As we at St. John’s enter the calling process for a new Priest-In-Charge, we have prepared this profile to help you become acquainted with us.

Our small congregation is a congenial blend of life-long St. John’s members; come-here’s; single people; and families, young and not so-young. While diverse in our views and backgrounds, we accept one another, both as fellows in Christ, and as the individuals we are. In the main, we consider ourselves fairly traditional in outlook, yet still open to new ideas and even change.

Someone spending time with us would soon sense one of our most defining traits: caring for our mission in Christ, for St. John’s, and for one another, and with it, big-time commitment. As you have surely observed in other churches, and civic-type organizations, we have a coterie of hard-working members who do much of the heavy lifting, but when help is needed, just about everyone can be counted on.

Our active membership has declined over the last fifteen or so years, due primarily to:

- The passing of a generation of exceptionally dedicated congregants
- Fewer young people coming on; bigger-time careers are mostly elsewhere
- National trends, particularly as they have affected ‘mainline’ churches

On the plus side, there seems to be an emerging desire among boomers and GenXers for the more traditional, dignified form of worship epitomized by the Episcopal Church. This appears to be borne out in part by the large numbers who attend our Easter and Christmas Eve services, suggesting there are those out there who like what we do, at least enough to give us a try.
The Diocese of Virginia
The Diocese of Virginia, organized in May 1785, was one of nine dioceses represented at the first General Convention in September 1785. Today, the Diocese of Virginia is one of the largest in the Episcopal Church by active membership with over 80,000 members. Its congregations have the second highest average Sunday attendance in the Episcopal Church. It is composed of 185 congregations and covers 38 counties, extending from its southern boundary at Richmond and the James River to northern Virginia and from the Chesapeake Bay on the east to the Shenandoah Valley on the west.

The diocesan offices are located in the Mayo Memorial Church House, a 19th century Greek revival mansion on West Franklin Street in Richmond. The building was left to the Diocese by heirs of Peter Mayo, a wealthy 19th century tobacco merchant. The Diocese also maintains a Northern Virginia office at The Falls Church-Episcopal, in Falls Church.

The Rt. Rev. Shannon Sherwood Johnston, who was elected and consecrated in 2007, began his ministry as the 13th Bishop of Virginia on October 1, 2009. He is joined in his Episcopal ministry by the Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff, Bishop Suffragan, who was consecrated on July 28, 2012. In January of 2011, the Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, retired bishop of Kentucky, began serving our diocese as Assistant Bishop. The bishops serve the Diocese well and work with congregations in their ministry, helping them to pursue the diocesan priorities: youth and young adult ministry, strengthening our congregations, evangelism and proclamation, multicultural and ethnic ministries, and mission beyond ourselves.

The bishop’s seat is the Cathedral Shrine of the Transfiguration, an open-air stone chapel at the Shrine Mont Diocesan Conference Center. This facility, located in the Shenandoah Valley, is used for diocesan meetings, conferences and clergy retreats, and hosts extensive summer youth camping programs. The Diocesan Center at Roslyn in Richmond overlooks the James River and is a gathering place for diocesan events of continuing education. It is also often used for vestry and parish retreat, as well as for individual clergy retreats.

The Diocese owns and operates six secondary schools and has part ownership and operation of five continuing care retirement facilities. The Diocese enjoys the benefits of the Virginia Theological Seminary, the world’s largest Anglican Seminary, as a resource for education.

For more information, visit www.thediocese.net.
St. John’s Episcopal Church

History
St. John’s is a lineal descendant of two late 17th century churches of South Farnham Parish that were lost to the post-Revolutionary War disestablishment of the Church of England, and subsequent neglect and vandalism carried out by the victorious 'patriots' of that era. Built in 1850 to replace an interim town chapel, our church is a frame structure of the carpenter gothic genre, most unusual in this area. In 1930, the brick parish hall was built, adjoining the sanctuary. The rectory, completed in 1950, became home to the priest who served both St. John’s and St. Paul’s, Millers Tavern.
In 1972, the Church was enlarged by extending the nave and adding transepts, so that it will now serve about 200 people. Also that year, St. John’s and St. Paul’s were officially separated into two self-sustaining parishes, and the rectory was acquired by St. John’s. In 2006-07, a handicapped access entrance was installed and the parish hall extensively renovated.

**St. John’s now**

Our average attendance for all Sundays and two key services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Sunday</th>
<th>Easter</th>
<th>Christmas Eve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>136</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

….and our recent worship schedule:

At 8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I or Rite II with no choir or music. About thirty percent of those who attend on Sundays come to this service, and they are fiercely committed to that hour!

The 10:30 a.m. service schedule is:

1. **1st Sunday** – Holy Eucharist, Rite I
2. **2nd Sunday** – Holy Eucharist, Rite I
3. **3rd Sunday** – Holy Eucharist, Rite II
4. **4th Sunday** – Morning Prayer, Rite I or II
5. **5th Sunday** – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

A Healing Service is conducted on the third Friday at 11:00 a.m., and a popular Adult Bible Study class at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday. The Prayer Group of between four and nine people meets Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School/nursery is offered at the 10:30 a.m. service during the academic year, September – May.

**Organization**

Not surprisingly, our parish is organized along lines typical of those found in most Episcopal Churches. Here is how it looks:

**The Vestry:** each year a class of four is elected for a three-year term as members of our twelve-person governing body. Typically the Priest-In-Charge presides over Vestry meetings, which are held on the third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Of late, two senior wardens and one junior warden have been elected. Committees and task-forces are formed as needed.
**Our choir:** Numbering between six and ten of a given Sunday, the choir was recently lauded by Bishop Ted Gulick as 'the best small-parish choir in the Diocese', reflecting both an outstanding choirmaster and dedicated members. With a measure of outside support, they have also performed as a community chorale, presenting such works as Faure's Requiem, and the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmastime. Well-deserved praise has come our way, from our parishioners and guests from the community. Rehearsals are every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

**Other:** Despite the small size of our parish, many members volunteer to do the lay tasks germane to the running of the church, often filling more than one billet. For instance, about half of our lay readers are also choristers. Ushers, who serve two-week stints, have the additional duty of ringing the steeple bell at the outset of each service; they almost always remember to do this. Our flower and altar guilds do their respective jobs with dedication and skill. The presence on the former of several master gardeners and flower arrangers surely helps. Five young people serve interchangeably as acolytes and crucifers, and the chalicer corps counts some eight certified personnel.

**Service to the community**

Outreach and ECW were recently combined so that all church women may concentrate on giving help to those whose needs are not met by existing aid sources. For many years, our activities have centered on assisting area agencies such as The Haven (a refuge for abused women); Community Services Food Bank; Christmas gifts for needy children; raising the wherewithal for scholarships awarded to deserving high school students; and services for our own, be they shut-ins or otherwise in need. Five years ago we began preparing and serving free dinners for those less fortunate, and on the fourth Monday at 6:00 p.m., we can expect some 120 people. More recently, other area churches have joined the cause, so that each Monday night, meals for the needy are available.

We are closely affiliated with St. Margaret’s School, an Episcopal girls boarding and day school located just across Water Lane from St. John’s. One Sunday a month, groups of its students come to worship with us, and the institution’s baccalaureate ceremony and other rites are conducted here. As well, our esteemed choir director and organist * is a member of the St. Margaret’s faculty, responsible for its music program.

*Among his many professional honors is the designation of Master Choirmaster, conferred by Britain’s Royal School of Church Music.

The Ann Riggs Chapter of Daughters of the King was formed in 2011, with 12 members. Their mission centers on prayer, service, evangelism, strengthening the spiritual life of the parish, and supporting the Priest-In-Charge.
Social activities

Our coffee hours following the 10:30 a.m. service are less coffee and more ‘mixer’ in focus. As well, from time to time, the men convene for pleasant Saturday morning breakfasts, sharing their culinary skills. We have also held a number of theme dinners to benefit the music program, fund scholarships, or the activities of DOK. In recent years, we have held a Mardi Gras dinner instead of the traditional pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday. Memorable are the German and Irish feasts of the past year, and the fact that so many attendees pitch in to help prepare the meals, and remain for the cleanup. That, too, makes it all the more fulfilling.

Staff

In addition to the choir director, St. John’s employs a parish administrator who prepares weekly bulletins, newsletters (The Evangelist), general correspondence, annual directory update, and fields phone inquiries. She works approximately 14 hours per week.

Budget

St. John’s is operating under a 2014 balanced budget of approximately $134,300. Of this amount 87% will be received from congregational pledges. On the expense side, 30% will be paid as compensation to the interim Priest-In-Charge with the remainder being used to operate the church, to maintain the church parish hall and rectory, and to support outreach activities.

Parish-wide Survey

You will want to know our parishioners’ feelings, attitudes, ideas and what they are looking for in a Priest-In-Charge. Here is a synopsis of the salient findings and pertinent comments of the survey conducted over the winter of 2014.

Worship: Over half of us (66%) attend at least twice a month, and 81% pledge. In terms of longevity at St. John’s, the largest cohort (24%) has been attending for between 11 and 20 years, followed by 1 – 5 years (21%) and lifelong (19%). 44% want a combination of Rites I and II, while 24% have no preference, and 22% opt for Rite I only. 54% of the 10:30am service attenders would like at least one Morning Prayer per month, and 46% prefer Holy Eucharist. Most of us pitch in to get the job done, although as noted, there is considerable overlap; for example, five lay readers, and five chaliceers are also members of the choir.

What are our attributes? Traditional service and values came in first, followed by the music program, community outreach, children’s Christian education, and adult Bible study. Our parishioners consider us “A strong, supportive congregation”, “caring for one another”, “tradition and our historical place in the community”, “a tight-knit family”, “our willingness to be of help”, “laid back, friendly atmosphere”, “the message received each Sunday”, “the rectory”, “a feeling of belonging to something that truly matters”, “I’m always proud to say I’m a member of St. John’s”, “I love it here”, “the free pasta dinners”, finally, many a respondent merely noted, “our people”.
What needs improvement? More participation by young families; better attendance; growing the congregation; pastoral care of members; a closer association with St. Margaret’s School; and the ultimate catch-22: we want more children in our Sunday school, youth program, and acolyte corps. The challenge is that in order to entice more to participate; there have to be more already here. Other suggestions for improvement include, “physical improvements are needed”, “include new members in activities”, “more welcoming feel for newcomers”, “bring back former members”, “get young mothers to help with their children’s Christian education”, and this rosy view: “not much”!

What are we looking for in a Priest-In-Charge? A warm, good and kindly nature; dedication to St. John’s, it’s mission and parishioners; a good speaker; knowledge of scripture; good teacher; commitment to pastoral care; membership-building skills; community involvement; devotion to child and adult fellowship; strong work ethic; leadership skills, traditional approach to worship and church music. We want someone who is ‘friendly to everyone”; “visiting shut-ins”; “good stature and character”; and “someone who loves God first and shares that love with the church and community”.

Our Community (for additional information, see www.essex-virginia.org)

Tappahannock is located an hour southeast of Fredericksburg and 45 minutes east of Richmond in Essex County which is comprised of 258 mostly rural square miles. The county’s population is 10,633, and that of Tappahannock, the county’s only town, is about 2,000.

Essex has 120 farms totaling 56,280 acres, and ranks second in the state in production of soybeans, corn, and barley.

We average 40 inches of rain a year, and 10 inches of snow. Our mean temperature is 56.6 degrees, with July averaging 77.3, and January, 35 degrees.

The public school system is made up of one elementary, one intermediate, and one high school, and there are four private schools in the county, one of which is the previously-mentioned St. Margaret’s. Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw, seven miles away, offers a variety of vocational majors and a university parallel transfer program.

Riverside Tappahannock Hospital, with 100 beds, provides services in X-ray, nuclear medicine, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, cardiology, family medicine, orthopedic surgery, and emergency and urgent care services. Serving the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, Tappahannock Regional Free Clinic offers healthcare to the uninsured. Many family practices and a wide range of specialist professionals, most located adjacent to the hospital, serve the community.

River Fitness Center offers a full array of exercise options, including pool, sauna and Jacuzzi. In addition, there is a Curves.

Two nursing homes in the county and several others nearby serve area senior citizens. As well, major hospitals in Richmond, include VCU Medical Center, St. Mary’s, and Memorial Regional Center.
At the junction of Routes 17 and 360, Tappahannock serves as a regional trade center, and is the site of the only bridge to the Northern Neck for 40 miles. The economy is varied, ranging from agriculture, to timbering, to manufacturing, to services. In addition to many prosperous locally-owned retail operations, the lineup includes a Walmart Super Center, Lowe’s Home Improvement Center, Peebles, Essex 5 Cinema, and one of the area’s major employers, FDP Brakes. Also of note, Tappahannock is something of an antiques mecca, home to many shops.

The Essex County Museum and Historical Society, The Essex County Public Library, The Community Chorus, The Tappahannock Art Guild, The Essex County Garden Club, St. John’s Chorale, and on the nearby Northern Neck, Westmoreland Players, a top amateur theatrical group. Members of St. John’s are involved in all of them. Among the other clubs and civic groups are Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Woman’s Club, Moose Lodge, Masonic Lodge, Eastern Star, Friends of the Library, and the Lions Club. Including St. John’s Episcopal, there are exactly 40 churches in Essex County. Most, if not all, are connected to Essex Churches Together, which annually sponsors Operation Inasmuch, a one-day service opportunity of painting, repairing, sewing, planting, a food bank, and a free to all yard sale.

Tappahannock’s annual ‘Rivahfest’ in June is a fun community festival (including food, crafts, shopping, games, and music entertainment), that brings nearly 12,000 people to our town. The Rappahannock River offers numerous opportunities for boating, fishing, and just plain gazing. If you are a golfer, several 18-hole courses await you, and if you look on exercise as a form of recreation, the River Fitness Center has it all.

There are a number of good restaurants to please just about every taste, ranging from landmark Lowery’s Seafood Restaurant, to Rivahside Café, Sandbar Restaurant, Los Portales, Java Jacks, The Fat Finch, Applebee’s, and Shoney’s. (Sorry if we missed any.) Still others are found on the Northern Neck and in Richmond and environs.

The St. John’s Search Committee extends an invitation to join us in discernment if St. John’s is the parish for you. We request that you send a letter of interest, your resume, and your Ministry Portfolio to Lindsay Ryland at the Diocese of Virginia, lryland@thedioce.se.net. All inquiries received by St. John’s Church will be sent to Lindsay Ryland as well.