

From your Rector...



Only a few months after I arrived at St. John's, Lloyd Thomas stopped by my office. He asked if I would be able to officiate a blessing service for him and his partner Eric. At the time, gay marriage was not yet legal in every state. However, the Episcopal Church had approved a same sex blessing liturgy on a trial basis. It was the responsibility of every bishop to determine how to implement this liturgy in their diocese. Bishop Hollerith created a process that required the vestry to have a discussion and then take a vote on whether they would allow same sex blessings in their church. Following this process was required for the bishop to give his approval. I was not ready to begin that conversation given that I was such a new rector. I told Lloyd that while I personally supported him and his relationship, I did not think we were ready to make that decision as a church. I asked him for some more time. I tried to be supportive, but my support felt hollow. Lloyd was gracious and adamant that he did not want to cause problems in the church. He was loyal to St. John's. I later found out that he got married in Washington DC, where it was legal.

The following year, I had two additional gay couples approach me with a desire to get married at St. John's. While I was not sure the church was ready to have that conversation, I felt that I could not ignore the conversation any longer and brought the matter to the vestry who voted to start the discernment. While there was support in the church and the vestry for same sex blessings, it was not overwhelming. Bishop Hollerith said that it needed to be "overwhelming support" in order for him to approve it. We agreed as a vestry that we would return to the conversation in two to three years. This was in January of 2016. In the end of 2017, Lloyd told me that he would like to run for vestry. He said that he hoped we would be able to start the conversation again. I was thrilled he was interested in serving on vestry. He had been an active member for decades. One week before the vestry election, Lloyd was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He was determined to serve on vestry. While he was elected, he never was able to attend a vestry meeting. He died in May, only a few months after his diagnosis. While he was already legally married, he very much wanted to have his marriage blessed in the church that he loved, St. John's. I do not have many regrets in my ordained ministry, but not being able to bless his marriage will be a regret I will never quite overcome. Only 3 months after his death, the Episcopal Church approved gay marriage again making it standard in the Episcopal Church. It is no longer under the pur-

view of the bishop. It is now a sacramental rite that is open to all.

A lot has happened in our world and our church since our first conversation about same sex blessing over three year ago. Gay marriage is now legal in all 50 states and it is now the right of every Episcopal priest to officiate same sex blessing or marriage. Also, we have had three gay couples in our church get married outside of the walls of St. John's despite the fact that each of the couples are committed members of our church and more importantly, disciples of Jesus Christ. I have shared all of this with the vestry and the vestry unanimously decided to support gay marriage at St. John's. I know that this news will affect you all in different ways. Many will be thrilled that we can now bless the marriage of people who are active members of our parish, people who are probably very dear to many of you.

Some will be concerned about how this might affect St. John's. Please be assured that we will continue our current wedding policy. In order to be married at St. John's, one has to be an active member of the parish or the child of an active member of the parish. For instance, even now, if someone calls and says they want to get married here, I tell them they are more than welcome to get married here after they have become an active member of our church. I have made some exceptions, but these exceptions are rare. As has always been the case, the clergy can say no to any couple for any reason. Neither I nor Mark is obligated to officiate at any marriage. If someone is local, I expect them to attend the church. We are not a marriage chapel. We are a faith community.

In 2015, we spent 9 months discussing this as a vestry and 6 months discussing it as a church. While I welcome any conversation at this time, I do not feel as though we need more conversation before making this decision. I told the vestry that we could take some more time for this conversation, but they didn't want to wait any longer. I know that change can be hard. I am not asking any one person to change their views. The Episcopal Church is a big tent and we don't expect everyone to agree. However, I can no longer in good conscience deny this sacramental rite to some of our most devoted members. My experience with Lloyd taught me an important lesson. Sometimes the price of waiting is far too high.

Faithfully,

Samantha

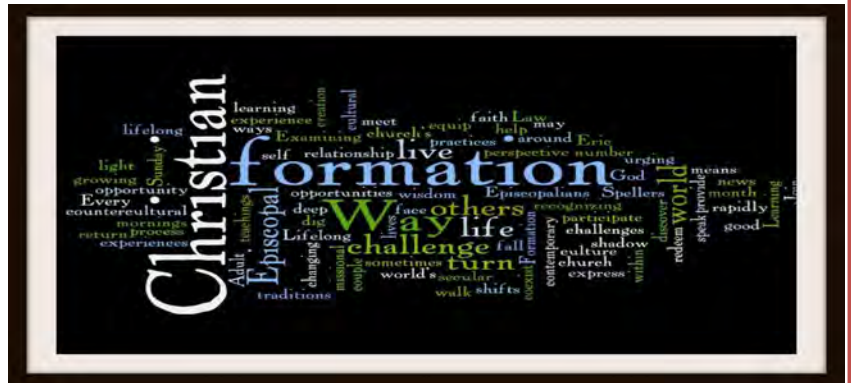
From Your Senior Warden



As your Senior Warden, I want to comment on Samantha's article regarding gay marriage ceremonies at St. John's Church. At our last Vestry meeting on April 9, we discussed this subject at length, and, without exception, your Vestry members wholeheartedly supported the conduct of same sex marriages and blessings for our Parish, subject to the guidelines specified by our Clergy and mentioned in Samantha's article. It was a unanimous decision.

Speaking for myself now, it is my view that in our efforts to be the Parish that God calls us to be, we must accept all of God's people. It is high time we take this step.

Bob Harper
Senior Warden
St. John's Church



The children gathered on Sunday, April 7, 2019 for lunch and egg dyeing. We used shaving cream and food coloring to dye the eggs, which the children seemed to enjoy!



LAST DAY OF CHRISTIAN FORMATION

WILL BE SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019. Thank you to our wonderful volunteer teachers and leaders, your dedication is appreciated. Shannon



YOUTH SUNDAY is May 19, 2019. One of our seniors, Jill Shoemaker will deliver the message. If you have a graduate you would like to recognize please send the information to Shannon Olson via email formation@stjohnshampton.org. Please include name, name of school or college graduating from, date of graduation, future plans.

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING: June 1, 2019 from 1-3pm at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Hampton. Please register by May 24, 2019 (you can do this online at diosova.org). If you interested in participating with any class or camp that involves the children (ex. Sunday School, Music Camp, etc.), then you must complete the Safe Church Training. By attending the workshop in person, your certificate is good for three years. If you do the shortened version offered online, it will only last one year. For more information contact Shannon Olson via email at formation@stjohnshampton.org.

More training workshops:

- April 27 - Hickory Neck, Toano
- May 4 - St. Paul's, Petersburg
- May 18 - Trinity, Portsmouth
- June 8 - Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach
- June 15 - Christ & St. Luke's, Norfolk
- June 22 - Trinity, South Hill
- September 28 - Redeemer, Midlothian

EPISCOPAL 101: Are you new to the Episcopal Church? Are you interested in learning more? The clergy will be offering Episcopal 101 classes in the near future for those new to the church (or people who just need a refresher). We are debating when to offer these classes and decided first to figure out who is interested and then we will go from there. If you are interested, please contact the clergy or the church office.



Open House at Chanco - May 11, Chanco on the James, Surry. Calling friends of Chanco of all ages! Join us from 1-5 pm to visit Chanco. Enjoy tours, refreshments, games, and meet some of our Chanco staff and board members. This event is free and open to the public. Questions? Contact us

at hospitality@chanco.org or 888-7CHANCO (888-724-2626).

Parkie Rice is very much involved with Chanco and this camp has been voted "Best in VA" for several years. Funds are needed to provide youth scholarships and to support Chanco programs. Contact Parkie Rice 757-817-2108 if you'd like to donate.

Holy Land Pilgrimage with Bishop Magness February 3-14, 2020



The next Holy Land Pilgrimage led by Bishop Magness will be February 3-14, 2020. Bishop Magness invites you to join him in the spring of 2020 for our second Diocesan pilgrimage to the "Land of the Holy One." For a number of years he has been making trips

to Israel and Palestine for the purpose of both pilgrimage and building relationships. In coordination with Lightline Pilgrimages Bishop Magness has developed a splendid pilgrimage. If you choose to be one of our 2020 pilgrims you will have an incredible opportunity to both renew your faith and expand your knowledge of the land where Jesus lived out his ministry. Quite literally, you will be walking in the places where Jesus walked, and you will be experiencing the world that our Lord experienced. Space is limited to 35 people. Registration deadline is June 7, 2019. [Click here](#) for tour brochure and registration form.

Prayer for the Bishop Search



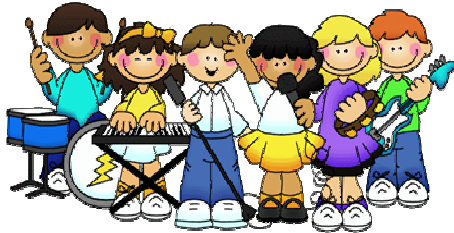
EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE
of Southern Virginia

Almighty and most gracious God, source of all wisdom and guidance, send your Holy Spirit to guide us as we seek and discern a shepherd for the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Inspire us with hope, hearts to love you, and a desire to serve one another. Grant us grace to entrust you with the future of your Church and all things. We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.



Our next monthly Taizé service of peace and meditation will be offered on Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 4pm. Join us for this time away from the frenzy of life to refresh your mind and relax your body.

Summer Music Camp



SAVE THE DATE!

July 8th –July 12th

Do you want to learn about instruments?
Do you enjoy being an actor on the stage ??
Are you a rising 2nd-6th grader??

More information coming soon!

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Deborah Carr at music@stjohnshampton.org

Sun. May 26 St. John's Episcopal, Hampton 4:00 PM

Roy Belfield, Jr. Organ

Justin Weisenborn, Trumpet

Join us for this Organ Concert

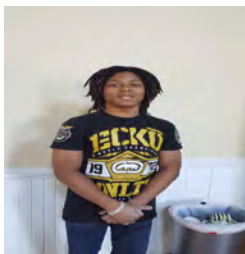
in the beautiful sanctuary St. John's Episcopal Church, Hampton

Featuring Pipe Organ and Trumpet Selections

This charming program will delight everyone!

Followed by a reception for fellowship to meet and greet

Retiring offering to defray expenses



WELCOME

NEW SEXTON: Please welcome Michael Todd as our new sexton. Michael is a recent graduate of Phoebus High school.

**HOW
YOU
CAN
HELP**

The **Downtown Neighborhood Lunch Program (DNLP)** will be starting June 19 this year. This is a ministry that serves the homeless and others in Hampton's downtown neighborhood every Wednesday at lunch time during the summer. With lots of help, it is a very satisfying experience and a blessing to those we serve. Contact Kay Perry for more information. kper-ry@wyoming.com



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.

*Please Welcome to St. John's
John and Donna Halpin*

May Birthdays

- 7 Mary Virginia Strup
- 7 Mackenzie Phillips
- 9 Greta Harrison
- 10 Jim Klotz
- 12 Donald Heath, Jr.
- 13 Nancy Beach
- 17 Lewis Whitehouse
- 18 Ron Forbes
- 20 Ian Edgar
- 22 Paula Hogg
- 23 Henry Eley
- 25 Thomas Miller
- 25 Jess Miller
- 26 Betsy Clark
- 27 Brian McMahan
- 28 James Mason
- 28 Kimberly Heiby
- 28 Lawrence Cumming
- 30 Whiting Chisman IV

May Anniversaries

- 2 Robert & Mary Pat Croft
- 6 Jerry & Betsy Bouchard
- 10 Andy & Virginia Armstrong
- 12 Jim & Emily Klotz
- 13 Mark & Laura Riley
- 14 Jason & Sarah Messersmith
- 16 Steven & Ellen Griffith
- 20 Coner & Samantha Vincent-Alexander
- 23 Bill & Lynn Kirkland
- 24 Michael & Debra Woodward
- 26 Frank & Ann Edgar
- 27 Ron & Carrie Quinn
- 27 Jeff & Ann Templeman
- 29 Bill & Claudia Melgaard
- 30 Billie Jeffries & Warren Coleman

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

St. Anne's Guild

St. Anne's Guild will gather together on May 7 (11:30) for lunch at the Hampton Yacht Club. This will conclude their meetings for the 2018/2019 year. A review of this year's events and speakers, as well as planning ahead for next year, are on the agenda. Lunch selections will be from the daily lunch menu. All attendees will pay for their own meals. **As always, all are welcome.** Kindly RSVP by **May 5, 2019** so we can reserve tables. Janice Markham 851-0177. Barbara Sinclair 722-0338.

BLOCK PARTY SHIFTS: On May 4th, St. John's will be helping at the Hampton Block Party by working at one of the beverage tents. This is a great way to get in to the community. It's also a lot of fun! The shifts will most likely be: 5:30pm-8:00pm and 8:00pm-10:30pm. If you would like to help, contact Darden Barrett at darden.barrett@gmail.com.



St. John's Episcopal Church

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(757) 722-2567

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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

formation@stjohnshampton.org

Jenn Devlin, Parish Administrator

office@stjohnshampton.org

Darlene Jackson, Communications Assistant

communications@stjohnshampton.org

Michael Todd, Sexton



Vestry

Greg Brauer (2021)

Patrick Dennehey (2019)

Charlie Edmonson (2021)

Bob Harper, Sr. Warden (2019)

Emily Klotz (2021)

Denine Miller (2021)

Bettyrene Pope, Jr. Warden, (2020)

Stephen Rous(2020)

Ruth Simmons (2020)

Darius Rowe (Youth Representative)

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.