

Historic ST. LUKE'S

Volume 3 | Fall 2018

Virginia's Oldest Church

BEYOND ARTIFACTS Exploring Colonial Virginia

Archaeology captivates and engages people from all walks of life. Archaeologists use science to solve mysteries and better understand a past that is sometimes lost to us. When the staff began developing field trip ideas for Historic St. Luke's in late 2016, using archaeology as a theme seemed like the perfect way to inspire students and teachers from all over Hampton Roads. And so, a new program was born.

"Beyond Artifacts: Exploring Colonial Virginia" gained momentum in 2017 when Historic St. Luke's began reaching out to friends in the Isle of Wight County School system to ask questions like, "Which grade level curriculum would benefit most from an archaeology-themed field trip?" and "What Standards of Learning (SOL) could this field trip support?" The outcome of these discussions was a field trip designed to explore what archaeology can tell us about life in Colonial Virginia, intended to support the public school curriculum of fourth graders. The field trip has three separate, but related, activities: a study of the architecture of Historic St. Luke's Church with a focus on what the architectural style can tell us about the time period, a hands-on archaeology simulation where students learn the basic practices of archaeologists, and a visit to a local archaeological dig site to speak with real archaeologists. The shining star of this program is the mock

archaeological dig where students unearth artifacts, clean their finds, identify and label their treasures, and learn about their meaning and importance.

Archaeology Field Trip Will Bring Fourth Graders to Historic St. Luke's



*Above: Students look over an example of a Ground Penetrating Radar report as the Education Coordinator explains this method.
Below: Students discover artifacts during mock dig.*



Not only does this program cover many subjects included in the fourth grade SOLs, but it also complements the "Five C's" – Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, Communication, and Culture – of project-based learning. "Beyond Artifacts" also incorporates elements that address Virginia's commitment to a STEAM initiative: science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

Thanks to underwriting support from the Howard W. and Katherine L. Gwaltney

foundation and the Titmus Foundation, Inc., beta testing of the field trip will begin in late summer and early fall of 2018. Historic St. Luke's looks forward to welcoming Isle of Wight County fourth graders in the spring

of 2019 for the first presentation of "Beyond Artifacts: Exploring Colonial Virginia." Historic St. Luke's has big dreams for this exciting educational opportunity and hopes that it will become an annual field trip, supporting the continued learning and creativity of local children for years to come.

For more information about this field trip program, please contact Rachel Popp, Education Coordinator at Historic St. Luke's.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT WHITEMARSH

July 2018 Report by Alain Outlaw

Over the past eight years, various small exploratory investigations directed by Principal Archaeologist Alain Outlaw of Archaeological & Cultural Solutions, Inc. (ACS) have taken place at Whitemarsh, Joseph Bridger's plantation. Bridger is believed to have been the primary benefactor of Historic St. Luke's Church and his partial remains reside in the church building. Beginning in May of 2017, more intensive and extensive work funded by Historic St. Luke's Restoration



Principal Archaeologist Alain Outlaw

began under the oversight of Outlaw. This undertaking began with the very careful clearing of dense woods in the dwelling area to minimize potential damage to subsurface remains. Excavations around brick foundations forming the presumed earliest Bridger home were begun as well.

During this work, important artifacts linked to the early occupation of the historic site were recovered from intact deposits found to be undisturbed by digging performed by avocational archaeologists in 1991. These artifacts include a Rhenish stoneware jug fragment that is sprig-molded and blue and gray in color. It is similar to a vessel depicted in the c.1660 Netherlandish painting by Johannes Vermeer. Titled "The Milkmaid," this masterpiece is displayed in the



Above: *The Milkmaid*, Johannes Vermeer, c. 1660
oil on canvas,
h 45.5cm x w 41cm.
Image courtesy
of the Rijksmuseum in
Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Left: 17th century blue
and gray Rhenish
stoneware jug fragment
from Whitemarsh

Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam and it demonstrates the setting in which these vessels were used. Also dating to the early occupation period at Whitemarsh are smoking pipe stems marked "LE" for Llewellyn Evans, a pipe maker working in Bristol, England, from 1661 to 1688, near the Bridger ancestral home.

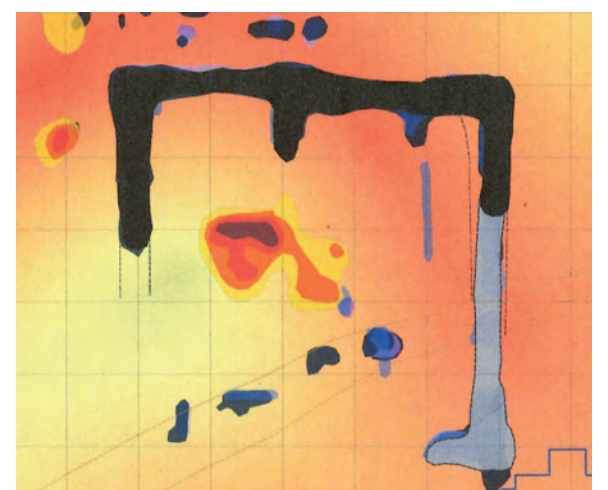
To better understand the setting of Whitemarsh, a one foot contour topographic map is being created to study the disposition of outbuildings, fence lines, yards, and other associated cultural features on the landscape. This study extends to soil coring to record the former size and depth of the adjacent creek, immediately south of the dwelling. The work has demonstrated that the creek was likely once navigable, with access to the James River. Supporting evidence indicates that the original bottom of the creek has been filled over by eight feet of erosional soils, built up from over 350 years of cultivation of the surrounding fields.

Important work also has been undertaken in the archaeological laboratory at Christopher Newport University (CNU), in nearby Newport News. Outlaw's staff and History Department students are processing (washing and numbering), conserving (preserving), and analyzing (cataloguing) artifacts as well as studying five known collections from the archaeological site. Four of the five are now owned by Historic St. Luke's. The fifth is owned by the Isle of Wight County Museum and in the spirit of partnership, they have loaned their collection to ACS to support this study of the community's history. This arrangement is allowing Outlaw and his team to examine 17th-century wine bottle fragments and ceramic fragments from the different collections so that they can be cross mended, providing a more complete profile.



Glass wine bottle neck,
c.1650. This artifact
represents the initial
Bridger occupation at
Whitemarsh. (Courtesy
of Isle of Wight County
Museum, Smithfield)

Following the excavation of 2.5' and 10' square units by hand, remote sensing studies were carried out over large areas of the site. These non-excavation methods have been very useful in narrowing down promising locations for subsurface features. ACS investigations are currently focusing on "ground truthing," *i.e.* mechanically removing plow zone soils down to natural clay where architectural features should be present according to remote sensing. Once it was uncovered and cleaned by hand, the surface near the existing brick outbuilding revealed partial brickwork that has survived plowing, erosion, and the robbing of bricks since the seventeenth century. Thus far, the 28' wide north gable of the main dwelling, a substantial brick structure over 30 feet long, has been mapped. The current project, including the recording of two outbuildings, will continue into the fall.



Remote sensing image of the north gable end
of the main dwelling at Whitemarsh. Ongoing
excavations have revealed that the structure
was 28' wide and at least 30' long.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Century Isle of Wight County: A Living History Event

Saturday, September 8, 2018, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Admission to this event is the price of general admission (\$8).

Join us at Historic St. Luke's for a 17th-century living history weekend. There will be special guest presentations, period vendors, modern food vendors, and more available to the public. Reenactors will also be present throughout the day.

A schedule with more information will be available on Facebook and on Historic St. Luke's website, closer to the event.



Twilight Cemetery Tours

Friday, October 12, 2018, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 13, 2018, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Light refreshments will be provided.

Dead men don't tell tales, but their tombstones do! Historic St. Luke's Church has been the site of burials since the 1600s. Enjoy the stories of local saints and sinners on a 30-minute, family-friendly guided tour through the Ancient Cemetery. Participants are asked to wear closed-toe shoes and bring a flashlight. Tours leave every 30 minutes beginning at 6:30 p.m.; last tour is at 9 p.m. Spots are limited so advance ticket purchase is encouraged.

Tickets are available on our website.



ADULTS ONLY Twilight Cemetery Tours

Friday, October 19, 2018, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 per person. Hard cider tasting included.

As a new twist on our Twilight Cemetery Tours, Historic St. Luke's will be hosting an "Adults Only" night. Each ticket purchase will include a hard cider tasting by Sly Clyde Ciderworks. Must be 21 years of age or older to gain access to the event. IDs will be checked at the door.

Spots are limited. Advance ticket purchase is encouraged.



Cemetery Iconography Lecture

Saturday, November 3, 2018, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$15 per person. Spots are limited. Light refreshments will be provided.

The design and creation of tombstones is an ancient art with deep meanings behind many of the symbols chosen for each monument. The weeping willow, the cherub, the rose that has not fully bloomed, the eternal circle of the wreath, are all symbols with important meanings, carefully selected by loved ones upon the death of those memorialized.

Join us at Historic St. Luke's for a presentation on Cemetery Iconography by Joanna Wilson Green, Easement and Stewardship Archaeologist for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



A Colonial Christmas Concert: Smithfield High School Choraliers Ensemble

Saturday, December 1, 2018, 4 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Spots are limited.

Take a trip back in time to a Colonial Christmas at Historic St. Luke's Church.

The Smithfield High School Choraliers Ensemble will take you to the colonial days with songs from the period on December 1, 2018. There will be two performances, one at 4 p.m. and one at 7 p.m. All proceeds will be split evenly between Historic St. Luke's and the Smithfield High Choraliers Ensemble.



Please contact Education Coordinator Rachel Popp via email, rpopp@historicstlukes.org, with questions regarding lectures and events.

For ticket information and purchase, please check out these events on our website at www.historicstlukes.org.

BEHIND THE TOMBSTONES



Planning the Twilight Cemetery Tours

Over the past few years, Historic St. Luke's Church has noticed more and more interest in not only our cemeteries, but cemeteries everywhere. Hashtags for things like #TombstoneTourism, #CemeteryLovers, #CemeteryWandering, and #CemeteryExplorer have begun to appear on social media sites like Instagram. Working with the growing popularity of cemeteries, Historic St. Luke's held its first Twilight Cemetery Tours in 2016. These guided tours take guests on a journey through our Ancient Cemetery to highlight some of our oldest residents and most noteworthy stories...after the sun has set. Although the setting is spooky (in a dark cemetery), the event is designed to be family friendly with interesting stories about the lives of those buried here.

Like many of the events here at Historic St. Luke's Church, a lot of planning goes on behind the scenes in preparation for our annual Twilight Cemetery Tours. A surprising amount of research was involved in the original development of the tours in 2016. While there are many interesting stories surrounding the residents of the Ancient Cemetery at Historic St. Luke's, most of these anecdotes were previously unknown to us. The few stories we were able to

collect amongst the staff included the supposed fatal fall of Reverend Alexander Norris from a window of the church building, the curse of the four "Jordan Angels" memorialized in one of our stained glass windows, and the 1890s restoration benefactor who suffered the tragic loss of two children in the same day. While these few narratives are interesting and often amazing, they cannot fill a 30-minute Twilight Cemetery Tour on their own. The research in preparation for the first Twilight Cemetery Tours took months of scouring books, newspaper and magazine articles, the internet, and the keen memories of a few wonderful locals. We continue this research today as we research cemetery residents, name by name, and accumulate more personal stories from loved ones and friends of the deceased. All of these stories can potentially be included in our annual Twilight Cemetery Tours each October as we continue to change and improve our tours.

For the first time ever, Historic St. Luke's will turn one of these Twilight Cemetery Tour nights into an Adults Only event (21 years of age or older). In the spirit of partnership with our local community, Historic St. Luke's will hold a hard cider tasting featuring Sly Clyde Ciderworks as part of the festivities on October 19, 2018. Staff at Historic St. Luke's are currently designing tasting glasses that each guest will be able to take home as a memento at the end of the night. The tasting and souvenir glass will be included in the cost of the ticket (\$20) and tickets are currently on sale on our website, www.historicstlukes.org. Adding so many new details to an existing event has been exciting and occasionally complicated but we look forward to sharing these fun new twists to a favorite event with the public this October!



WEDDING SCRAPBOOK PROJECT

The Wedding Scrapbook Project intends to gather moments from past, present, and future weddings. We want to connect with everyone who has exchanged vows at Historic St. Luke's. In February 2018, we announced that we are collecting stories, pictures, videos, articles, and other depictions of the special day so many couples have experienced at Historic St. Luke's. We heard from the mother of one bride who was married here in 2003 during the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel. The story included details of how, despite widespread power outages, the family cleaned up debris so that there could be a wedding. Most inspiring was the determination of the family and friends who toiled to make our site presentable so that the wedding could take place. It is a story told with humor and love.

What are your stories? We want to hear them! Betty Delk is the volunteer who is coordinating this project. We would like to create a scrapbook album that prospective wedding couples can view as they tour and plan their wedding at Historic St. Luke's. We also plan to create a multimedia video of living history for our YouTube channel that would allow viewers to scroll through pictures and video clips.

We want to hear and record your stories and touching moments. Some stories may be funny or outrageous. Other stories may be heartfelt and emotionally stirring. In any case, we would love for you to share them with us! If you were married here or know someone who was, please contact us at contact@historicstlukes.org.



TODD TALK



“Whose history are we preserving and interpreting?” The answer may seem rather simple to most people: Americans. When we peel back the layers of who they were, their stories, and their legacies, we find ourselves staring at the answer.

Since the dawn of the United States, the preservation and interpretation of American History has been full of bias and at times agendas. Even now as I write this piece, I recognize my own bias and cannot fully extricate it from my own perspectives. I am passionate about historic preservation and making institutions relevant and viable far into the 21st century. I believe this is my life work. So, as I write about preserving history and interpreting to our friends, the question that rises in my mind is, “Are we doing justice to the memories of all of those who came before us? Are we addressing the complicated and honest histories of our collective American History? If we address American History, does this history reflect a fictional narrative of what some people wanted America to be or a truer reflection of how America was?”

As a young boy, I was bitten by the history bug after visiting the archaeological dig site at a Nansemond River/King’s Highway and attending the 1981 Bicentennial events in Yorktown. Since then my journey in the public history field has been fraught with excitement about studying the minutia of material culture to embracing the importance of impolite topics such as religion and politics. This has been my personal evolution.

Now as Historic St. Luke’s begins a new chapter as a proud partnering historic site with the “American Evolution 2019” initiative, we venture further into the 21st-century as a brave organization embracing the rich, diverse, and at times controversial history we all share as Americans.

Whether we like, love, or dislike this history, it is in our DNA as citizens. We cannot run from it, but instead we should approach it straight on. Perhaps not as a celebration, but a commemoration of what we were, what we are, and what we want to become. I invite you to contact me and share with me your stories and suggestions on how we can fully participate with the American Evolution 2019 commemoration. Only through your participation and support can

AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ commemorates the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured events, programs and legacy projects inspire local, national and international engagement through the themes of democracy, diversity and opportunity. For more information visit: www.AmericanEvolution2019.com



we provide the educational programming and preservation projects you have come to expect from us. Through our Corporate History Archives Project and our Cemetery Preservation Workshops we are discovering new-to-us history almost lost with the passage of time. Here’s to another 400 years of evolving American history that started here in Virginia and for many folks, at “Virginia’s Oldest Church Building.”

Todd Ballance, Historic St. Luke’s Restoration’s Executive Director, welcomes conversations about Historic St. Luke’s past, present, and future. He can be reached at 757-357-3367. Email: tballance@historicstlukes.org



Making History

Last year, Historic St. Luke’s made modern history by merging the neighboring cemetery, St. Luke’s Memorial Park, with our own non-profit organization. Perpetual care continues to be an important part of our mission as the new stewards of St. Luke’s Memorial Park Cemetery. We now offer a wider range of choices for final resting places. We even offer a limited number of spaces in our Ancient Cemetery, directly adjacent to Virginia’s Oldest Church. Our serene grounds and fascinating history provide a unique setting for visiting and remembering loved ones.

For more information, please contact Sales & Services Manager Fred Hodges to arrange a personalized visit. Become Part of History at Historic St. Luke’s Church.

Contact Fred Hodges via email at fhodges@historicstlukes.org or by phone, 757-357-3367.

A NEW DAY

HENRY MASON DAY PORTRAIT RETURNS TO HISTORIC ST. LUKE’S

The portrait of Henry Mason Day that typically dominates one wall of the conference room in Historic St. Luke’s Administration Building is finally back in its rightful place after months away. Henry Mason Day was the first president of Historic St. Luke’s Restoration, the non-profit organization created in the 1950s that still cares for Historic St. Luke’s Church today. The portrait had begun to show its age after years of battling light damage and the ill effects of moisture and temperature changes. In December of 2017, staff carefully transported the painting to the Chrysler Museum of Art where Conservator Mark Lewis began the painstaking conservation process. Afterwards, the Chrysler agreed to store the portrait for a few months while much-needed maintenance work was completed in the Administration Building, where the painting is permanently housed. This project would not have been possible without the support of the Nancy Sayles Day Foundation and the expertise of Conservator Mark Lewis.

Chrysler Museum
Conservator,
Mark Lewis, uses a
cotton swab to
remove varnish from
the surface of the
Day portrait.



Portrait of Henry Mason Day, artist unknown, oil on canvas, c. 1938, Historic St. Luke’s Restoration Administration building.

R. FRANKLIN AND ARBEE R. EDWARDS/ HISTORIC ST. LUKE’S SCHOLARSHIP

The R. Franklin and Arbee R. Edwards/Historic St. Luke’s Scholarship was created by Bob Edwards’ mother, Arbee R. Edwards to honor her husband R. Franklin Edwards. Bob Edwards has been a board member of Historic St. Luke’s for over 25 years. This year marked the 19th award given, and 20 applications were received. The Hampton Roads Community Foundation administers the funds. Scholarships are awarded on academic merit and financial need. Students are awarded \$3,000 each year for four years if the student remains in good standing. Students from Smithfield High School, Isle of Wight Academy, and Windsor High School may apply.

All applicants must fill out an application that includes three essay topics: Write about three prominent figures who significantly contributed to Isle of Wight County (*i.e.*, Maj. Francis Boykin, Timothy Tynes, Segar Cofer Dashiell, Mary Wells, Mallory Todd, Parke Rouse). What are the VA Provisional Driver’s License regulations

that impact drivers under 18? What are your future plans and aspirations?



Clockwise from bottom left:
Lea Briane Lanzalotto,
Nancy Fortier,
Bob Edwards,
and his wife
Verne Edwards



Lea Briane Lanzalotto and her parents Mark and Michelle Lanzalotto

This year’s winner is Lea Briane Lanzalotto, daughter of Mark and Michelle Lanzalotto. Lea, along with her three sisters, are all first generation college students. Lea is a graduate of Smithfield High School, where she was a member of Beta Club, National Honor Society, Drama Club, and was a writing center tutor. She was a lead character in “Steel Magnolias,” put on by Smithfield High School last spring. She was also a member of the Girl Scouts of America, volunteered for Relay for Life and the IOWC Animal Shelter, and worked as a sales associate at Victoria’s Rose. Lea will be attending the honors program at George Mason University this fall where she will explore her passion for poetry, creative writing, and political science.

OUT OF THE ASHES

Since the creation of Historic St. Luke’s Restoration in the 1950s, stewards of the site have avidly collected and stored important documents pertaining to its corporate history. Until recently, Historic St. Luke’s institutional records were only kept in hard-copy form. Many of these documents were stored in a house on the property, which unfortunately burned to the ground in 2005. Twelve boxes of files survived the fire. Approximately 50,000 pages, mostly onion-skin copies, are slowly deteriorating.

“In early 2016, we began actively encouraging our volunteers to assist us by photocopying these damaged archives onto acid-free paper,” said Education Coordinator Rachel Popp. “We estimate that it will take 1,527 hours for volunteers to complete the copying of all of these documents. Once copied, we can begin the process of deciphering and organizing these damaged documents.”

After these 50,000 archival documents have been organized, Historic St. Luke’s will high-speed digitize them, create a computer database of all of its archives available for keyword searches, and store the hard copies in acid-free sleeves and binders.

So far, information contained in these surviving boxes documents the formation of Historic St. Luke’s Restoration, illuminates the 1950s preservation and restoration efforts, traces the acquisition of items in the collection, details financial records, and reveals philanthropic relationships and financial transactions.



Archival documents detailing Historic St. Luke’s corporate history survived a fire in 2005.

“Critical corporate history lies in these twelve boxes of damaged institutional archives,” said Executive Director Todd Ballance, “and we are actively seeking grant support so that we may retrieve Historic St. Luke’s 1950s history out of the ashes.” Ballance hopes to secure the services of a professional archivist to organize and direct the project once grant support is achieved.



Intern Haylee Lewis carefully removes fire damaged pages from its binding for photocopying and digitization.

16 MM FILM

An unexpected treasure found in these boxes is film from the 1950s when Historic St. Luke’s Restoration was established to restore and preserve the 17th-century church building. There are three reels containing approximately 600 feet of 16mm film footage. Two reels were damaged in the 2005 house fire, but, the third reel remains largely intact. Historic St. Luke’s is in the process of seeking estimates for conservation of the damaged film and digitization of all three reels of film.

The undamaged reel of film contains footage of the 1950s television show “Strike It Rich,” which was an effort to raise funds for the 1950s restoration project. Nearly \$500,000 was raised from approximately 1,000 donors from 40 states and two foreign countries. The broad-based fundraising campaign was led by the Historic St. Luke’s Restoration’s first president, Henry Mason Day, and included a long list of state and national dignitaries.



“Our mission is preservation and education,” said Rachel Popp, “These corporate archives are valuable windows into our history. We are eager to decipher them and share them with our visitors.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Many people assume that a museum’s operating costs are covered by admission revenue. Not so!

Typical of most non-profits, Historic St. Luke’s Restoration relies on multiple income streams, both earned and charitable, to maintain its fiscal health.

The historic site’s annual operations are supported by a number of earned income streams -- admission fees, gift shop sales, cemetery sales, education programs fees, special events and rental revenue, and a modest draw from its invested funds.

Key to Historic St. Luke’s operating budget, however, are the charitable gifts of its hundreds of philanthropic supporters whose Annual Fund gifts keep the doors open, the lights on, and its preservation and education programs in full swing.

So when your Historic St. Luke’s Annual Fund letter arrives in a few weeks, consider the impact your generosity will have on the vibrant life and legacy of this magnificent 17th-century site.

HISTORY IN ASHES

On the north side of Memorial Park Cemetery, there once stood an historic house known as the Batten Farm or Yeoman Farm. The house was built in 1887 by George Wesley Batten. By 2005, Historic St. Luke’s owned the house and used the first floor for the storage of numerous archives. On May 24, 2005, the house burned to the ground due to an electrical fire. An estimated 50,000 pages of archival documents were recovered in damaged condition. The house, on the other hand, was irreparable. Learn more about the archives that survived this fire in “Out of the Ashes” on page 7.



Historic ST. LUKE’S

Virginia’s Oldest Church

14477 Benn’s Church Boulevard
Smithfield, VA 23430



*Pictured (from left to right):
Susan Jordan, Elizabeth
Jordan, and Ella Jordan.
The Jordan Sisters were
vital to the 1950s
Restoration of Historic
St. Luke’s Church and
instrumental in the
creation of Historic
St. Luke’s Restoration,
the non-profit organization
that still cares for the
historic site today.*

Visit us Monday through Saturday, 9:30 am to 5 pm, and Sunday, 1 pm to 5 pm, between February 1 and December 31. Tours are on the hour.
Learn more at www.historicstlukes.org, email us at contact@historicstlukes.org, or call 757-357-3367.

Welcome to the Old Brick Gift Shop

The gift shop at Historic St. Luke’s is more than a shop where visitors find unique gifts and mementos. It is also the Welcome Center to the grounds of Virginia’s Oldest Church. This is the first impression for an experience connecting four centuries of history.

The shop is not new. There has been some representation of a gift shop since the 1950s restoration. However, Historic St. Luke’s has recently decided to give the shop an identifying name. “The Old Brick Gift Shop” is an intentional connection with the most enduring name for this site: “The Old Brick Church.” While the shop and welcome center are not that building, this is an intentional connection to the past, present, and future of Historic St. Luke’s Church.



Merchandise includes postcards, photographs, prints, and artistic representations of the church building. In addition to site-related items, the shop features an engaging array of merchandise such as scarves, wine clutches, jewelry, watches, and artisanal soaps. Witty and whimsical mugs, kitchen items and home decorations express humorous themes or sayings.



The current offering of books chiefly relates to local genealogy and the scholarly works of our recent lecturers. The staff is currently researching the availability of accurate studies to add to the current book selection regarding the 17th and 18th century history of the east coast of North America, especially the Mid-Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay region.

You are always invited to shop, whether before or after a tour. As the holiday season approaches, stop by and check out the unique gift items and decorations. Follow Historic St. Luke’s on FaceBook and visit the website to stay up to date on special offerings and sales. Welcome to the Old Brick Gift Shop!