

# Sixth Annual Merritt Island Pioneer Day

## February 11th, 2017

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

5555 N. Tropical Trail  
Merritt Island, FL



Sams House at Pine Island

6195 N. Tropical Trail  
Merritt Island, FL

Parking available at both locations (suggested donation of \$1).

*Free shuttle service, approximately every 20 minutes, between the two locations.*

### Events at St. Luke's (10 am to 4 pm)

- Self-guided chapel and cemetery tours between scheduled events
- Display of Artifacts & Activities from the American Space Museum
- 10:30 Historic Cemetery Tour
- 11:00 **"VAB: From Swamp to Icon"** - John Tribe, retired Aerospace Engineer and NASA docent
- 11:30 **"St. Luke's Chapel: A Gem of Carpenter Gothic Architecture"** with Jonathan Rich and Phil Eschbach
- 11:30 **Highlights of Space** with the American Space Museum
- 12:00 Homemade soups (\$5)
- 1:00 A Visit with the Sams Family (Sams Family Plot, cemetery)
- 2:00 **"St. Luke's Chapel: A Gem of Carpenter Gothic Architecture"** with Jonathan Rich and Phil Eschbach
- 2:00 **Highlights of Space** with the American Space Museum
- 2:30 Historic Cemetery Tour
- Fish Fry Dinner at 4:30 and 5:30 seatings (ticket sale starts Jan. 2 by calling 321-452-5260. \$9 advance/\$10 day of)

### Events at Sams House (on-going 10 am to 4 pm)

- Living History Demonstrations and Educational Exhibits including: Florida Historical Society, Florida Public Archaeology Network, Indian River Anthropological Society, Florida Bat Conservancy, Brevard Veterans Memorial Center, Field Manor, Canaveral National Seashore, Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge, Linders Way Back Machines, Sea Rocket Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, UF/IFAS Master Gardeners, Space Coast Chapter of Florida Master Naturalists, North and South Brevard Heritage Foundations, Brevard Museum of Science and Natural History, Aging Matters, Space Coast Spinsters, Cow Camp Cavalry, Confederate Sons Association, Order of the Confederate Rose, Daughters of the American Revolution, Seminole Reenactors, North Merritt Island Homeowners Association, Keep Brevard Beautiful
- Crafts Fair and Farmer's Market including: AntDsynz, Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation, Maria Falvey Face Painting, Mrs. Mango and Co., Pappa's Backyard Honey, Plates by Suzan, Sarah Younger local Author, Space and Trowel Club, Suzanne and Martha Cook Quilts, Teresa Camarata Coiled Baskets, Adamson's Orchids, and more.
- Historic House and Cabin Tours will focus on the foods of Pioneer families
- Music by the Freight Liner Blue Grass Band and the Celery City String Band
- Children's Crafts and Games include: cow milking, rope tossing, corn husk doll fabrication, and much more
- Several food vendors

[www.mipioneerday.com](http://www.mipioneerday.com)

*Please – Service Animals Only*

## Sams House at Pine Island Conservation Area



John Hanahan Sams came to Brevard County from South Carolina in 1875, bringing with him his wife Sarah, five children, older sister Catherine and older brother William. Taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862, the family originally settled in Eau Gallie. When the orange trees they planted failed to bear fruit, the family moved to North Merritt Island. As part of the move, the Sams cabin was floated up the Indian River Lagoon and reconstructed onsite in 1878. The oldest standing home in Brevard County, the cabin now serves as a museum and visitor's center. A larger, two-story home was built onsite in 1888. This house now serves as staff offices and bunk housing for visiting service groups.

Mr. Sams ran a successful orange grove and served as the first Superintendent of the Brevard County Public School System. He was instrumental in the founding and construction of St. Luke's Episcopal Church as well as the first schools in the area. John Sams died in 1924. His descendents lived on the property until 1996. The Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program and the St. John's River Water Management District purchased the property. The EEL Program is responsible for management of the site.

This and other events are sponsored in part by the **Pine Island Preservation Society**, a 501(c)(3) organization promoting conservation, awareness and appreciation of the Pine Island Conservation Area. We welcome new members.

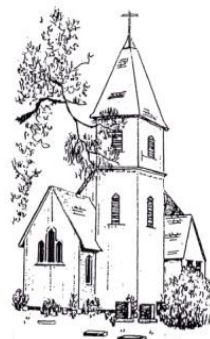
Find us on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/samshousepineisland](https://www.facebook.com/samshousepineisland)

[www.facebook.com/eelbrevard](https://www.facebook.com/eelbrevard)



## St. Luke's Episcopal Church



In the 1870's the LaRoche, Porcher, and Sams families settled in Courtenay, Merritt Island. The families had moved to the area from the Charleston/John's Island area of South Carolina after losing their wealth as a result of the Civil War. As Episcopalians, they brought with them their Book of Common Prayer, which provided services for use by both clergy and lay people. They founded a congregation as they met in their homes for worship and fellowship.

In 1886 the Episcopal Diocese of Florida (founded in 1838) formally recognized St. Luke's Mission. In 1886 Mrs. Lucy A. Boardman of Connecticut offered Bishop John Freeman Young money to build a series of churches on the central Atlantic Coast. Due to careful stewardship of that money, it allowed an extra church - St. Luke's - to be constructed in 1888 on land sold by Maj. J.H. Tiffin to the Diocese of Florida for \$5. This building was an example of the "pure" form of the carpenter gothic architecture, which has been described as the most American of church styles.

Until the early 1960's this small church served the white, small, relatively isolated rural community of Courtenay. Children were baptized, couples married, and the dead were buried in the cemetery. The African-American community had their own church and cemetery south of St. Luke's. The recently rediscovered Church Registry documents the life of Courtenay between 1890 and 1960.

With the expansion of the Space Program in the 1960's, Courtenay and wider Merritt Island experienced a great growth in population. One resident described that Courtenay in the early 1960's moved from the 1920's to the 1970's. This period saw St. Luke's membership grow and the first resident priest, so that in 1972, the Church was raised to parish (self-governing and self-financing) status. To meet the needs of the growing congregation an education building was built in 1965, a Rectory in 1967 and a new Church in 1977.

Since the arrival of the first pioneers St. Luke's has been a place where Christians gather to worship God, support one another, and reach out to the community and the wider world in loving service.

Find us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/stlukesmi](https://www.facebook.com/stlukesmi)