

## THE SLHS NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 5/May2023

### WELCOME TO THE PATH

St. Luke's is situated on a fairly small piece of land and yet there is a new treasure hidden in plain sight of which many of you may not be aware. The patch of woods on the western edge of the property has until now been known solely as a repository for bottles, cans and other varied debris and as the home of weeds, grapevines and poison ivy vines the diameter of an elephant's trunk.



This perennially overlooked area has been transformed through the vision and hard work of Dan Jones and the guiding word and understanding of Dale Custer. Where once there was natural discord there now is The Path.

The story of the creation of The Path begins on a Saturday workday when Dan decided to tackle the overgrown shed behind the parish house. Clippers firmly in hand, he waded into the web of briars and kept cutting



until he could see that beneath, above, and truly all around the vines and trash was a beautiful haven waiting for someone with the eyes to see and the stubborn resolve to refuse

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### A Snapshot from the Past

#### FIRST FEW PAGES FROM THE VESTRY BOOK FOR POWHATAN PARISH, POWHATAN COUNTY, VA.

Easter Monday - April 22, 1867 - Notice having been given by the Rector of an election of Vestrymen, to be held on this day, at the Parish Church (St. Luke's), the following gentlemen were duly elected Vestrymen of this Parish, for the ensuing year - 1. Miles C. Selden, 2. Robert W. Nelson, 3. John F. Whitfield, 4. Wm. A. Sublett, 5. John C. Lawton, 6. Edward M. Watkins, 7. James M. Sublett, 8. Charles C. Lee, 9. Jno F. Lay, 10. John H. Holman, Jr.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
**Memorial Day Service (p. 4)**  
**Gravestone Cleaning Day (p. 4)**

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

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Chosen church Wardens: Miles C. Selden and Robert W. Nelson  
Chosen Register and Treasurer: Jno. F. Lay

The following report was then read, which was ordered to be entered upon the minutes. To the Vestry of Powhatan Parish.

The undersigned regrets that, as Treasurer of the Parish, he has not such a report to offer as he would wish to present ~ Painful as he finds it to make the statement, duty yet requires him to announce the fact, that, during the year ending March 31st 1867, the Rector has received from this Parish, in money, only the inconsiderable sum of Two hundred and fifteen dollars, ~ We all know that since the close of the late, unhappy war, this Parish has not been able to do, in the way of supporting its Rector, what it did in years gone by ~ Still, if the undersigned be not much mistaken, this Parish is capable of doing much more for its Rector than it has done during the past two years ~ He feels called upon therefore to suggest, that unless more is done by the Parish towards rendering our Rector and his family comfortable, we may well fear that, at no distant day, we shall be without a Pastor to break to us the bread of life, shall see our little Church closed, and behold ungodly assemblages and pastimes assuming the place of our solemn and happy meetings for Divine Service ~ For the injury which would result from such a state of things to the spiritual welfare of ourselves, our families, and the congregation we represent, no temporal



advantages would begin to compensate ~ Confident that the other members of the Vestry feel as he does in regard to this matter, he begs leave to conclude this report by expressing the hope that we shall, realizing our responsibility to the great Head of the Church, and to the Congregation we represent, promptly do - not something merely - but all that in us lies, to avert from this Parish the evils which must arise from a failure on our part to do our whole duty ~ Jno. F. Lay Treasurer

Look forward to the Resolutions proposed at the May 11, 1867 meeting of the Vestry in our Fall newsletter.

**Background on Jno. F. Lay**  
(Resource findagrave.com)

**Birth:** 2 November, 1827  
Richmond, Richmond City, VA  
**Death:** 16 April, 1900 (age 72)  
Richmond, Richmond City, VA  
**Burial:** Shockoe Hill Cemetery  
Richmond, Richmond City, VA

He was the son of John Olmstead Lay (1779-1840) and Lucy Anna May (1802-1832). He and his wife Caroline had 11 children. According to church records, of the 11, five children were buried at St. Luke's.

He attended the University of Virginia and was attorney and judge

in Powhatan County before the Civil War. After the war, he worked for the Life Insurance Company of Virginia and later lived in Florida raising oranges until 1900 when he returned to Richmond due to bad health.

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**PRESERVING THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS**

Prior to its monthly meeting in April, the Leadership Committee of our Society and other interested members of St. Luke's met with Scott Vanderbeck, a salesman with Associated Crafts & Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, to hear his assessment of the stained glass windows in the nave and the rose window in the sanctuary. He noted that these windows were in good condition, all having been conserved in the mid-1990s. Scott made suggestions for further preservation efforts such as removing the currently installed plexiglass coving the exterior of the windows, painting the window frames, improving the ventilation between the windows and the plexiglass, and, perhaps, upgrading the existing plexiglass. He also offered his appraisal of the value of the windows, as well as an estimate for the above mentioned improvements. This report will be considered by the Vestry of the church.





to be dissuaded from revealing this beauty to the world.

Dan Jones was the right person at the right time in the right place. The full story of how this insight led to the current walkway and how Dale's instinctual understanding led to the Stations of the Cross on The Path are part of a longer tale that will be presented at a later date, but please understand that many, many hours of work have been devoted to this project. Dan has certainly received some much-needed help from Billy Boykin and Steve McMichen but the great majority of the effort has been his, stump by stump, hole by hole, completing one task and moving on to the next one. We at St. Luke's are the beneficiaries of this true labor of love; it is ours to treasure and to share. There is still work to be done on The Path (there always will be) but now it is there for us any time we choose to avail ourselves of its presence.



Try this approach if you will. The first time you walk it set aside five to ten minutes. Admire the huge oaks at the opposite ends of The Path. See the Stations in order. Look for the twenty six varieties of trees. Breath the air. The next time you walk it set aside twenty to thirty minutes. Sit for a while on one of the stumps that are arranged along The Path. Let some of that burden you carry go. Take a deep breath and go ahead and smile.



From then on spend a few minutes or a few hours on The Path. Don't forget to look up; there's so much to see above our heads. Come alone or bring along friends; there's room here for everyone. And keep Dan and Dale in your prayers.



## SLHS MEMBERS VISIT VA MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND CULTURE



On Thursday, February 9, eight members of St. Luke's took a field trip to the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond. The purpose of the trip was to review documents and records that are currently housed in the archives of the museum. Items have been submitted to the museum over the years, most of them prior to the founding of SLHS, to preserve and safeguard St. Luke's history. Some of the items include the Parish register, 1842-1919; Vestry book, 1867 April 22-1904 February 11; Vestry book, 1904 April 8-1932 April 16; Account book, 1884-1889.

Historical records stored at the museum are available for view by the general public, however an appointment is required. You can visit the Virginia Museum of History & Culture website, Library Collections Catalog, and search "St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Powhatan, VA" to view the list of items that are currently available for an in-person viewing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### GRAVESTONE CLEANING DAY

St. Luke's Historical Society is planning another gravestone cleaning day. Please join us on Saturday, May 6, 2023 at 9:30 AM. We will supply the cleaning solution, brushes and instructions but you will need to bring a bucket and rubber gloves. We encourage family members who have loved ones interred in the cemetery to join us.



Before



After

## MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2023 at 3PM



A Memorial Day service will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Sunday, May 28, 2023 at 3pm.

Please join us as we remember our brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedoms.

## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SLHS MEMBER?

To become a member of SLHS, please make a check payable to *St. Luke's Historical Society* with "Membership" on the memo line and mail to the church (SLHS, 2245 Huguenot Trail, Powhatan, VA 23139). Life membership fee is \$100.

For more information please contact:

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