

From your Rector



One of the dialogues in preaching circles is how much to talk about politics or government from the pulpit. As you can imagine, there is a wide range of opinions, even in the Episcopal Church. While I have never heard any Episcopalian support advocating for a candidate or political party from the pulpit, many do feel a need to address current events and the government's role in these events. How we interpret these events or sermons is completely subjective. A preacher could deliver a sermon that she did not perceive as political at all. Half the congregation would agree that it was not political. Half would think it was. It is quite murky and it is something I struggle with a great deal. For instance, is talking about racism or sexism political? I would say that it is not. It has political implications, but to me, it is much more about justice than politics. What about helping the poor and loving our enemies? Is that political?

I do not know the answer to many of these questions. I am torn. In college, I majored in Political Science. I was the high school student who woke up early to read the Washington Post. I interned in Congress when I was in high school. The whole process fascinated me. I was convinced that I would work in government after graduation. Then I took Introduction to New Testament. I loved studying the Bible. I took all the religion classes I could. To graduate with honors, I had to write a senior thesis for my major. I was determined to bring religion in somehow as I had declared a minor in religion. The topic I chose was "Religion and its effect on women's role in politics." I do not remember a lot about that paper. I remember meeting with my political science advisor when I was half way through the project. He said, "This looks great for a religion thesis, but you need more politics." That was one of the first clues that I was not meant for politics. I am telling you this story to say that I chose religion instead of politics. But there are times when the two intersect. Navigating that intersection can be rather terrifying.

Karl Barth is a very well-known German theologian who spoke out against Hitler and his use of the German Church to advance his racist agenda. He once said that "One should preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other." I agree with him in that we have to keep in mind what is going on in our world today. It is the only way that we can be relevant. However, we are not reading the same newspapers anymore. We all live in our own silos listening, reading and watching the news we agree with. I listen to NPR and when I listen to it I cannot imagine how anyone would see it as anything but objective. Yet I know there are many people who perceive it as biased. I think that is part of the problem in our world today. I was talking to a friend about something that I kept seeing on Facebook regarding some political issue. She said she had not seen anything about it on her newsfeed. We had different friends with different political views. We weren't seeing the same articles. How can we agree on politics when we can't even agree what the facts are?

I have put a lot of thought into this and I have come up with one conclusion. I preach the Bible. I read about 10 commentaries every week to get a wide perspective on various insights into the Bible. Then I pray that God will guide my hand as I write my sermon. Sometimes I will bring up current events because the text I am preaching relates to it. I never preach something that is not related to the Biblical text assigned for that Sunday. It might happen someday but it has not thus far. You might hear something I preach and think, "Wait a minute, is she referencing something the president or congress just said?" Maybe. All I ask is that you keep an open mind. The Holy Spirit speaks to me when I write my sermon, but I also believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to you in the way you hear the sermon. If both the preacher and the person listening is open to the Holy Spirit, then maybe...just maybe...the Gospel will shine through.

Faithfully, Samantha

Academy of Music at St. Johns

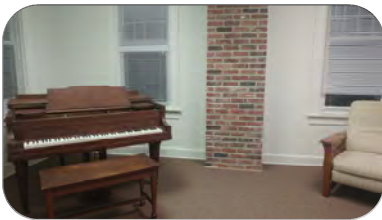
Have you always wanted to learn to play a musical instrument? Or always looking for ways to add beauty and creativity to your life or the life of our Hampton community? Well, the music ministry at St. Johns has been looking into these questions and more and has embarked on a new and exciting adventure.

The Hoffman House is a two-story property owned by St John's right next to the church building, and presently houses the office/studio of our favorite photographer Bob Harper, as well as the office of an architecture firm. Half of the second floor is presently vacant and has recently been the home to a drum set, some guitars, an upright piano and lots of electronic music equipment.



Danny McFarland and Bill Beach have been using this space to introduce their music to budding guitar and piano enthusiasts. So we decided to see if we could open a music academy in this space that would offer music lessons and group musical experiences to the Hampton community.

The Academy of Music of Hampton Roads has been in existence for over 20 years and has been offering musical training of all sorts for the Southside communities. Our music director Deborah Carr has connections to the Music Academy and learned that the Academy of Music was hoping to expand to the peninsula. It seemed a partnership between the music ministry at St John's and the Academy of Music was just waiting to happen. And now it has happened!



With the support of St. John's Vestry, the generosity of Charlie Edmonson and Towne Bank who donated all our office furniture, and the enthusiastic help of the Academy of Music, the **Academy of Music at St. Johns** is beginning as an outreach effort of the church.

In addition to the work of Danny McFarland and Bill Beach, we will open our doors to music lessons for three retired veterans beginning in December. The Academy has partnered with Veterans organizations and others to offer scholarship lessons to veterans and the students currently scheduled will be studying violin, guitar and piano.

We will soon add a link on the church website to the Academy website to sign up for lessons at our facility. Scholarships are available to those in need. The Academy will also be adding a link to its website to take interested students to our webpage. We are exploring ways to partner with downtown development groups, after-school programs and child development centers to see what musical opportunities we might create for Hampton. One hope of our clergy and music director is that we will be able to provide opportunities for Hampton residents who might not be able to afford music lessons otherwise. There will be much more information coming about the progress of our new adventure to foster music in Hampton and at St. Johns!

St. John's Ringers - our newest musical group at St Johns are the St Johns Ringers. Comprised of eight committed handbell enthusiasts, this handbell choir will play their first offering for church on Sunday, November 26th at the 10:30am service. Their next scheduled appearance will be for Christmas music on Sunday, December 17th at the 10:30 am worship service. Come early to hear them at the prelude time.



Advent Lessons and Carols - Our St. Johns' choir will offer a concert of Advent Lessons and Carols of the season on Sunday, December 17th at 4:00 pm. This wonderful service will recount God's relationship with his people from the beginning of time until the coming of his Son at Christmas. It will give us hope in our darkness, peace for our future and will prepare us for the coming of the Christ child. All are welcome. A holiday reception will follow in the parish hall.

Christian Formation

H.E.Y. gathered on Sunday, November 12th in St. John's parish hall for a community out-reach program. The youth, directed by leaders, assembled 10 homemade apple pies. The pies were served to guests at St. Mark's community dinner held late November. Rev. Warren Hicks of St. Mark's led a very informative program and conversation about "Food Deserts" and the need here in our own community. A food desert is an area with low income and minority residents, that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food. The group talked about the importance of the Food Bank and H.E.L.P. to our community. After the program we gathered to enjoy apple crisp and fellowship. H.E.Y. is fun way to get area youth together, I encourage our youth to join in the fun and bring a friend. H.E.Y. will meet again Sunday, December 10th from 3-5pm at Emmanuel Episcopal Church for a Christmas party.



St. Nicholas Visits St. John's: On Sunday, December 3rd, St. Nicholas will visit during the 10:30 am service. We encourage children of all ages to come and worship and visit with St. Nicholas. We will host a cookie reception during coffee hour. Please bring your favorite Christmas cookies to share.

Christmas Pageant: Sandy Smith will be leading the Christmas pageant this year. The pageant takes place during the 5pm Family Christmas Eve service. If your child or youth are interested in participating please email jjawsolson@aol.com. Look for more information in the upcoming Sunday bulletins.



St. Anne's Guild:

St. Anne's Guild will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 5, 10:30AM at the home of Barbara Sinclair. This will be our annual Christmas celebration. Members are asked to bring a holiday brunch dish to share. Friends are welcome to join us. Please contact Janice or Barbara:

Barbara Williams - 757-722-0338 bsinclair3@cox.net

Janice Markham - 757-851-0177 - jmarkham74@yahoo.com

Young Adults: St. John's is hosting a dinner for all young adults (20s and 30s) on December 3rd at 6pm. It will be a casual dinner with yummy food, beverages and good company. Please RSVP to Samantha at sjrector@stjohnshampton.org or 722-2567.

Prayer Shawl Ministry We will not meet in December due to the Christmas holiday. Please plan to join us again on the 4th Monday in January, the 22nd from 10am till 12noon as we gather to knit or crochet beautiful prayer shawls for those in need.

The Craft Guild will be holding a mini bazaar on December 10th. It will be after both services in the parish hall. You may find something special for that someone special, please stop by and give us a look!

Altar Guild

If you are looking to help serve in this important ministry then the Altar Guild is waiting for you! We are looking for volunteers for both the 8 am & 10:30 am services. Please contact Lynn Kirkland kirkland3@aol.com if you are interested. We'd love to have you!



COMING UP 2018:

Annual Meeting January 21st, One service at 9:15am—meeting & breakfast will follow.

Oyster Roast, January 20th from 4-6pm

December Birthdays

03 Sarah Messersmith
03 August Olson
04 Bill Brown
06 David Bishop
07 Jill Shoemaker
08 Russell Smith
10 Charlotte Weber
10 Bill Kirkland
11 Ann Templeman
12 Jan Peters
13 Adelyn Devlin
14 Hagar Melgaard
17 Carrie Quinn
18 Carol Giles
21 Will Olson
21 Donovan Devlin
21 Morgan Devlin
22 Bonnie Jones
25 Charlie Edmonson
26 Martha Barrett
26 Jamie Shoemaker
27 John Park
29 Mark Riley
29 Billie Ray Jeffries
29 Parker Moore
30 Mary Pat Croft
31 Joe Strup
31 Gwen Carr

December Anniversaries

02 Matt & Missy Austin
24 Jack & Marilyn Gendeloff
27 Jack & Jacqueline Park

Please contact the office
if we have missed your
birthday or anniversary:

757-722-2567

office@stjohnshampton.org

Directory updates:

Duncan Garnett: phone 757-876-6509 Diana Garnett: phone 757-876-6478

Judy Steffens: email correction judysteffens47@gmail.com

Kippy Sinclair: phone: 757-870-7506, email: kippysinclair@yahoo.com

Please contact the office 757-722-2567 for any contact information changes or corrections

Advent & Christmas Events at St. John's 2017

DECEMBER 3rd: **A Visit From St. Nick.** Be sure to bring your children to the 10:30am service on Sunday, December 3rd, as St. Nick will visit us during the 10:30am service. A cookie reception follows in the parish house. Bring your favorite batch of cookies to share (plated, please).

DECEMBER 6th, 13th, and 20th – Wednesdays 12:15pm **Noon Day Prayer** in the church with healing. Can't get away from work? We plan to broadcast via Facebook Live – look for us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnshampton/> Share with your friends.

DECEMBER 10th: **Mini Craft Bazaar** presented by the Craft Guild between the 8am & 10:30am services

DECEMBER 17TH: **Christmas Pageant** rehearsal at 11:30am in the church.

DECEMBER 17th: **Concert of Lessons and Carols** at 4pm.

CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 24th: Sunday morning 9:15am Holy Eucharist II.

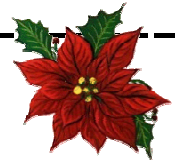
Christmas Eve Services (Sunday) 5:00pm Family Service (Carols begin at 4:45pm) with Holy Eucharist and a Children's Traditional Christmas Pageant.



10:00pm Traditional Service (Carols begin 9:30pm) with Holy Eucharist & choir. The service concludes with lighting of the candles and the singing of Silent Night.

DECEMBER 25th: **Christmas Day Service** and Holy Eucharist at 9:15am on Monday, December 25th.

Christmas Poinsettias & Altar Decorations:



If you would like to make a donation for Christmas poinsettias and altar decorations, please fill out the form below. You may return the form and your check to the church office or place in the offering plate. The memorials and thanksgivings will be printed in the Christmastide bulletins, as well as the January 2018 Epistle Newsletter.

Deadline for printing in the bulletins: Monday, December 18th

Enclosed is \$ _____ for Christmas Poinsettias & Altar Decorations

I wish to give this in Memory/Honor of (Specify dedication type):

Name: _____ Phone: _____

VESTRY NOMINATIONS

The form below gives parishioners the opportunity to nominate a candidate for election to the Vestry of St. John's Church, prior to the Vestry Elections on Sunday, January 21, 2018 at the Annual Meeting. This year we will be electing three persons to serve a three-year term from 2018-2021. There will be no nominations from the floor. We ask for these nominations in advance so we can get information on the candidates to the parish ahead of time. You may nominate yourself. ***Nominees for Vestry must be active, confirmed, pledging members of the congregation.***

Deadline for submission is Thursday, January 11, 2018.

Please return the completed form to the parish office.

Name of Nominee: _____

Does the nominee meet the following qualifications?

	Yes	No
Has s/he given permission to be nominated?	___	___
Is s/he 16 years of age or older?	___	___
Is s/he a confirmed Episcopalian and a member at St. John's?	___	___
Does s/he worship regularly at St. John's?	___	___
Has s/he been off the vestry for at least one year?	___	___



St. John's is providing a service commonly referred to as the Longest Night because December 21st is the winter solstice and is officially the longest night of the year. We know that Christmas can be a difficult time for many people. While the world tells us to "deck the halls," some of us want to stay in bed and avoid the holiday cheer. This is a service for those

who want to recognize the birth of Christ in a way that does not force them to act in a way that they do not feel. It will be a quiet service with readings, music, and a short meditation. Please join us if you would like to. ***Thursday, December 21st at 7:00pm***

December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 First Sunday of Advent 8 & 10:30am Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Christian Formation 9:30 Choir in Loft St. Nick Visit at 10:30 and Cookie Reception following service 6pm Young Adult dinner 8pm AA	4 11am Charitable Trust 8pm AA	5 10am Craft Guild	6 10am Heritage Group 11am Staff (Deborah) 12:15pm Noon Day Prayer 2:30pm Bible Study 7pm Choir Practice	7 12pm Bulletin & Epistle Deadline 8pm AA	8 9am Jail Ministry	9
10 Second Sunday of Advent 8 & 10:30am Holy Eucharist I 9:15am Christian Formation 9:30am Choir in loft Craft Bazaar between both services 3-5pm H.E.V. Event 8pm AA	11 8pm AA	12 10am Craft Guild 4:30pm Vestry/Executive 5pm Finance Committee	13 10am Heritage Group 12:15pm Noon Day Prayer 2:30pm Bible Study 7pm Choir Practice	14 12pm Bulletin & Epistle Deadline 8pm AA	15 9am Jail Ministry	16
17 Third Sunday of Advent 8 & 10:30am Holy Eucharist I & Prayers for Healing 9:15am Christian Formation 9:30 Choir in loft 11:30 Pageant rehearsal 4pm Lessons and Carols 8pm AA	18 8pm AA	19 10am Craft Guild 7:00pm Vestry at the Fileys	20 10am Heritage Group 10am Pastoral Care 11am Staff (Samantha) 12:15pm Noon Day Prayer 2:30pm Bible Study 7pm Choir Practice 8pm AA	21 12pm Bulletin & Epistle Deadline 7pm Tazet/Longest Night Service 8pm AA	22 9am Jail Ministry	23
24 CHRISTMAS EVE Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:15am Holy Eucharist I 10:30am Greening of the Church 5pm Family Service Holy Eucharist 10pm Traditional Service w/ Holy Eucharist	25 CHRISTMAS DAY OFFICE CLOSED 9:15am Christmas Day Service 8pm AA	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30
31 Christmas 1 New Year's Eve 9:15am Morning Prayer No Christian Formation	1 New Year's Day 2018 OFFICE CLOSED					



St. John's Episcopal Church

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(757) 722-2567

office@stjohnshampton.org

St. John's Staff

The Rev. Samantha Vincent– Alexander, Rector

sjrector@stjohnshampton.org

The Rev. Mark Riley, Assistant Rector

mark@stjohnshampton.org

Deborah Carr, Organist and Music Director

music@stjohnshampton.org

Jane Price, Lay Pastoral Associate

janeprice30@aol.com

Shannon Olson, Christian Formation Coordinator

jjawsolson@aol.com

Jenn Devlin, Parish Administrator

office@stjohnshampton.org

Betsy Bouchard, Communications Assistant

communications@stjohnshampton.org

Calvin Slade, Sexton



Vestry

Bill Brown (2018)

Whiting Chisman, Jr. (2019)

Mary Pat Croft (2017)

Patrick Dennehey (2019)

David Edmonson (2017)

Duncan Garnett (2018)

Bob Harper (2019)

Rosemary Hobart (2018)

Bettyrene Pope, Jr. Warden (2017)

Office Hours

Monday through Friday

9am-4pm

In case of Pastoral Emergency,

please call 757-504-3504.

Sunday Worship

8:00am Holy Eucharist

9:15am Christian Formation

10:30am Holy Eucharist

Nursery Provided
for Christian Formation
and for the 10:30am service.