

THE SLHS NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 1/May 2021

SLHS's FIRST NEWSLETTER

St. Luke's Historical Society (SLHS) is excited to publish its first newsletter. The Society was established in 2015 by a group of dedicated Church members who wanted to preserve the fascinating history of both the Church and its Cemetery. Over the past few years, SLHS has been busy with several projects, programs and events. In an effort to keep our members informed, SLHS decided to create a newsletter to share some of its history, what the Society has accomplished, and what it is currently doing to carry on the preservation of St. Luke's for future generations to come.

Our Mission Statement
To research, discover, promote, and share the significance of St. Luke's Episcopal Church and its Cemetery within the broader community.

Each issue, SLHS will feature a person of interest interred in our Cemetery. Pauline was a founding member of SLHS. Therefore, we found it fitting that she be highlighted in our first issue.

Pauline was an enthusiastic and loyal member who served as corresponding secretary and was our "writer" in residence. She and her family came to St. Luke's in 1962 shortly after moving to "John Tree Hill". She loved the Church and Cemetery where her husband and so many close friends are buried.

PAULINE MITCHELL 1930 - 2020

St. Luke's lost a long-time parishioner and friend recently. Pauline Mitchell died peacefully on September 24, 2020, at her family home, having survived the same coronavirus that ravaged her senior living facility earlier last summer, claiming the lives of many residents. She was 90 years old.

(continues on page 2).



UPCOMING EVENTS

Gravestone Clean-up Day (p. 4)

Vets Honored Memorial Day (p. 4)

We give thanks to those who built this place to the glory of God and to those who have maintained it over the years in His name.

- St. Luke's Historical Society

...continued from p. 1

Pauline grew up in bustling war-time Newport News, where she recalled walking past internment camps and assisting service members at her parents' jewelry store. As a high-school student, she accepted a date with a classmate on the condition that he contribute artwork to the high school yearbook she edited. That was the beginning of a courtship that resulted in a 47-year marriage and six children with Ashton D. Mitchell, Jr.

In 1962, having outgrown their small home in suburbia and on a tip from county egg farmer, William Jervey, Pauline and Mitch purchased "John Tree Hill", a spacious but humble 17-room house overlooking the James River. Instantly, the neighborhood children's population grew and Pauline immersed the family in all facets of country living. With a Mitchell in every Sunday School classroom at St. Luke's, the kids provided a steady supply of choir members, Christmas angels and shepherds, acolytes, altar guild and EYC members. The boys participated in the church affiliated scout troop with their dad serving as a leader, while Pauline enjoyed teaching Sunday School and later became St. Luke's first female vestry member. Pauline knew no strangers. She was a master communicator with a keen interest in the lives and backgrounds of others. She and Mitch delighted in inviting parishioners over for a drink (a "quickie") following Sunday services, creating cherished bonds with members of the St. Luke's community that lasted nearly six decades.

With young children still at home, Pauline went to night school to complete a degree in Mass Communications at VCU, finishing the education that began many years earlier. Her degree would launch an illustrious career in communications and public relations.



So distinguished, in fact, was her career that she was inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame in 1998 and won many other professional honors and awards along the way, notably with the Virginia Press Women and National Press Women.

Apart from her role as wife and mother, Pauline's diverse work experience included holding positions as Corporate Director of Community Relations and Television Producer at WCVE/Channel 23, Information Director at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and Director of News and Information and Director of Special Projects, both for Chesterfield County.

Pauline was a creative visionary who developed and established many boards including The Henricus Foundation where, as a co-founder of Henricus Historical Park, she was conferred the honor of Emeritus Board Member in 2013. She also served with the James River Task Force, the Huguenot Trail Preservation Society, Virginia Civil War Trails, the Midlothian Mines & Railroads Foundation, Powhatan Historical

Society, the Greater Richmond Tourism Association, the Michaux-St. James Foundation and the Powhatan Civil War Round Table.

She shared her talents and love of history with the church, through her work with the St. Luke's Historical Society.

Pre-pandemic, spending time with Mom at Beth Sholom, her nursing home, was tough. She had a heavy schedule. Besides remaining active with her bridge group from St. Luke's who brought the game to her, there were lots of visitors, especially on Sundays. It was best to call ahead for reservations. If you did gain admission, she'd offer a cup of coffee, Bloody Mary or glass of wine from her unauthorized refreshment bar. You'd have to serve yourself, of course, because she was bedridden, but the consummate hostess always had provisions on hand and the conversation would inevitably turn to her guests. "Tell me about yourself, your children, your work, your travels." Mom hosted not only her friends and family, but other resident's guests would drop by, as well. And that would allow for more introductions, more connections, more learning about others and that's when Pauline was at her very best.

Contributed by the Mitchell Family



Pauline and Ashton at the Baptism of their daughter Anne

SLHS MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees have been the life support for the Society. Currently, we have 38 members. Membership fees are \$100 per person to become a life member and \$25 per person for a one-year membership.

The Society was able to net approximately \$1,000 from the sale of Christmas wreaths in 2020 and was recently blessed with a gift of \$1,000 from a new member whose parents and grandparents are interred in our beautiful churchyard.

The expense of making and placing granite section markers in the churchyard was a gift from another member. These markers were placed to facilitate locating specific grave sites.

Thank you, once again, to those of you who became new members in 2020. The Society is making plans for events in which we hope you will be able to participate.



PLACING FLOWERS ON GRAVESITES

Thank you to all who place floral decorations in our cemetery to honor your loved ones. They beautify the grounds and make them more inviting. In choosing these arrangements, we ask that you:

- Do not use glass containers as they can break and become a hazard.
- Choose fresh flowers, potted plants, or other natural materials (nothing artificial please).

To eliminate the use of glass containers, SLHS recently purchased flower vases with stakes for your use. They can be found at the back of the Church near the water spigot in a covered bin.

PLEASE VISIT US

St. Luke's cemetery is open 24/7, all year round. All are welcome to visit. While there, check out St. Luke's Historical Society's new brochure in clear containers located on the front entrance gate as well as the back gate. Please help yourself to a brochure and pick one up for a family member.



NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact:

Connie Harriss
harrissconstance@gmail.com
[804-794-5642](tel:804-794-5642)

or

Betty Handy
handybetty@msn.com
[804-794-6472](tel:804-794-6472)



UP COMING EVENTS...

GRAVESTONE CLEANING DAY MAY 15th



St. Luke's Historical Society will be cleaning gravestones in our cemetery on Saturday, May 15 starting at 9 AM with a rain date scheduled on May 22.

Volunteers plan to remove lichen from the stones with natural bristles and popsicle sticks. After wetting the stones, a solution approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will be used to gently help remove dirt from the stones.

Gravestones should be cleaned every ten years. This will be the first of what we hope to be an annual event in order to clean all the stones. We aim to make the writing on gravestones more legible and overall presentable.

St. Luke's Historical Society will provide appropriate brushes, popsicle sticks, and solution. Volunteers should bring rubber gloves and a bucket.

Please join us in honoring those before us by helping with this project.

INTERRED VETS HONORED ON MEMORIAL DAY



To honor our veterans interred in our churchyard, American flags will be placed at each gravesite of those who served in the military. SLHS members continue this annual tradition with honor and gratitude for those who served and fought bravely for our country and freedom.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SLHS MEMBER?

To become a member of the SLHS, please make a check payable to St. Luke's Historical Society and mail to the church (2245 Huguenot Trail, Powhatan, VA 23139).

Membership fees are \$100 per person to become a life member and \$25 per person for a one-year membership. Please indicate "Membership" on memo line.