

## THE SLHS NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 6/November 2023



### TRIP TO ST. PETER'S CHURCH

By Peter Boone

On the morning of September 28<sup>th</sup>, a passel of parishioners from St. Luke's hit the road in the company of our rector and several members of Manakin and ventured into New Kent County to visit St. Peter's Episcopal Church, a parish dating to the seventeenth century and the purported site of the 1759 wedding of Martha Dandridge Custis and Colonel George Washington. We entered the impressive brick church beneath the tower that dates to the 1750s and took seats in the wooden box pews facing the altar and the magnificent window at the east end of the sanctuary.

Our docent, a lifelong member of St. Peter's, presented an overview of the history of the church from the 1679

confirmation of the establishment of the parish by the General Court through the colonial years, the



abandonment of the church in the nineteenth century and the subsequent story of its restoration and rebirth as an active church community where Episcopal services

*(Continues on page 3...)*

### A SNAPSHOT FROM THE PAST

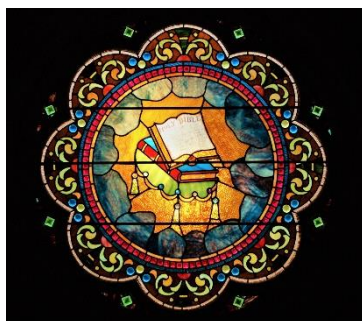
A Follow-Up to an Article in our Spring Issue 2023

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

A portion of the minutes recorded by Jno. Lay, Register, of the Vestry meeting held on May 11, 1867 at 11:00 A.M. at "Greenwood".

...the following appeal to the Congregation of St. Luke's was presented for the consideration of the Vestry. ...In the name of that God whom we worship as our Creator, Preserver, and

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

Veterans Day Service (p. 4)  
Gravestone Cleaning Day (p. 4)  
Christmas Wreath Fund Raiser (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.

## INTERESTING HISTORY

By Paul Mitchell

In February 2023, I had the pleasure of joining Connie Harriss, Peter Boone and others in the St. Luke's Church Historical Society in visiting the Virginia Historical Society's archives to examine the St. Luke's books and papers which had been donated to the VHS for safekeeping decades ago. I was fascinated to learn that starting soon after the conclusion of the Civil War, former slaves, whose marriages were unlawful during the slavery era, were joined in matrimony by St. Luke's clergy. Those marriages were recorded in the St. Luke's Church Record Book.

The first recorded marriage was on Sep. 1, 1866; The last on Sep. 6, 1877. During those 11 years, 53 marriages were recorded. They took place at various locations. Twelve were performed in the Rectory, nine in St. Luke's church, five at Monacan Farm, four at Norwood and one each at Jude's Ferry, Maiden's Adventure, Calais and Eliocho. These are some of their common-to-our area surnames: Archer, Cox, Giles, Harris, Harvie, Hobson, Jasper, Jenkins, Jones, Kiser, Mayo, Payne, Pleasants, Randolph, Richardson, Scott, Smith, Vaughan, Watson and Whitlock.

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## FIRST FEW PAGES

*(Continued from page 1)*

constant benefactor; in the name of his blessed Son who died to redeem us; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who will sanctify and bless to us every effort to do our duty; in the combined names of religion, morality, and virtue, we appeal to you to rouse every energy, and to determine that, come what may to us of earthly ill, we will still preserve the privilege of coming each Sunday to worship God in this Sanctuary, which the energy and self-denial of those who have proceeded us, have, by the blessing of God, erected for us...and we earnestly appeal to the Congregation cheerfully and liberally, and with self-denial, if necessary, to sustain the action of the Vestry~

Resolved-1- That the Vestry offer and guarantee to the present Rector of this Parish, for the year commencing April 1, 1867, the monied salary of Four hundred dollars, with such contributions of provisions as may be secured from the members of the Congregation.

Resolved-2- That as much more as we can do, we will do cheerfully, and while we are only able to give a small monied salary, we will, in the name of the Congregation, promise to spare and contribute all that we can from our family stores to aid it.

Resolved-3- That we retain undiminished feelings of respect and love for our Rector and his family, and beg him to believe that our reduced offerings have not been the result of any diminution of affection for, or of confidence in him.

The above report...unanimously adopted by the Vestry, and together

with the report of the Treasurer, were to be read to the Congregation by the Register after divine service on the following Sunday; and the Committee were requested to follow up this appeal by an immediate, personal application to the members of the Congregation for subscriptions to meet the amount pledged, and for contributions to aid the same.



An aside: The minutes of a meeting held on April 24, 1869, note that "the subscription raised for our Rector for the ensuing year, amounting to \$406.50 - 17 Bbls (Barrels) Corn - 3 Bbls Flour and 4000 lbs Oats.

The Rector of the Parish was the Rev. Lewis Walke, the second rector to serve St. Luke's. He served from 1859 - 1874.

The following information was obtained from the Diocese website:

1863 Parochial Report  
St. Luke's Church  
Powhatan Parish Rev.  
Lewis Walke, Rector

Baptisms--adults, white, 1; infants, white, 4. Total, 5  
Confirmations--white, 9  
Present number, 44  
Funerals - white, 2  
Contributions:  
Bible Society of Confederate States, \$30;  
Diocesan Missionary Society, \$314.22;  
Fredericksburg sufferers, \$ 280;  
Contingent Fund, \$60;  
Bishop Meade's monument, \$35;  
Total, \$719 22.

## TRIP TO ST. PETER'S CHURCH

(Continued from page 1)

are currently held weekly. Limitations of space prevent a complete summary of the fascinating tale that unfolded over the centuries in this historic setting, a tale of struggle, faith, perseverance, and a dream realized in order to continue to worship within the steady, true brick walls of St. Peter's.

Just two quick notes: first, the dream realized was the total restoration of the church after it was desecrated during the Civil War. The work began in the 1920s and was not completed until 1964. This entailed tearing the building down to brick walls and dirt floor, consulting many architectural and ecclesiastical experts to ensure the authenticity of their restoration of a colonial period church, and then fulfilling this communal vision both within the building itself and among the surrounding grounds. They succeeded gloriously; St. Peter's is a stunning achievement and testament.

The second note relates to the imposing and rare three-tiered wooden pulpit that presides over the nave. The difference between the tiers of the pulpit are easy to comprehend. If you were the clerk and read the psalm from the first and lowest tier, you might point your finger during your reading for emphasis. However, if you were the parson and had ascended from your seat on the second tier to the third and highest tier to deliver the sermon, mere finger-pointing would not suffice. From such a lofty height you must gesticulate!

There was much more we learned from our docent and later from our own walks through the grounds, the adjoining cemetery and the parish house. As an example, we now know the difference between English bond brick (St. Peter's) and Flemish bond brick (St. Luke's). Some of our group even repaired to a neighboring winery after our visit for food, drink, and lively discourse. The SLHS, who planned and sponsored the trip, is in the preliminary stages of planning our next excursion. We will let everyone know when the agenda is set. Please plan on joining us! Think of it this way: you gain knowledge about the history of our living faith, enjoy good times with good people, and we get you home before it's dark. What could be better?



*Of marriages*

Date	Name	Place	Officiary
1869 Jan? 4 <sup>th</sup>	James Lewis and Mary Ann Harris (Colonial)	St. Peter's Church	L. Walker
1869 Oct. 20 <sup>th</sup>	John Gilliam and Bessie M. Taylor	Windson	L. Walker
1869 Oct. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Alfred Boyman and Edna Page (Colonial)	Rowwood	"
1869 Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup>	William Wilkinson and Charlotte Romer (Colonial)	St. Luke's Church	"
1869 Nov? 7 <sup>th</sup>	James Willis and Cora Harris (Colonial)	St. Peter's Church	"
1869 Nov? 24 <sup>th</sup>	Wm. W. Linnon and Bessie S. Gilliam	St. Peter's Church	"

## INTERESTING HISTORY

(Continued from page 2)

As a genealogy enthusiast, I recognized the importance of this information to those folks in our area who are descended from these couples in helping them document their family trees. I shared the list with some leading members of Shiloh Baptist Church and St. James Baptist Church. They were appreciative and said they found the information interesting.

A page from St. Luke's Record Book now housed at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture

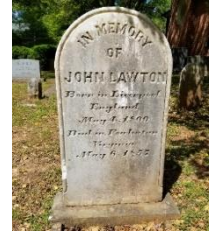
## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **GRAVESTONE CLEANING DAY**

St. Luke's Historical Society is planning another gravestone cleaning day. Please join us on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 10 AM to noon. 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

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### **VETERANS DAY SERVICE**

#### **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2023 at 3PM**



A Veterans Day service will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 3pm. Please join us to honor all American veterans, living and deceased, who served this country honorably during wartime and peacetime. St. Luke's cemetery has over forty service men and women interred, who served. During the service, we will honor each by reciting their names.

If you have a family member who served in the military and would like their name to be mentioned, please contact the Church Office by noon, Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup> with your name and the name(s) of the service person(s). If you plan to attend the service and would like to read your family member's name(s), please let us know.

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### **CHRISTMAS WREATH FUND RAISER**

If you would like to order 21" wreaths made from fresh evergreens with large red bows to be placed on wreath stands, please complete the enclosed form and mail it to SLHS, 2245 Huguenot Trail, Powhatan, VA 23139 along with a check payable to *St. Luke's Historical Society* noting "Wreath(s)" on the memo line. The price for each wreath is \$50.00.



Please send your request as soon as possible as we could perhaps order more wreaths if needed. No orders can be accepted after November 17th. Thank you. We hope to hear from you soon.

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### **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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or

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[handybetty@msn.com](mailto:handybetty@msn.com)

[804-794-6472](tel:804-794-6472)