

THE SLHS NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 2/November 2021

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR THE CEMETERY

St. Luke's Vestry, at its September 2021 meeting, began a process of reviewing and updating the maintenance guidelines for the cemetery. These standards will aid the Parish in maintaining the inherent beauty of the grounds while taking into consideration the historical nature of the cemetery and its proximity to a designated Virginia Historical Landmark.



St. Luke's asks for your assistance in preserving the attractiveness and decorum of the grounds. Please leave only fresh flowers or potted plants and no glass containers at the grave markers. No fencing, other structures, or plantings may be added at a gravesite. Small American flags or the flag of the Commonwealth of Virginia may be displayed for national holidays.

Prohibited items will be removed.



The churchyard at St. Luke's is a place for quiet contemplation and remembering. It is the hope of the Parish that these guidelines will assist in it being so for years to come.

Featured person of interest

**BRIG. GEN.
JAMES POSTELL
JERVEY
1869 -1947**

General James Postell Jervey, known affectionately as Jinks, was born at St. Helen's Farm in Powhatan, Virginia in 1869. James was the third son of Dr. Henry D. Jervey of Charleston, SC and Helen Louise Wesson of Summit Plantation, Northampton County, NC. The Jerveys had been among Charleston's most prominent families. They were leaders in medicine, law, banking, government and shipping.

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UPCOMING EVENTS
Veteran's Day Service (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.

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The Wessons and the Jerveys came to Powhatan after the Civil War and William Wesson, Helen's father, purchased the property on the James River known as "Calais". He deeded a portion of the property, including a log house, to Helen where James grew up with his brothers.

James was an office boy for Southern Cotton Oil Company in Atlanta, GA when he received an appointment to West Point. His older brother, Henry, graduated first in his 1888 class just weeks before James matriculated with the Class of 1892. Upon his graduation, second in his class, James was assigned to the Corps of Engineers and received an equivalent of a Master's Degree from the Army's Engineering School of Application at Willet's Point in New York.

His record was outstanding at his many assignments, noted both for his engineering expertise and teaching. His many posts included the Panama Canal construction, Wheeling WV, the Intracoastal Waterway and defenses at Norfolk, VA and the Ohio River, Pensacola FL, and instructing at Willet's Point.

General Jervey married Jean Webb in 1894. They had three children, Jean Postell Jervey (Col. Alexander Quintard), Darrell Eloise Jervey (Naval Captain William Ware) and James, Jr (Ann Sullivan).

At the onset of WWI, he was assigned to the 79th Division and later as chief engineer of the 7th Corps. He then joined the American Expeditionary



Force (AEF) led by renown General "Blackjack" Pershing. James was awarded the Army's Distinguished Service Medal for exceptionally meritorious and distinguished service. Before his retirement in 1920, he was district engineer at Wilmington, DE and division engineer at Baltimore, MD.

From 1920 to 1926, James served as City Manager of Portsmouth, VA. During those years he drew plans for his Powhatan home and purchased land, a portion of Jude's Ferry Farm, from his bother William. His youngest brother, Darrell, who continued to reside at nearby "St. Helen's", was his builder. His new home, "John Tree Hill", was situated on a beautiful bluff overlooking the James River. His retirement plans were interrupted when his childhood friend, Dr. Benjamin Finney of nearby "Elioch", Vice Chancellor of the University of the South, Sewanee, TN, offered Gen. Jervey the position of chair of the mathematics department.

General Jervey and his wife, Jean lived happily at Sewanee for 19 years. They visited "John Tree Hill"

and family and friends when Sewanee was out of session. Their son Jim (Col. James Jervey, Jr.) and his wife Ann and their family resided there in the meantime.

During WWII, James again served his country by teaching an accelerated navigation program to navy personnel.

Quotes from his retirement celebration at Sewanee: "our sincere affection high esteem and grateful appreciation for the rich contribution he has made to the life of the University and the community, in his relations with the students, he won their undying respect and affection both as a teacher and Christian gentleman." He is remembered as a fun loving, kind and gentle man with a quick wit and as an engaging story teller. At family gatherings he would entertain the children with games of his invention and would insist the more formal adults join them on the floor.

He and his wife Jean retired to "John Tree Hill" but, lacking proximity to medical care, they responded to an invitation to stay with daughter Darrell and her husband, Captain Ware at the U.S. Naval Magazine in Bellevue, Washington, DC. He died at Walter Reed Hospital in 1947 and is buried at St. Luke's among his family and friends.

Historical data contributed by Paul Mitchell, father of Paul, Jr. and Bonnie, Jervey family descendants



175TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATED

It is two years since we celebrated the 175th anniversary of St. Luke's Church. As part of the festivities in May 2019, the Parish Hall was turned into a gallery filled with historic documents, photos, memorabilia and more. Members, families, and friends were greeted with a banner designed and made by the Anniversary Gallery Committee. Most of the displays have been or will be deposited for preservation at the VA Museum of History and Culture (VA Historical Society).

To commemorate the occasion, SLHS found it fitting that the



banner be preserved for display in the Parish Hall. Mark and Dolores Gennari graciously volunteered to create a frame to showcase the banner. SLHS covered the cost of the plexiglass which will protect the banner for years to come.

The banner is displayed proudly in the Parish Hall Assembly room.

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).

A life membership \$100. A one-year membership \$25.

For more information please contact:

Connie Harriss

harrissconstance@gmail.com

804-794-5642

or

Betty Handy

handybetty@msn.com

804-794-6472

PLACING FLOWERS ON GRAVESITES



Thank you to all who place floral decorations in our cemetery to honor your loved ones.

To eliminate the use of glass containers, SLHS recently purchased reusable and recyclable flower vases with stakes for your use. These can be found at the back of the church near the cellar



doors in a covered bin where a water faucet is also located.

GRAVESTONE CLEANING

SLHS held its second gravestone cleaning day. The event took place on Saturday, October 9th under threatening rainy skies. A handful of SLHS members attended and scrubbed clean one of the largest gravestones in the cemetery.



This is the **before** photo. Next time you visit, checkout the difference in appearance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VETERANS DAY SERVICE NOVEMBER 14th at 3PM



A Veterans Day service will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 3pm.

Please join us to honor all American veterans, living and deceased, who served this country honorably during wartime and peacetime. Veterans Day, originally known as "Armistice Day", originated on November 11, 1919 on the first anniversary of World War 1. In 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

This United States federal holiday is always observed on November 11, regardless of the day of the week, and is in honor of the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918, signaling the end of the war.

All American veterans of all wars are commemorated on Veterans Day. Virginia has the third highest number of living veterans in the United States. There are 41 veterans known to be buried at St. Luke's.

CHRISTMAS WREATH FUND RAISER

Last year, many of our SLHS members and others purchased Christmas wreaths to be placed on the gravesites of loved ones buried in our little churchyard.

The Society Leadership Committee is offering to provide this service again this year. Fifty wreaths have been ordered to be delivered to St. Luke's during the first week of December. Last year we ordered 45 and sold out to the disappointment of some who did not get their orders in on time.

If you would like to order 21" wreaths made from fresh evergreens, with large red bows and 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 \$40.00.

Please send your request as soon as possible as we could perhaps order more wreaths if needed. No orders can be accepted after November 26th. Thank you. We hope to hear from you soon.



**Christmas 2020
St. Luke's Cemetery adorned with
Christmas wreaths (Parish Hall in
background).**