldiers" in their struggles with the Church establishment). After several years, the family relented, and the newly ordained Baring-Gould went in 1864 as



Sabine Baring-Gould  
(1834-1924)

*Continued from previous page*

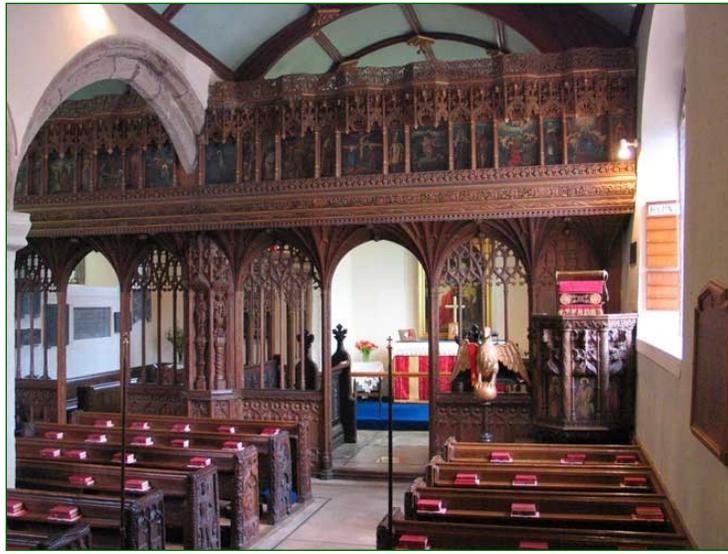
a curate to the village of Horbury Brig. He was given charge of a section of the parish filled with rough, working class people who, when he first arrived, had little use for the Church. However, he had learned well from his work with Father Lowder in London's slums. His reputation as a gripping storyteller among the children won over the parents as well. Baring-Gould soon arranged worship services according to Anglo-Catholic principles. All his life, he denied that Anglicanism was Protestant. It was at Horbury Brig that he dashed off the verses of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" for a children's procession. Immediately, it caught on and became for many years a party song of the movement, with its description of the processional—an innovation in services of the time—with banners and "the Cross of Jesus going on before." It is hard to understand now that plain altar crosses, much less a processional cross, seemed too Catholic well into the nineteenth century in most congregations. Far from being militaristic, the hymn is based on the

passage from Saint Paul's second letter to Timothy, 2:3: "Share in suffering like a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; the early Christians did not bear arms, but considered their enemy to be sin and evil, with Christ as their commander whom they obeyed in all things. It amused the author that in later years many Protestant groups who did not believe in the concept of "the Universal Church" as a divine institution or in its Creeds could be heard belting out:

*Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;  
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;  
We are not divided, all one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.*

At Horbury Brig, Baring-Gould composed a number of other familiar hymns, many of which can be found in *The Hymnal, 1982*.

This particular burst of lyric creativity may have occurred because there he met and fell in love with Grace Taylor, a sixteen-year old girl who worked at the local mill. Today, the age difference between them (he was then in his 30s) and the fact that he was her priest would make such a romance taboo. At the time, it was the fact that she was lower class and barely literate, while he was the son and heir of landed gentry. Neither set of parents approved the romance. However, Baring-Gould arranged for her to live with relatives of another vicar until she was of age, and also to be educated. In the meantime, in 1867 he left Horbury Brig for a parish on the salt marshes of East Riding, Yorkshire, known to its depressed locals as Dalton i't Muck. When Grace turned 18, he married her, and brought her there as well. They were happily married for 48 years and had 16 children, all but one of whom lived to adulthood. But the time in Dalton was not easy. The people were apathetic, and the climate unhealthy. His work with early Jewish and Christian legends



St. Peter's Church at Lew Trenchard

there inspired him to produce a controversial volume entitled *The Origin and Development of Religious Belief* (1869-1870). Today, its premise seems mild, but at the time it was excoriated not only by Evangelicals but by Roman-Catholics and, which stung, by many Anglo-Catholics as well, who resisted the notion that revealed religion could "develop" in any fashion, as they had earlier resisted Darwin's theory of evolution. (As we will see later in this series, a subsequent generation happily embraced both ideas). However, what first seemed misfortune had a happy ending. Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone—a friend to the Anglo-Catholic movement, as Disraeli was an opponent—loved the book and found a much more congenial parish for the young vicar and his growing family. Furthermore, Baring-Gould's time in Dalton i't Muck inspired his greatest novel, *Mehalab*, often compared

to *Wuthering Heights*, but more a forerunner to the dark novels of Thomas Hardy, and still well worth reading. Those who argue that Baring-Gould was too much a gentleman to understand the lives of the working men and women he served sell his fictional characters short, not to mention the pride he took in his wife's humble origins.

As a boy, Baring-Gould had visited the parish church of St. Peter's at his family's seat of Lew Trenchard, where his uncle was then vicar. Used to the beauty of German Catholic churches from the high gothic period, he was appalled at what his grandfather had done to an historic English building. The beautiful medieval rood screen had been stripped away, as had the pews, to be replaced with "horse stalls"—the scornful name Ritualists applied to high box pews which the wealthy sometimes furnished with sofas, and heating stoves, while the poor sat and shivered on hard, backless benches. These, and the pulpit, had been painted mustard yellow, while the altar was draped in a blue cloth, not to denote anything liturgical, but because yellow and blue were the colors of the Gould coat-of-arms, which was also centrally displayed as an object of devotion. Horrified lest the remains of the rood screen be chopped up for firewood, Baring-Gould hid it. When his uncle died in 1881 and he finally became rector of Lew Trenchard as well as its squire, he lovingly restored its medieval character. One of his biographers served the parish while many parishioners were still alive who remembered their old rector, and how he had made the land around them and their church come alive with his stories, so that they felt one with the past, present, and future. For while Neale always set his sights on the Beatific Vision of the world to come, Baring-Gould hoped for a better future here on earth, as well as in heaven. He died having spanned many generations—from the Ritualist battles in what William Booth had called "darkest London" through the Great War—still as much at home in the past he was able to evoke so powerfully as in the future he was able to envision so clearly. One of the great strengths of the Ritualist movement's heroes was to recognize that for the Church to move forward into the future in health and strength, it must remember and preserve its past.

## Fall Brunch & Stewardship Kickoff

By Cory MacLean

On Sunday 25 October, we kicked off our fall programs with a festive brunch (admirably arranged by Junior Warden Susan Brazil) in the Great Hall following the Solemn Mass at 10 am. Forty-two parishioners met for fellowship and good food, and we rounded out the event with a brief presentation about this year's stewardship campaign. Chair Thomas Oakes, sporting red suspenders and excellent comic timing, proclaimed, exhorted, teased, and spoke seriously, too, about the importance of stewardship. He continued the theme presented in his October letter to the parish about the reasons why we give, and are asked to give, to the worthy undertakings of our parish church, both large and small. Spouse Pat Fuller endured some good-natured ribbing and all present were brought to hearty laughter on several occasions; quite an accomplishment for a S. Stephen's event, and a fundraising event at that!

We then heard from Fr. Yost, who spoke eloquently about giving as an act of worship, describing how during the Mass our plate offerings, the elements, the altar, the clergy, and all the people are censured, marking us as participants with Christ in his sacrifice, and thus in some sense a part of the matter of the sacrifice. And that by making an offering from our substance, we not only support the church, we actually unite with Christ's offering on the cross.

On Stewardship Sunday, 15 November, members of the congregation brought their pledge cards forward at the both Masses, where they were blessed and then tallied during the service. However, it's not too late to make a pledge for 2016. If you haven't received a pledge card but would like one, they are available in the church during services, or you can contact the parish office at 421-6702, ext. 1.

*As a form a ministry, fundraising is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry.* — Henri Nouwen





# Quodlibet

by James Busby

**quodlibet** (kwäd'lə bet') *n* [ME fr. ML quodlibetum, fr. L quodlibet, fr. *qui* who, what + *libet* it pleases, fr. *libere* to please] 1. a piece of music combining several different melodies, usually popular tunes, in counterpoint and often a light-hearted, humorous manner - *Merriam Webster*



As a conservatory student I didn't spend much time writing. I remember knocking off a little paper on T. S. Eliot's poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, and not much more. Fortunately for many us, our instructor, a young Harvard grad student, was much more interested in his teaching assistant, to whom he was subsequently wed, than any budding literary skills in the classroom, so we were left pretty much alone and it was quite to everyone's liking and the universal good. Still, given a pressing deadline, I feel sometimes like Eudora Welty's character Edna Earle who "was so slow-witted she could sit all day pondering how the tail of the C got through the loop of the L on the Coca-Cola sign." I solve this problem by calling on colleagues from the Schola for their newsy bits, and I'm grateful to them for helping to relieve this egregious block.

Not expecting my reader to make it past the figurative loop on the L, I'll start by telling you a bit about Lessons and Carols on Advent I, 29<sup>th</sup> November at 5:30 pm. This has become such a beloved tradition at our parish church that the time we attempted to do something a trifle different it was met with hue and cry. In consequence, I'd be grateful to see a large congregation, especially for the inordinate amount of work it takes on top of Thanksgiving weekend. Adhering to this date avoids conflict with the University's more worldly offering on Advent II.

Our musical selections at our carol service this year date from early plainchant, visiting English Renaissance composers William Byrd and Robert Ramsey, early Baroque Andreas Hammerschmidt (called the "Orpheus of Zittau"), through a newish work by young Norwegian Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978). Gjeilo, who

immigrated to the USA in 2001 to study composition at The Julliard School counts amongst his inspirations Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams. The presented motet's title *Second Eve*, dating from 2008, is inspired by John Henry Cardinal Newman's writings, and is a setting of Marian texts appropriate for The Annunciation.

I'm so pleased my colleague Peter Stoltzfus Berton from St. John's Newport will visit to share some of the organ duties with me at Lessons and Carols.

John Brooks, a new bass in the Schola, finds time not only for us, but to serve as Dean of the Rhode Island American Guild of Organists. John offers "...as a professional church musician, I very much enjoy singing under James's benign dictatorship! Formerly a Fellow in Church Music at Washington Cathedral, I had the great privilege of living and working in England as a Choral Scholar in the choir of Wells Cathedral, and as a Lay Clerk in the choir of Gloucester Cathedral. I have been singing professionally since my days as a treble chorister in my home parish, Christ Church in

Bronxville, New York, and am about to take a short trip back to England to take part in a concert celebrating the Three Choirs Festival's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, at Buckingham Palace. As the festival's patron and a keen choral music enthusiast (apparently his favorite composer is the renowned C. Hubert H. Parry), the Prince of Wales is hosting this grand occasion."

An old friend, Michael Raymond, after a couple of year's leave of absence, has morphed most effectively from second tenor to alto. Mike, ever agreeable, writes of his musical life these days thusly: "When not teaching high school band, guitar and chorus, I'm playing principal viola with the Narragansett Bay Symphony



Andreas Hammerschmidt  
c. 1611—1675  
"The Orpheus of Zittau"

*Community Orchestra, and I have been working with an early music group called "Make We Music." We will be doing a program on 15<sup>th</sup> November of the music of Salomone Rossi (the Jewish-Italian Renaissance composer) in which I will be playing recorders, chalumeau and violin in addition to singing." It brings me great happiness to have Mike back on board.*

The other recent personnel change is soprano Kimberly Ayers, who performs and teaches privately in the Boston and Providence areas. She received the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Massachusetts and the Master of Music from the New England Conservatory of Music. Kim writes that she is *"thrilled to be joining S. Stephen's beautiful musical family."* She and her husband, Jonathan Amon, who is the saxophone professor at Bridgewater University, are new parents of eight-week-old Evelyn Frances.

Mezzo-soprano Hillary Nicholson has been a member of the Schola Cantorum at S. Stephen's since 1986, and is as comfortable singing medieval monody as Bizet's wanton gypsy Carmen on the operatic stage. Hillary has over fifty operatic roles to her credit, including performances at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. She is a good friend and her absence – due to a vocal cord injury requiring a state-of-the-art laser treatment followed by extended voice rest – has been noted this fall season.

She writes: *"I'm very much looking forward to returning to S. Stephen's as soon as I can, as I've missed it terribly. Those in the clergy and congregation that I've seen in the meantime have been exceedingly kind and patient and I thank them sincerely for being such a welcoming family. The only benefit to being out of the loop has been the opportunity to hear the Schola as the congregation hears it from out in the pews, something I haven't experienced since 1986. Being in exile myself, I can say with no vanity or conceit whatsoever that this is an exceptional choir, and Dr. Busby is an exemplary musician and leader.*



Hillary Nicholson,  
mezzo

*If I had ever forgotten, hearing the music at Deb Abel's wedding and at the evensong for Saint Michael and All Angels reminded me of just how fortunate I am to be a small part of such an outstanding group."*

While the tail of the C continues its peregrination I call your attention to the concert by vocal ensemble Blue Heron on Advent IV, 20<sup>th</sup> December at 4:00 pm, which will feature Christmas music of medieval England. Interestingly, Grammy Award winning tenor Aaron Sheehan's first professional engagements out of grad school were with S. Stephen's Schola Cantorum and with Blue Heron, and I'm thrilled the current group is singing at our parish church. Further information can be found on their website at [blueheronchoir.org](http://blueheronchoir.org). Please support that, as I know you will our Lessons and Carols!



Kimberly Ayers, soprano



## IN CONCERT:



# 'Christmas in Medieval England'

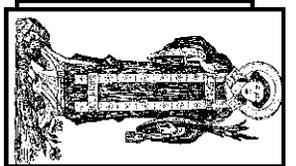
SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER  
4 PM

Tickets available online at  
[blueheronchoir.org](http://blueheronchoir.org),  
or at the door



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# The S. Stephen

ADVENT ♦ CHRISTMAS ♦ EPIPHANY

2015—2016



*The Annunciation* by Eustache Le Sueur, c. 1650