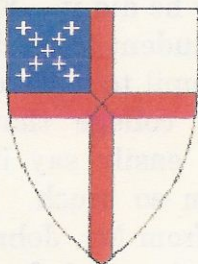


# THE VOICE

Issue 40

July 2013



## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**MONDAY—THURSDAY**

**9:30 A.M.—3:00 P.M.**

**FRIDAYS—9:30—1:30 P.M.**

## CHURCH SERVICES

**8:00am Eucharist Rite I**

**9:15am Christian Ed.**

**10:30am Holy Eucharist Rite II**

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## FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK



### Discerning God's Call to Mission

On the front of the Sunday bulletin in bold letters St Stephen's Episcopal Church's mission statement is proclaimed. Our mission is: "To meet the spiritual needs of the Church and Community through worshipping, preaching, witnessing, serving, and sharing God's grace."

I have read and reread this statement trying to make sense of it and have asked a few of you to help me to think through its meaning. After those discussions and some intense reflection I realized that: "To meet the spiritual needs of the Church and Community" is the actual mission statement and that worshipping; preaching; witnessing; serving; and sharing God's grace are core values.

#### So What?

Well, here's what. A mission statement is supposed to be a statement of the enduring purpose of an organization. On page 855 of the Book of Common Prayer the mission of the church is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ." This statement of purpose is not only clear but also unambiguous in its meaning. Ours is not so clear. What does it mean to meet the

spiritual needs of church and community and what does this look like? This is a difficult question and I would venture to guess that most of us could not give a clear explanation of what our mission statement means. What can we do to make our mission statement more understandable? First I ask that we begin a period of congregation prayer and reflection to discern what God is calling St Stephen's to be and to do in this community. Then following this period of prayer and reflection we will begin to explore God's will for us.

God our Father,

You have a plan for each one of us,  
You hold out to us a future full of hope.

Give us the wisdom of your Spirit  
so that we can see the shape  
of your plan in the gifts  
you have given us,  
and in the circumstances  
of our daily lives.

Give us the freedom of your Spirit,  
to seek you with all our hearts,  
and to choose Your Will above all else.  
We make this prayer through Christ our

Lord.  
Amen

Prayer of St. Ignatius

## John Solomon's Perspective On James Solomon

It is truly a pleasure to be able to share my perspectives with you about a man that some call Archdeacon Russell, Rev. Russell, Dr. Russell, and for my children, great-great grandfather Russell. I am honored to be a part of a legacy that changed people's lives through hope, perseverance, faith, and education; some of the major building blocks in life that continue to guide us, help us, and comfort us.

We all know the great things that James Solomon Russell has done and we continue to celebrate and educate ourselves on just how important they were. So without being repetitious in sharing my perspective, I'd like to take a different approach to discuss what he has done.

Imagination is the only requirement as you read further.

James Solomon Russell was born on December, 20, 1857, four years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. So let's set our time capsule to 1865, the end of the Civil War. While the South was going through a rebuilding and transformation, so were thousands of freed slaves to include James Solomon. Imagine you and your parents working on a plantation and then suddenly freed with virtually nothing in your possession but the clothes on your back, maybe some food, some shelter, a horse and plow. Nevertheless, you were free to live your life as you see fit. The importance of the first building block was the hope to do better.

At the same time, a great deal of perseverance, another building block, was required to survive poverty and yet maintain the hope and dream to rise above the current situation. Imagine no running water, electricity, machinery, and grocery stores. You had to milk the cows, sell eggs and butter, and follow the hoe and plow to survive. You had to engage in fishing, hunting, and trapping for additional food. According to James Solomon's book, Adventure In Faith, in 1870, a small Sunday school was transformed into growing schoolhouse and this provided him the building blocks of faith and education

that would later prove to be the most powerful influence in his life. Although regular textbooks were somewhat scarce, to be introduced to scriptures and textbooks at an early age was life changing. There were no televisions, radios, computers, or film projectors that some of us were exposed to in our formative years. Imagine a lack resources to be able to learn the basics, such as the alphabet, numbers, and word formation.

So I always try to imagine how he did it - From a slave child to a great man, a student to teacher, a follower to a leader, a godly pupil to a Reverend, and the founder of a great college that has touched so many. We could easily say it was God's blessings that gave him so much. From Palmer Springs to Hampton, from Mr. John E.P. Wright to Major Giles B. Cooke, and from his training at St. Stephen's to St. Paul's Memorial Chapel and seven other Episcopal Churches that he founded. Today, we continue to give thanks to so many things that have been done by him and others that God called. Anytime I sing or hear the hymn "Onward Christian Soldier," I picture him. Anytime I read or see the poem "Invictus," it reminds me of him. Both are befitting of a true Christian soldier.

Remember the old adage, "God Works in Mysterious Ways?" Around 1988 while working at Ft. Lee, one of my co-workers last name was Hendrick. We were talking one day and I mentioned that my great grandfather was a slave on the Hendrick Plantation in Palmer Springs, Va. He mentioned that his family, and great great grandfather owned a great deal of land in Palmer Springs that was also home to a race track; now Hendrick Motorsports. He remembers his family mentioning that the land was once a farm; a kinder word for plantation. We both realized what we had stumbled upon in casual conversation and forged a friendship by embracing it. Twenty-four years later, I met the great great nephew of Reverend Major Giles B. Cooke, Charles "Buck" Palmer, while attending a service at St. Stephen's. So I'm certain that for my kids and grandkids, these meetings with other generations of families that are directly tied to James Solomon will continue to happen. Is it destiny or coincidence?

Finally, I must mention that I'm thankful to have been raised in St. Paul's Memorial Chapel. I participated in Sunday School, and served as an acolyte and crucifer. When I attended Hampton University and later moved to Petersburg, my late parents always encouraged me to attend St. Stephen's. I must admit that I didn't listen well at the time but it hit me later.

So I'm thankful to now be a part of St. Stephen's, a church that has laid the framework for so many other institutions; a place that my great grandfather called home, and that my family and I now call home.

*John Solomon Russell*



### Eucharistic Visitor Ministry

There are many parishioners who are unable to worship and receive the sacraments at St Stephen's. To address this problem six members have answered God's call to be Lay Eucharistic Visitors. Their ministry will enable those who for reasons of illness, confinement, etc. are unable to attend Sunday services, to receive the Holy Sacrament. The members of this ministry are Joan Campbell, Clifton Dickens, Sandra Gamer, Robin Magee, Nancy Ross and Minnie Wallace. Members of this team will provide communion on a scheduled basis as an extension of the Holy Eucharist, the principle act of Christian Worship on the Lord's Day.

The Catechism in the BCP [p.855] states: "As lay persons it is our ministry to "represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts he has given, to carry on his works."

*Nancy S. Ross*

### Notary Services

St. Stephen's is offering notary services to our church community and others. The service is free; appointments only, will travel to Healthcare Facilities, or schedule appointments at the church. Our license Notary is Nancy S. Ross and she can be reached at (804) 720-2485.



### ECW Notes

Our activities for 2013 thus far have been a resounding success. Thanks to the committee chairs and members for arranging the Seder Feast, Recognition of Graduates, and Women's Day.

2013 Remaining Activities:

August – 2014 Planning Meeting

September – Day of Remembrance Repast

October – ECW Diocesan Meeting

November – Fall Yard Sale, Fall UTO, Jewels Celebration/Family Day Dinner

December – Christmas Projects (community outreach)

During this past year we have sponsored several **yard sales** – a major source of our fundraising. These are proven "win-win" events for ECW and the community. We count on contributions from the congregation and continue to be blessed with many great donations. Thank you for your steadfast support of all our endeavors.

*Bennie Wooten*

**Reminder:**

**ECW Monthly Meeting:** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after 10:30 am service in the Parish Hall. Come and participate – there is much work to do!



## ECW—Women's Day 2013

The St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Women (ECW) celebrated Women's Day 2013 on Sunday, June 30th. Our speaker was Petersburg's own, The Reverend Glenice Robinson-Como. Rev. Como serves as Canon Pastor at Christ Church Cathedral in Houston, Texas.

Glenice was raised in Petersburg and attended First Baptist Church. She is the daughter of the late Ruby J. Gamby and Theodore N. Robinson. She has three sisters, Belinda, Vanessa and Annett. Glenice is married to Paul L. Como and they have two children, Paulie and Dominique. She is a graduate of Petersburg High School. She also received a B.S. from Virginia Commonwealth University, a M.Div. from Perkins School of Theology at SMU, in Dallas, TX, and a Diploma of Theological Studies from the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest.

Our theme for this years' celebration was "Uncapping our Wells: Women as Agents of Change" and Rev. Como delivered a strong and inspirational message.

A program and reception followed the service in the Parish Hall where the ECW presented Rev. Como with a monetary donation to her discretionary fund at Christ Church Cathedral to enable her to continue her works towards eradicating poverty in the Galveston-Houston area as Chaplain for the social service agency The Beacon.

Tanya and Marjorie would like to thank everyone for their support, and thank all the ladies of the ECW for their hard work and assistance in making our 2013 Women's Day celebration a continued success!

Tanya Harris

Tanya A. Harris  
Women's Day Chair

Marjorie Goodwin

Marjorie T. Goodwin  
Women's Day Co-Chair



# Congratulations

*To Our 2013 Graduates*

**John Solomon Russell, Jr.**

Graduated from Matoaca Elementary School  
Will be entering Matoaca Middle School

**Leilia Magee**

Graduated from Maggie L. Walker's Governor's School—Will attend William & Mary

**William Matthew Wooten**

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)  
Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine; Assignment at St. John Medical Center in Westlake, OH near Cleveland

After words: Reflections on the 121<sup>st</sup> Annual  
Episcopal Council  
Diocese of Southern Virginia  
Williamsburg Lodge & Convention Center  
February 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Michael S. Joshua**  
Delegate (alternate)

The journey of the St. Stephen's delegation (Rev Foster, two delegates and one alternate) to the 121<sup>st</sup> Annual Episcopal Council, held at Williamsburg, Virginia, began with a pre-council convention meeting at Merchant Hope Church in Prince George. This session was very helpful because many of the business agenda items were discussed in a way that attendees could understand the issues to be voted on at the meeting. This contributed to efficient and effective dispatch of the business agenda. Thus ample time was left for worship. There was an attendance of at least three hundred including delegates, alternates, and others. These came from one hundred and eight Congregations, one Ecumenical Community, five Chapels, and eight Shrines. The order of business, from "call to order" to "adjournment," contained forty-five items which were carried out with the kind of precision that comes only from a high quality of organization of the convention. Indeed there was a protocol document on organization and procedure which served to maximize productivity of the operation. There were two sessions each day, each one book ended by worship, except that Holy Eucharist was at the end of the final session.

There were three important highlights of the convocation: 1) the Bishop's presentation on the state of affairs in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, 2) The debate and passage of Resolution R-1: "Repairing the Breach" resulting from segregation and its impact in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, and 3) the keynote presentation by Dr. Elizabeth Kimball.

Bishop Hollerith presented a very positive and upbeat picture. Indeed, given the dark clouds - issues regarding the Talbot Hall property; the "covenantal blessings of same Christians"; the state of the diocesan budget - that hovered over the 120th Council Meeting, his optimism could well account for the bright thread of optimism running through the entire presentation. Bishop Hollerith underscored the issue of "polarization" dominating our current public policy discourse, but that did not seem to dampen his positive outlook. The presentation included a package of reform that has the potential for creating a more vibrant diocese. For example, the reorganization of the Executive Board, refocusing its efforts on planning, could well be the foundation of that vibrancy. The outward invisible sign of the intended progressive reorganization is the establishment of three

mission areas on which to focus in the foreseeable future: Leadership, Stewardship and New Communities. As the presentation indicated a number of the programmatic changes are already bearing fruit. This suggests leadership of the transformative kind on the part of the bishop because he tended to give most of the credit to everyone else. That leadership quality is further evident in his remarks on the longstanding issue of racism in the diocese and the efforts to deal with it. The remarks provided all, regardless of their personal persuasion, something positive to take away from the discussion.

The Repairs of the Breach Commission submitted the following resolution for ratification by the Council. On the disposition of this resolution and the actions generated rest the Bishop's hope for real change in the future. The resolution reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the Convention and Parishes of the Diocese of Southern Virginia use the materials created by the Repairers of the Breach Commission, i.e. video, lectures and study guide, to initiate conversation, to share stories, both personal and institutional, that will help to transform relationships and to transcend the sin of racism.

Following extensive debate, the resolution was amended as follows:

"Be it further resolved that November 2, 2014 "All Souls Day will be designated as a "day of Repentance and Reconciliation" in the Diocese of Southern Virginia and parishes will annual hold this observation during the octave of All Saints (any day between 2 November and November 9)"

The Repairs of the Breach Commission has provided a study guide on racism in the Southern Diocese of Virginia and is prepared to support an ongoing conversation on the matter. A video presentation is also available at [www.diosova.org](http://www.diosova.org)

This resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

The final highlight of the convocation was the presentation of the keynote speaker- Dr. Lisa Kimball from the Virginia Theological Seminary. Dr. Kimball under the theme "The EPIC Adventure of Being Church Begins. She presented her perspectives on the future trends in the Church and what leaders might identify as missional opportunities. She urged participants not be satisfied with just average performance, but rather work for expanding the guest list to our Christian community.

## Upcoming Events

The J. B. Patterson Men's Club will host the annual **Church Picnic** Saturday, August 17th at 1:00 p.m. in Parrish Hall.



St. Stephen's annual **Day of Remembrance and Appreciation** will take place on Sunday, September 8, 2013 during the 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist.



The J. B. Patterson Men's Club will sponsor their annual **Jazz Concert** on Friday, September 13th in the Parrish Hall.



### A PUBLIC SERVICE OF HEALING

A **Public Service of Healing** will be held Sunday, September 29th during the 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. services.

### BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS



The Blessing of the Animals service, which honors St. Francis of Assisi, will take place at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, October 5th outside the Parish Hall.



ECW's Annual **Fall Yard Sale** will be held on the 1st Saturday in November at 8:00 a.m.



The annual **Jewels Celebration and Family Thanksgiving Dinner** will take place on Sunday, November 24th.

Dear Friends,

We receive information through weekly announcements during church services, and through regular meetings. So why have a newsletter? To not have one would be to lose a vital source of communication between the rector, the vestry and the various church organizations. Further, the newsletter provides a voice for members of the congregation to share personal experiences, achievements, suggestions, reflections, etc.

"The Voice" is your instrument to have your voices "heard" in print and contributing to the working, live church.

Included in this issue is the second in what we hope will be series of historical vignettes relating to the history of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

The next issue of "The Voice" will be June 2013. Please submit your material by June 15, 2013.

Thank you.

*Emily, Editor*

# Bible Word Search: Thankfulness

contributed by Michelle Deleon

All the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and Circle each letter of the words you find.

G	G	L	O	V	E	J	T
N	N	W	O	O	O	H	P
I	I	I	D	Y	A	R	P
R	R	R	V	N	A	S	F
A	A	H	K	I	I	L	A
H	C	F	S	I	G	K	I
S	U	E	C	A	E	P	T
L	T	S	U	R	T	P	H

## Words to Use

Caring, Faith, Giving, Joy, Kind, Love, Loyal, Peace,

Praise, Pray, Sharing, Thankful, Trust

Mystery Answer

Worship

# AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10:30-Holy Eucharist	5 11:00 – 1:00 DCU Feeding Ministry	6	7 Midweek Bible Study – 1:00 p.m.	8	9	10
11 12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10:30-Holy Eucharist	12 11:00 – 1:00 DCU Feeding Ministry	13 7:00 p.m. Property Committee	14 Midweek Bible Study – 1:00 p.m.	15	16	17 CHURCH PICNIC 2:00 – 6:00 P.M.
18 13 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10:30-Holy Eucharist	19 11:00 – 1:00 DCU Feeding Ministry	20	21 Midweek Bible Study – 1:00 p.m.	22	23	24
25 14 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10:30-Holy Eucharist ECW Meeting After Service	26 11:00 – 1:00 DCU Feeding Ministry	27	28 Midweek Bible Study – 1:00 p.m.	29	30	31



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*The Vestry*

*George Henderson, Senior Warden (2014)*

*James Norman, Junior Warden (2014)*

*Nancy Bryant, (2015)*

*Walter DeRamus (2013)*

*Veronica Fountain (2013)*

*Tanya Harris (2013)*

*Sherry Luckett (2015)*

*Nancy Ross (2014)*

*Reginald Tabor (2015)*

*August*

*Anniversaries*

- 1 *Porcher & Ann Taylor*
- 26 *Benjamin & Barbara Ford*
- 29 *Filmore & Sylvia Martin*

*Birthdays*

- 4 *Calvin Walker*
- 5 *Cheryl Taylor*
- 9 *Porcher Taylor, Jr.*
- 9 *Linda Torrence*
- 11 *Walter M. Jones*
- 15 *Judy Bland*
- 18 *Benjamin Ford*
- 28 *Emily Madden*
- 29 *Larry R. Johnson, II*
- 31 *Marcus Wallace*
- 31 *Carla Thomas Russell*

**The Voice of Stephen's is a Quarterly Newsletter - News is reported by the members of Stephen's Church.**

**Emily Madden, Editor**

**Mary Palmer, Publisher**