This Self-Guided Walking Tour of Saint James’ Church has been prepared as a Girl Scout Gold Award Project by Hannah J. Kelly. Hannah is a Girl Scout in Troop 2260 affiliated with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland. The Gold Award is the highest award that can be earned by a girl in Girl Scouts. Hannah is also a member of St. James’ Parish.

Photos and text: Hannah Kelly, Troop 2260

With deep appreciation to Project Advisor, The Reverend William H.C. Ticknor, Rector of St. James’, and to Kathryn Whipple, Troop Leader, Girl Scout Troop 2260.

To learn even more about St. James’, visit our website:
www.stjameslothian.com

(Old Herring Creek Parish)
A worshipping community in Southern Maryland since before 1692

5757 Solomons Island Road
Lothian Maryland 20711
Brief Chronological History of St. James’ Parish

1634—Colony of Maryland established
1695—First Church built on this site
1698—The Rev. Henry Hall becomes first Rector
1704—Baptism of Robert Montague, Native American
1723—Oak tablets containing The Lord’s Prayer, The 10 Commandments & The Apostles’ Creed placed on the walls of the church
1763—Present Church structure built
1792—The Rev. Thomas John Claggett leaves to become the first Bishop of Maryland
1837—Two chimneys & heat added
1876—Chapel in Tracey’s Landing built
1895—New church bell purchased
1895—Bi-centennial of St. James’ Church observed
1900—Rectory burned
1924—St. Mark’s Chapel in Tracey’s Landing replaces St. James’ Chapel in Tracey’s Landing
1946—Present Rectory built
1960—Present Parish Hall built
1997—Education Building built
1999—Assistant Rector’s Home built

The Rectors Of St. James’ Parish & Their Years of Service

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<td>The Reverend John Lang</td>
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<td>The Reverend Alexander Adams</td>
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<td>The Reverend Walter Magowan</td>
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<td>The Reverend Dr. Thomas John Claggett</td>
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<td>The Reverend John Collins McCabe</td>
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<td>The Reverend Edmund C. Murdaugh</td>
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<td>The Right Reverend Lloyd R. Craighill</td>
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<td>The Reverend Luther D. Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Reverend William H. C. Ticknor</td>
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In the American colonies of Great Britain where the Church of England was the established religion, glebe land (usually 100 acres) was distributed by the colonial government, and was often farmed or rented out by the church rector to cover living expenses. This practice was no longer observed following the disestablishment of state churches that accompanied the American Revolution. There are still many “Glebe Roads” in the eastern United States and you can be certain that they all do or did run parallel to a colonial Anglican church*. One of St. James’ most interesting aspects is its glebe, located behind the Rectory. The land was willed to the church in 1700 by Mr. and Mrs. James Rigby.

Over time, the glebe at St. James’ was sold off, so that today only 52 of the 100 original acres remain (the 48 missing acres probably went to the building of roads adjacent to the property). The glebe is taxed land that is owned by the church and rented out to local farmers. Even today, any income made from the glebe goes directly to support the parish. Historically, the land was entirely devoted to the cultivation of tobacco. Now, only corn and soybeans are grown in the glebe.

* Wikipedia

Welcome to St. James’ Parish!

St. James’ Parish is an Episcopal place of worship within the Diocese of Maryland, composed of the current church campus in Lothian, and our chapel in historic Tracey’s Landing, Maryland. Over the years, many have stopped by my office and asked about the church—why was it built here, who built it, how old is it, and is it still in use? The answers to these questions can be found in this document—A Self-Guided Walking Tour of St. James’ Church. This is a unique historical journey you can take by yourself in about 30 minutes.

Currently, our Parish is the worshipping home to approximately 350 Southern Maryland families who attend our three services each Sunday during the school year (including one at the Chapel). Today, we arrive at the church in modern cars and worship in an air-conditioned sanctuary. Our parish offices are equipped with the most current telecommunications equipment, and we are a presence on the World Wide Web. But, as you take this tour, think back three hundred years or so when parishioners arrived on horseback for Sunday services and instruction which may have lasted three hours or more. Picture yourself as a colonial Vestry member, as he struggled with the question of Independence and what this would mean for the Churches of England established across the colonies. Should they support the King or join the new national movement? Think about a hundred years later, when the Civil War was looming. This was a ‘planters’ church whose members were slave owners. How did St. James’ help them figure out the moral ambiguity of their way of life? Today, The Episcopal Church is still facing hard choices, choices members of St. James’ come here to seek guidance in considering.

It is my pleasure as the 32nd Rector to lead this parish into the 21st century.

William H.C. Ticknor, Rector (1973–present)
St. James’ Episcopal Church

Longitude — 38.47296 North
Latitude — -76.355237 West
Elevation— 43 m

# 11 Rectory
# 12 Assistant Rector’s Home

Built just after WWII, the Rectory is the home of the current Rector and his family. The former Rectory was destroyed in a fire in 1900. The Assistant Rector’s House was built in 1999 in a more modern style. Since these are private homes, they are not open to the public.
# 10 Education Building

The Education Building was built in 1997. It was conceived architecturally and built as an extension to the Parish Hall—as evidenced by the brick work and the grading of the roofs.

It is a modern, air-conditioned facility, which serves as the focal point for virtually all our youth Christian Formation efforts. Children as young as age 3 begin formal education. Through the fifth grade, the children participate in a program called the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. In middle school, the very widely-used curriculum *Rite-13* is used. In high school, students venture out into the community guided by the *Journey to Adulthood* program.

Although many adult education programs are offered annually, they are typically conducted in the Library or other meeting venues.

The Education Building is also the home of SCAN—the South County Assistance Network, a food bank serving South County’s neediest families.

Sites along Tour Route

1. Exterior Elevations of St. James’ Church
2. Interior of St. James’ Church
3. Stained Glass windows
4. The Bell Tower
5. Churchyard
6. Historical Graves
7. The Rector’s Garden
8. The Parish Hall
9. Administrative Offices and Parish Library
10. The Education Building
11. The Rectory
12. Assistant Rector’s House
13. The Glebe—Fields and Crops
There was a church on this property prior to the Royal Act of Establishment in 1692. It was called Herring Creek Church and was built just south of the present building. In 1695, a church was ordered to be built on the present site. By 1762, it was no longer adequate, and a new church was begun in 1763. This is the present Parish Church you will visit today. The sacristy, the small room on the east elevation, was built in 1950. It was added to provide meeting space for Church leadership, a library, and space for Sunday school.

St. James’ is known as one of the “10 Mile Churches.” The name comes from the decision in 1692 by William and Mary to divide Maryland into 30 districts thereby creating 30 different churches, all about 10 miles apart. Ten miles north of St. James’ is All Hallows Episcopal Church (in Birdsville), and 10 miles south is All Saints Parish in Sunderland.

There are groupings of historical photographs along the walls of the Parish Hall. The documents framed (above) are photocopies of the first three pages of the Parish Register (top row), and the first three pages of the Church’s Minutes (bottom row). The original documents are kept at the Hall of Records in Annapolis and are not borrowable. Vestry records are complete from 1692 to the present. The Parish Registry is complete except for the period 1855-1890—these records were destroyed in a fire.

The photos in the lower frame depict various stages of the church’s physical expansion, and some of the chapel in Tracey’s Landing. Both of these pieces are to be found in the hallway just before the door which leads to The Rector’s Garden.
The St. James’ Parish Library is a source of great pride. It is the oldest parochial lending library in the country, having been established in 1698 by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Bray, the Commissary for the newly established church in the province of Maryland. In the same year, the Rev. Henry Hall received one hundred and twenty-five books for the St. James’ Library.

Two of the Library’s original books, from the 1600s, remain with the Parish, while other records have been placed in temperature-controlled rooms at the Hall of Records in Annapolis.

The large built-in book case along the north wall was built in memory of the first female senior warden, Carolyn Booth.

There is an active library committee in the Parish today, which lovingly tends to the collection. It spearheaded a successful effort to refurbish the Library in 2007.

The exterior of St. James’ Church is made entirely of brick, with wood trim. The interior is believed to be all chestnut beams. The brickwork on the west and south sides of the church is Flemish Bond—which consists of alternating headers and stretchers in every course, so arranged that the headers and stretchers in every other course appear in vertical lines. This is not the case on the north and east sides due to the extra cost of using so many bricks. The original entrance of the Church was on the south side but, due to parking and modern transportation, the west entrance became the front, as it was more convenient with the parking lot to the north and churchyard to the south. Prior to automobiles, parishioners would come on horseback or in buggies which were tethered to posts outside the south entrance.
The interior of St. James’ is fairly typical for a rural southern Anglican church built in the colonial period—the altar and other sacred objects reflect that this is neither a high-church nor low, but somewhere in-between.

The oak tablets above the altar at the modern front (east) of the church show the 10 Commandments. Three tablets were given to the church in 1723 by William Locke in memory of his wife. These are amongst the Parish’s oldest possessions. In the mid 1970’s, they were taken down and restored by the Smithsonian Institution. The other two tablets, upon which are written the *Apostles’ Creed* and *The Lord’s Prayer*, are mounted on the south and north walls respectively.

To the consternation of many brides, the interior of the church lacks a center aisle. If there was a reason for this, it remains unknown.

Built in 1960, the Parish Hall is the gathering place for worshippers after Sunday services and provides a space for a myriad of other church functions—for example, weddings and funeral receptions, church school performances, as well as other civic and church-related events.

The Parish Hall also houses the administrative offices for the Parish, the Parish Library, and the music center.
The Rector’s Garden is a peaceful place to sit and while away some time. It is maintained by volunteer members of the Parish who tend it as an on-going part of this Parish’s history.
Today, there are eight stained-glass windows on the perimeter walls of the church. The church was constructed with clear glass windows. Over time, individuals bequeathed particular windows in memory of loved ones or historical events. The stained glass windows at the front of the church, on either side of the altar, depict the Saints James and Paul. The most valuable window is the “Cross and Crown” closest to the front on the south side of the church. Its value lies in the German enameling process that was used in its production.

The oldest window in the church is that of the “mystery saint,” located on the north side of the building, to the right of the organ. While there are theories as to who this woman was (perhaps St. Dorothy?), her true identity remains a source of pleasant speculation. The window of Elijah and Elisha is important to the church’s history as the outer edge displays the cultivation of tobacco—the crop of the region until just recently.

The window showing (a Native American) Montague being baptized is the newest window, having been added shortly after World War II. On the southwest corner, make sure you notice the window of St. Andrew and Jesus surrounded by images of how local people made their living on the Chesapeake Bay. The window shows a Bay Clipper Ship, crabs, oysters and other indicators of Bay culture and life.
This is the contemporary marker for the what is believed to be the earliest dated grave in the churchyard—although historians believe it was moved from another location. It is for Ann and Christopher Birckhead (1665).

A large slab, dated 1708, marks the grave of the Honorable Seth Biggs, one of the first Vestrymen of the Parish.

"Here lieth the body of Abraham Neaye who died May 8, 1683."

Our "Mystery" Saint
North wall, next to organ

Jesus, St. Andrew and the Chesapeake Bay,
South wall, closest to door
The bell tower and bell were dedicated at St. James’ in 1895.

The bell is made of bronze, a combination of copper and tin. The right clapper is for tolling at funerals and somber occasions, while the left is meant for joyous events, such as weddings, and to signal the start of Sunday worship. Today, the Rector will sometimes have the bell toll 33 times at a funeral to signify the age at which Jesus died.

Today, bell tolling is largely ceremonial, but the bell was a very important means of communication prior to alarm clocks—they summoned people to church on Sunday!

A walk through the churchyard at St. James’ is a lovely way to stroll through the history of this nation—from pre-Revolutionary times through today. It is a rich source of data for military historians & amateur family genealogists.

First off— in the Anglican tradition, a cemetery surrounding the church is known as its churchyard. This churchyard, laid out in 1696, is the resting place for well over a thousand individuals, although many of them are unknown due to the lack of record-keeping throughout the church’s history. The churchyard is “full,” although there are spaces for cremated remains, a custom that has grown more popular over the decades. There are plans to expand the churchyard in the near future.

If you are here seeking the grave of an ancestor, you will need to consult the most current list of lot owners. The present rector has worked tirelessly to reconstruct as reliable a record as possible.