

### *From your Rector*

The church is dying. People have been saying that as long as I have been a member of the Episcopal Church. A lot of people think the decline began in the early 2000s, but it actually began in the 1980's. Church attendance hit an unprecedented high in the 1950's and early 1960's. Since a lot of people in our church remember that time, some people assume that the church was always that large and influential. The truth is that the 1950's and 1960's was a bit of an anomaly when it came to church attendance. Therefore, it might not be fair to compare where we are now to where we were then. People really didn't worry too much when we declined a little in the 1980's and 1990's.

However, in the early 2000s, people across the church started to notice. Churches lost staff because of budget cuts. Pews that were once full started to empty. A lot of people attributed this decline to the controversy over gay marriage and ordination. This controversy played a part as there was a lot of infighting and most people don't want to be part of a church that is always arguing about something. However, it was more than that. This decline had been brewing for decades.



In 2012, I took a month long sabbatical. I went to England to study a movement called Fresh Expressions. The Church of England was putting a lot of effort into new ways of being church. Examples include "messy church" that was geared to families with young children. They moved worship to the parish hall where children could work on projects as part of worship. There were churches that met in basements, bars, nightclubs, etc. The Church of England was very intentional about trying new things. There was an entire office dedicated to studying these trends and supporting people in these ministries. I met with some people and marveled at how much they had done. I asked why they were so far ahead of The Episcopal Church. The answer was simple. "You aren't desperate yet. But you will be soon." The Church of England had been declining much faster than the Episcopal Church. They knew that something had to be done. Therefore, they started working on intentional evangelism and formation in the 1990s. It has only been in the last 5 years when I have seen these discussions become more common in the Episcopal Church. It appears that we are getting desperate.

The question is what are we desperate for? Are we desperate to get more people in our pews? Are we desperate for the survival of our historic church? If those are the causes of our desperation, I fear we shall never be satisfied. I would like the church to come to a point when we are desperate for God. Pew Research did a recent survey that found the number one reason people went to church was to feel closer to God. It seems obvious, but we don't talk about it much. In the Episcopal Church we rarely talk about a relationship with God. I confess I worry about church attendance. My fear is not that people don't care anymore. I believe they do. My fear is that our worship isn't helping people feel closer to God. If that is true, I want to know. The only way I can know is if you tell me. I would love to know what makes you feel closer to God.

Sometimes to feel closer to God, we have to lay ground work outside of Sunday morning worship. People who have studied church growth have determined that one of the signs of a thriving church is bible study. It makes sense. The more you study God's word, the more invested you are in what happens on Sunday morning. While we have an ongoing bible study during the week, we plan to do things a little different for Sunday Morning Christian Formation. We have moved our Vacation Bible School to the Fall. The benefit is that adults will be able to participate. The theme of our Vacation Bible School is "Rome: Paul and the Underground Church." While the children and youth will be doing activities focused on Paul and the early church, the adults will also be studying Paul. *(continued on page 2)*

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We will be looking at some overarching themes of Paul's letters as well as his part in the early church. The church was persecuted in its first 300 years of existence. This meant that people often gathered in homes or small assemblies. This provides an opportunity for more fellowship and participation.

On Sunday, September 23rd we will have our own underground church. We will meet at 5pm and will only reveal the location the week before. Don't worry, we will still have service in the morning. We thought it would be a good way to experience what early Christians experienced. I hope that you will consider participating in some of the activities around our Fall Vacation Bible School, especially the formation opportunities. If you cannot make it on Sunday morning and would like to have the study on a weeknight, let me know. I would love to make this available to as many people as possible. One of the things I am considering is offering the study online. Christian formation/education does not end your senior year of high school. It lasts a lifetime. I hope that through all of this, we will each find ways to draw closer to God.

Faithfully,  
*Samantha*



### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Total Meals Packaged: **10,152**

Number of Volunteers: **54** Youngest Volunteer: **5**

Oldest Volunteer: **Over 85. Amazingly Awesome!**

TOTAL Time: **UNDER 4 hours!**

(Includes set-up, packaging, and clean-up)

Impact: **Beyond Measure!**

Thank you to all of our members and friends who gave both their time and their financial resources to “be the change we seek in the world”. Thank you for helping feed 10,000 school children a healthy lunch in all parts of the world! Your support and dedication is greatly appreciated.



# Creating Safe Churches for Congregations

Safe Church training is grounded in our call to seek and serve Christ in all persons and respect the dignity of every human being. This training provides an opportunity to increase and enhance our ability to live out our Baptismal Covenant within our communities of faith and in the world beyond.

September 8, 2018 – Ascension, Norfolk.

September 15, 2018 - Trinity, South Boston.

September 22, 2018 – St. Andrew's, Newport News

October 13, 2018 – St. Aidan's, Virginia Beach.

October 27, 2018 – St. Matthias', Midlothian.



## September is Recovery Month

SpiritWorks Foundation is hosting the First Fridays Recovery Eucharist on September 7, at 5:30 p.m. at Bruton Parish, Williamsburg. The service is designed with prayers and readings that focus on helping people find ways to live faithfully in the midst of any kind of suffering, especially individuals and their loved ones who are living with addiction, co-dependence, mental illness, and trauma. We pray for those who are continuing to struggle, mourn those who have died, and celebrate with those who are experiencing the joy of recovery. Parking is available on Duke of Gloucester Street during the service. For more information contact 757-903-0000 or [lauren@spiritworksfoundation.org](mailto:lauren@spiritworksfoundation.org).



Online Christian Learning from expert teachers in scripture, liturgy, prayer, family, self-care, church history, theology, and more

Starting in September [ChurchNext](#) will launch three new, 'live' Bible classes that you can take by computer anywhere in the world. They're taught on the ChurchNext platform, incorporating zoom meeting technology. You can take a class individually or with your group.

There will be three-week courses.

**Heretics in Good Company, led by Scott Gunn and Melody Shobe**

**The Bible and Racial Justice, led by Kelly Brown Douglas**

**The Bible and Evangelism, led by Marcus Halley**

These classes are taught live - they begin September 12, from 8 to 9 p.m. Eastern Time. You can sign up now and you'll get an email shortly before the class begins with instructions on how to participate.

Please contact <https://www.churchnext.tv/p/churchnext> for more information and fee structure.

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSINGS:** The church office will be closed on Monday, September 3rd in observance of Labor Day. The following week, the office will be closed on Wednesday, September 12th through Friday, September 15th due to electrical work. The office staff and clergy will still be available via phone or email. If you need assistance on these days, please 757-722-2567 during office hours (9am-4pm)



# Musical Notes

## Music Camp

Our first Summer Music Camp this July was a great success for 15 children who attended. Each day of the camp the children met and interviewed a composer (Bach, Beethoven, Fanny Mendelssohn, Mozart and William Dawson). They learned how music is constructed and about the instruments of the orchestra. They learned to play a recognizable tune on handbells and chimes and presented a musical on the stage called "The Army of Two". We had perfect attendance from each camper for the week. I appreciate all those who helped make this camp successful. If you missed being a part of this year's camp I can assure you that we will have another one next July.

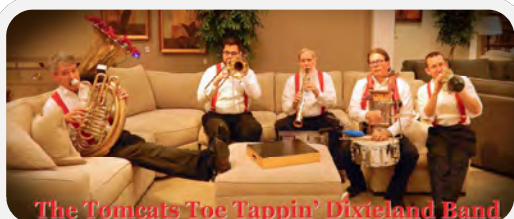


## Taize services



Our monthly Taize service of peace and meditation will resume Sunday Sept 16 at 4:00 pm. This special quiet candle lit service is offered the third Sunday of each month at 4:00

## Dixieland music in October



Our friendly Dixieland music group will be joining us for our Celebration Sunday on October 14th at the 10:30 service. Save the Date!!

## Academy of Music Sign Ups

Our Academy of Music offers private and group music lessons in the white house beside the church – the Hoffman House. If you have an interest in learning to play string instruments, guitar, piano, voice coaching, flute or oboe we have a faculty of professional musicians ready to teach you! To explore this music offering go to our website [stjohnshampton.org](http://stjohnshampton.org) and look under Music to find the link to sign up on the Academy interest form. This will go to the registrar at the Academy of Music and a teacher will contact you about your lessons. This might just be the something you are looking for to enhance your fall. Sign up now!



## Join the Choir!!

Our Choir resumes its Wednesday rehearsals the Wednesday after Labor Day, Wed Sept 5 at 7:00 in the choir room. We are ALWAYS looking for new talent. All you need is a joyful voice and we will do the rest. Leading worship from the choir loft is AWESOME! Come join us!!





## Kick-Off Sunday, September 9, 2018

Please join us at 9:15 in the parish hall for Christian Formation Kick-Off, ministry fair and parish breakfast.

In-Reach will host a family style breakfast for the parish after which you are encouraged to visit each ministry and learn about opportunities to serve God and God's people..

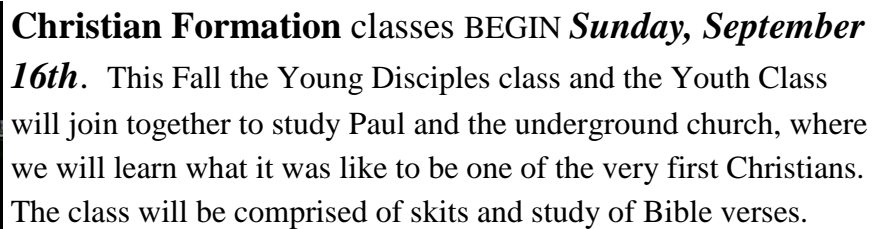
"Whoever wants to be great must become a servant." - Mark 10:43

What you are is God's gift to you; what you do is your gift to God. -Danish Proverb

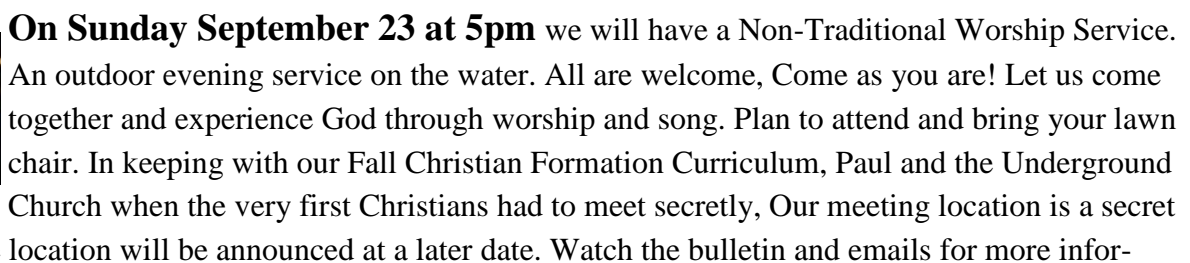
St. John's has several ministry opportunities, including:

*Christian Formation*  
*Choir*  
*Handbells*  
*Pastoral Care*  
*Flower Delivery*  
*Greeters*  
*Craft Guild*  
*Prayer Shawls*  
*Ushers*  
*Heritage*  
*Acolytes*  
*Altar Guild*  
*In-Reach*  
*Out-Reach*  
*Newcomers*  
*St. Anne Guild*  
*Stewardship*  
*Lay Eucharistic Ministers/Lectors*

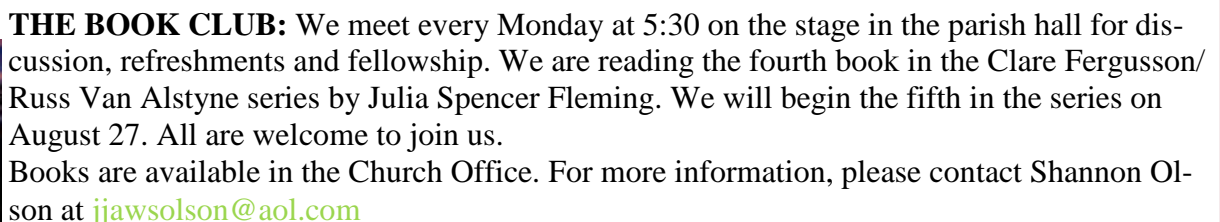
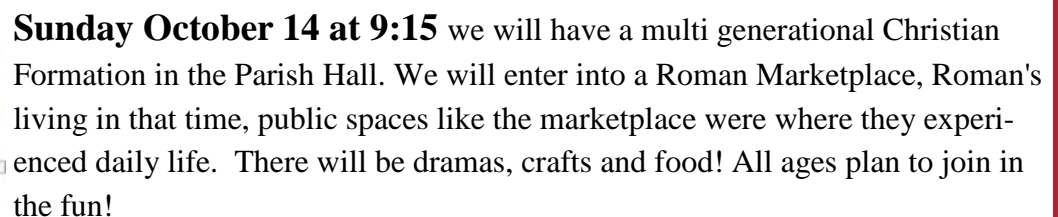


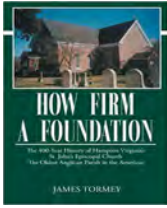


Since our children and youth are participating in our Vacation Bible School in the fall, we thought we would bring a little of that curriculum to our ***Adult Forum***. People often have mixed feelings about the Apostle Paul. They love him or can't stand him. Or, they feel both depending on what text they are reading. We will learn about Paul; who he was and what he wrote. Since one of the themes of VBS is the early church, we will talk about Paul's place in the early church. We will also discuss some of the more controversial things that Paul talked about. Examples include: women's role in the home and church, marriage, sexuality and a little talk about government. Join us for the first class on ***September 16 at 9:15***. Samantha will be leading this 4 week class.



**Attention:** There will be no Christian Formation classes on Sunday October 7 because of road closures due to the Crabbing Crawl Race. Please plan to attend the 10:30 service for The Blessing of the Animals.





This insightful and informative bookwritten by our own, Jim Tormey walks the reader from the Jamestown settlement in 1607 through the founding at Kecoughtan - the original name of the town - three wars and four church buildings. Almost miraculously, the fourth, built in 1728, survived all that Hampton's turbulent history has thrown its way, including a devastating fire that leveled the town during the Civil War. Pick up your copy in the

**BIBLE STUDY - ROMANS:** We are discussing the letter Paul wrote to the church in Rome. Paul wanted the gospel proclaimed throughout the then-known world, and the full support of church at Rome for the missionary program that he envisioned. The Group meets on Wednesday's at 2:30 PM (in the Library/Stage). Join us as we engage this period. Contact Mark if you have questions: mark@stjohnshampton.org. As always, "Drop In" visitors are truly welcome!

**ST. ANNE'S GUILD:** St. Anne's Guild will begin meeting once again for our 2018/2019 year. Our goal this year will be to welcome newcomers, while also creating new experiences and opportunities of fellowship for our current members. Our Guild meets monthly (often at members' homes), interesting local sites, or in our parish hall. Please join us Tuesday, September 4th at 10:30am in our parish hall. We'd love to see you! It's our donut & coffee special! Do not miss it! Janice Markham (757) 851-00177 or Barbara Sinclair

Rules around church membership can be a little nebulous. The official way to join is to transfer your "letter" to St. John's. However, if you attend and we have all your information, we could consider you a member. That said, we would like to welcome the following people who have formalized their membership. If you are not sure whether you are a member and want to ensure you are, feel free to call the church office and inquire.

### *Welcome to St. John's*

Welcome back to **William "Duke" Jenkins**, after several years in Florida!

**Ivan Goffe  
Ella Miskelly  
Chris Keene  
Solveigh Raske  
Sarah Keene  
Michelle Keene**

### September Birthdays

**4 Bob Croft  
6 Megan Shuford  
14 Virginia Armstrong  
16 Denine Miller  
16 Greg Brauer  
18 Carter Barrett  
18 Rosemary Hobart  
19 Doug Miller  
19 Frances Klovstad  
23 Shannon Olson  
24 Dave Bowen  
25 Carol Winarski  
27 Tyler Moore  
30 Jim Klotz  
30 Gwen Cumming  
30 Richard von Schilling**

### September Anniversaries

**1 Charlie & Susan Edmonson  
3 Randy & Jenn Devlin  
3 Everett & Linda Peckham  
6 Tyler & Jane Moore  
7 Whiting & Kristin Chisman  
12 Brian & Linda McMahon  
20 Danny & Kaye Lockey  
22 Jay & Paula Hogg**

### *Passages*

**Lacey Sanford Hudgins**

**Born April 10,1940 entered life  
eternal on August 19, 2018**

*O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered:  
Accept our prayers on behalf of your servant  
Lacey and grant her an entrance into the land  
of light and joy, in the fellowship of your  
saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who  
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.  
(BCP p.493)*



**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
100 West Queens Way  
Hampton VA 23669  
(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

**Darlene Jackson, Communications Assistant**

communications@stjohnshampton.org

**Nathan Houser, Sexton**

## Vestry

Bill Brown (2018)  
Whiting Chisman, Jr. (2019)  
Patrick Dennehey (2019)  
Duncan Garnett (2018)  
Bob Harper (2019)  
Rosemary Hobart (2018)  
Charlie Edmonson (2018)  
Stephen Rous (2020)  
Ruth Simmons (2020)

## 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.