

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

111 SOUTH CHURCH STREET
SMITHFIELD, VA 23430
OFFICE: 757-357-2826 OR 357-2810
FAX: 757-357-2810



THE WORD



AUGUST 2026

The Reverend Edith Gilliam Raby

January 3, 1945 — July 8, 2026



Christ Church's beloved Deacon, the Rev. Edith Gilliam Raby passed away on July 8, 2026, after a brief illness. She was born on January 3, 1945, to the late Quincy and Elva Gilliam of Smithfield, Virginia. She was also preceded in death by her husband Richard Raby, and her brother Quincy Gilliam, daughter Kim Yeoman Mullis, and grandson Eric Laughrey. She is survived by her sister Susan Dileanis (Peter), son Brian Yeoman (Kathy), grandchildren Brandon Yeoman and Katelyn Yeoman and her sister-in-law Sarah Gilliam.

She graduated from Old Dominion University and worked for IBM as a sales representative.

Edith lived a life defined by faith, service, love, and quiet strength. While she enjoyed a successful corporate career with IBM, her greatest fulfillment came from helping others. She found her true calling with the Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, where she worked in job placement, helping individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment and independence. She took great pride in making a difference in the lives of others.

Her faith was the foundation of her life. As a devoted deacon at Christ Episcopal Church, Smithfield, Virginia, Edith faithfully served with compassion, humility, and a generous spirit. She believed that caring for others was one of life's greatest callings.

She was a member of the Possum Hollow Ruritan, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, Episcopal Daughters of the King, and The Eastern Star. Above all else, Edith's greatest joy was her family. Her sister Susan (Peter) and her son, Brian (Kathy) and grandchildren, Brandon and Katelyn, were the light of her life. She treasured every milestone, every accomplishment, and every adventure they shared, delighting in following

their lives and celebrating them from near or far. She was endlessly proud of each of them, and nothing brought her greater happiness than being their mother, sister and grandmother.

Edith also cherished the friendships that enriched her life, especially the loving care and companionship of her dear friend, Martha Underwood and her cousin, Ann Gilliam Lovell and family, whose kindness meant so much to her.

Among Edith's favorite memories was the time she spent traveling and visiting with her good friend Macon Walton. Another special memory was a visit to the mountains with her sister where she sat quietly on the deck of a cabin and, for the first time, gazed upon the brilliance of the Milky Way stretching across the night sky. She often spoke of that moment with wonder and gratitude. It became a beautiful reminder of the awe she found in God's creation and the simple blessings that made life so meaningful.

Edith will be remembered for her unwavering faith, her servant's heart, her gentle kindness, and the love she poured into her family and friends. Her legacy lives on in the lives she touched, the people she helped, and the family she adored.

She will be deeply missed, forever loved, and always remembered.



HOSPITALITY



Our sign-up sheet for hospitality is on the kitchen door. Please feel free to sign up to bring something on Sunday so we can have some snacks as we fellowship after church. Also, if you are able, please help clean up after our fellowship is over. Take plates in the kitchen, rinse them off, and put them in the dishwasher. Thank you in advance for your help.

Dear Ones,

I want to offer my deepest thanks to each and every one of you for the love and care that you showed to my children, Jacob and Isabella, when they visited at the beginning of the summer! They both love coming to Christ Church and seeing you and look forward to it every time they come. When I asked them what was their favorite part of the trip, they both said "Going to church with you and seeing all our friends there." They miss you when they're not here and ask about you all the time. That, my friends, is all because of you!

On the last Sunday that they were here, Isabella drew this picture on the way to church and asked me to put it up on the refrigerator in the kitchen like I do the pictures she draws at my house. I also wanted to share it with you here. She asked me how many people we usually had in church (I said around 32), and then she drew that many people (16 men and 16 women). She said, "I don't know all their names, but I love them all."

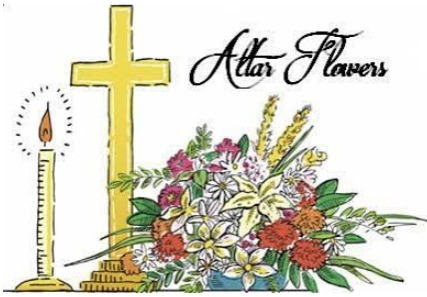
Love and Blessings to you all!

Todd+



Updated Procedures for Sponsoring

Flowers for the Altar



One of the most visible and tangible ways that we can give glory to God in our worship is by sponsoring flowers for the altar and dedicating them in thanksgiving for an event or in honor or memory of a loved one. In order to make the process more efficient and uplifting to all involved we are updating our procedures. Below are the new instructions for how to sponsor flowers for the altar. These instructions, along with a chart listing all of the Sundays for the year will be posted on the Flower Guild workroom door right next to the kitchen. If you have already signed up to sponsor flowers on a Sunday in 2026, your name is already listed. Otherwise please follow the instructions below to sponsor flowers on a Sunday this year. A new chart will be posted for 2027 as we get closer to the New Year. Please contact Father Todd, Altar Guild President Alison Crocker, or Parish Administrator Beth Harris with any questions.

To sponsor flowers for the Altar

- 1) Write your name in the box on the chart next to the date that you wish to sponsor flowers.
Only one name is necessary here. If multiple people are included as sponsors, you can indicate that on the Dedication Form. Indicate whether you would like the Flower Guild to arrange the flowers or if you will provide them yourself.
- 2) At least two weeks prior to your selected date, fill out the Flower Dedication Form and place it in the green basket in the church office box so that the dedication may be printed in the bulletin.
- 3) If you would like the Flower Guild to arrange the flowers, write "Flower Donation" on your check and place it in the offering plate. If paying cash, place it in an envelope and write "Flower Donation" on the outside. Place it in the offering plate in the same manner. The suggested donation is \$50.
- 4) If you are providing the flowers yourself, the suggested donation is not required. Please ensure that the flowers are on the Altar by Saturday night and that they are removed after the service on Sunday unless prior arrangements have been made with the Rector and the Flower Guild.

CREATION CARE



July was Bat Monitoring Month for Beth Harris and I. We are both Master Naturalists, so we have access to equipment for monitoring bat populations around the southern half of Isle of Wight County. We set up the monitoring equipment for half an hour before sunset and take it down a half hour after sunset. We review the data and click on little yellow bat icons that let us know what types of bats we recorded echolocation calls, feeding buzzes or social squeaks from.

Virginia is home to 17 species of bats. During two nights of monitoring, Beth and I picked up sounds of four different bats: the Evening bat, Big Brown bat, Hoary bat and Eastern Red Bat. Look them up to see how cute they are!

The data we collect through monitoring is submitted to Virginia's Division of Wildlife Resources to assist them in tracking bat populations. Bats are important to our ecosystem as they consume copious amounts of insects. To help bats thrive around your home, plant natives that attract insects, don't cut down all your trees, keep your cats inside, and turn lights down low or off at night.

Go bats!!! 

Alison



**Deadline for
September WORD
Wednesday
August 19, 2026
by 5:00 p.m.**



Open Mic Nite
Friday 7 PM
**Musicians, Comics,
Poets, Stories**

DONATIONS GO TO OUTREACH

be inspired
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
OF THE VIRGINIA COAST

Next OMN: Friday, August 21, 2026



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Back

to

School

SUPPLY DRIVE

WE ARE COLLECTING:

BOX OF 12 NO. 2 PENCILS, PENCIL SHARPENER
THAT CATCHES SHAVINGS, PLASTIC PENCIL
BOX/CASE: 5" X 8", YELLOW HIGHLIGHTERS,
ERASERS: PINK BLOCK, CRAYONS: 24 COUNT,
SCISSORS: 5-INCH BLUNT TIP, GLUE STICKS, 3
PRONG FOLDERS, COMPOSITION NOTEBOOKS,
BOX OF RECLOSABLE STORAGE BAGS:
GALLON/QUART SIZE, HAND SANITIZER BOTTLES
(ENTIRE LIST AT CHURCH ON TABLE BY KITCHEN)

NOW UNTIL AUGUST 23RD

Drop-off Location:

111 S. CHURCH ST.,
SMITHFIELD, VA

FOR MORE INFO PLEASE CONTACT
KIMBERLY LEAZER
(757) 810-4100



Martin Mikulus, is the author of “Martin’s Corner” where from time to time, he shares with us in the WORD the beautiful photos he takes birds and gives us information about them. He had a fascinating career at NASA and was written up in the Smithfield Times a while back about his career and it is below.



**Smithfield Times
Staff Columnist
Stephen Faleski**

Rocket man: Martin Mikulas’ 65-year NASA career started during space race

NASA retiree-turned-consulting engineer Martin Mikulas of Smithfield started his 65-year career at the height of the space race in 1961.



Martin Mikulas stands in front of an Apollo V launch vehicle at Johnson Space Center in 1985 during his two summers working with NASA engineers designing the International Space Station.

When the Artemis II spacecraft carrying astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen splashed down in the Pacific Ocean on April 10 after completing the first crewed mission to the moon since 1972, it was a familiar sight for Martin Mikulas Jr.

The NASA retiree-turned-consultant, who now lives in Smithfield, helped develop an early version of the supersonic parachute technology that enables manned craft to decelerate and land safely.

Mikulas graduated Virginia Tech with a degree in Engineering Mechanics and accepted a position at NASA Langley Center in Hampton in 1961, the same year Russian Yuri Gagarin became the first person to orbit the earth. Through NASA, he obtained his master’s and

doctoral degrees at the height of the space race when the United States and the Soviet Union were competing to see who would be the first to land men on the moon.

Langley, Mikulas said, at that time had the strongest structural research program in the world, drawing experts from all over the world to develop mainly fighter jets and large aircraft, including John Houbolt, who is credited with developing the lunar-orbit-rendezvous concept used for the Apollo program, and Adolph Busemann, one of the German scientists who immigrated to the U.S. following World War II

“You go there, you feel like you’re highly educated and you meet these technical giants,” Mikulas said. “They become your mentors. ... Being around those types of people was just so humbling.”

Houbolt, who lived in Williamsburg at the time, “was the reason we beat the Russians to the moon,” Mikulas said. But in general, “there’s no individual person that really stands out; these programs are all very highly teamwork oriented,” Mikulas said.

NASA continues to operate a strong mentorship program to this day. After decades of learning from and working alongside space age pioneers, Mikulas eventually became a mentor himself. He was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering in 1999 for his contributions to the national space program.

Each NASA office, Mikulas said, is centered around a core technology. Langley is structures for aircraft and spacecraft, as well as aerodynamics. One of his first major projects at Langley was developing an analysis for the structure of the Saturn V rocket for the Apollo program.

In 1969, Apollo 11’s lunar landing module successfully landed astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin on the moon and into the history books.

“After that, they wanted to go to Mars,” Mikulas said. Langley, he said, is a technical research center more so than a project-based center. The only major NASA project Langley oversaw was the Viking program, which in 1976 successfully landed a pair of unmanned probes on the surface of Mars. Mikulas’ assignment for Viking was to help design a supersonic parachute that could deploy from a spacecraft moving at about 3,000 miles per hour and remain intact. NASA would take rockets to White Sands, New Mexico, and use high-speed photography to determine why each prototype failed before ending up with the successful version. parachute that could deploy from a spacecraft moving at about 3,000 miles per hour and remain intact. NASA would take rockets to White Sands, New Mexico, and use high-speed photography to determine why each prototype failed before ending up with the successful version.

“That parachute technology is very, very unique and very, very sophisticated,” Mikulas said.

A version is still used on the Artemis lander. The Air Force uses similar technology to drop a large payload such as a tank out of an airplane.

Mikulas has spent 65 years in total working for NASA, including 30 years at Langley and 10 as a professor of aerospace engineering at the University of Colorado. Now, he's a consultant for manned missions to the moon and Mars. He's authored technical papers on the challenge of astronauts surviving hot days and cold nights on the moon, which can reach negative several hundred degrees Fahrenheit overnight. "You need to have energy to keep warm if you want to stay on the moon for more than several days," Mikulas said. "Apollo was only there for a few days."

What Mikulas is now working with NASA to develop are solar arrays to collect sunlight and a set of batteries to store that energy.

That program is called vertical solar array technology, or VSAT. A solar array, Mikulas said, like everything else, is very expensive to send to the surface of the moon, so it needs to be as light as possible and fit compactly in a spacecraft.

What NASA is trying to develop is the equivalent of a 10-kilowatt generator, or roughly double the capacity of the typical home generator people keep in their garages for use during prolonged power outages.

"They need that much energy to keep them alive for a short period of time and eventually these solar arrays have to be 50 kilowatts to support men up there longer," Mikulas said. "After a few years, you really have to get up to 1 megawatt if you want to generate enough power to do any good."

The next Artemis launch is planned for 2027 and the first crewed moon landing, which will be the Artemis IV, is targeted for 2028. The plan is to land at the moon's south pole, where the bottoms of craters never see sunlight and the temperature is around -400°F. The Apollo landings were at the moon's equator.

The goal, he said, is to eventually be able to mine the ice trapped in the moon's south pole craters and convert it to hydrogen fuel, which would be needed to enable astronauts to move on to Mars. Mikulas isn't involved directly with the Artemis program but is working on developing deployable solar cell arrays.

Now, instead of competing with Russia the race is with China.

"The April Artemis launch was exciting for me to reinforce the notion that mankind is not stagnating," Mikulas said. The competition with China is a healthy situation that will help drive space exploration forward."

COP Food Pantry Shelves

This program was born here at CEC and was started by Gene Lowery and Fred Glanville. We deliver food to the Isle of Wight County facility on an on-going basis. On the fourth Sunday of each month, our donations are placed at the altar to be blessed by the priest. Our food is then delivered to COP after donations are given by our congregation at Christ Church. Christian Outreach ALWAYS needs volunteers (2-4 hours per month) to help distribute and take in food, diapers, etc. If you can volunteer to work for the COP, please call for details of hours of operation or check out their website at: <https://iowcop.net>. Thank you.

Thank you to all who brought plastic bags for COP; however, they have enough to meet their needs so we don't need to bring them for COP. They still are still in need of paper grocery bags.

You can still bring plastic bags for Todd to take to St. Brides so they can use them in their ministry of feeding people who are homeless.



Christ Church participates in collecting non-perishable food items on Sundays for the Food pantry at COP (Christian Outreach Program.) Anything you can drop off at church in the "outreach" basket will be greatly appreciated. The basket is located under the mailboxes.

Thank you KINDLY and GOD BLESS!

COP Shopping List

- Canned Fruit
- Canned Soups
- Canned vegetables
- Pasta
- Peanut Butter
- Cereal
- Baby Food
- Granola Bars
- Diapers – size 5 or 6



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II Terrific Teen Talent Recital	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II	17	18	19	20	21 7pm Open Mic Nite 	22
23 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II After church – Vestry meeting “Back to School” supplies due at church	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II at St. Luke’s	31					



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II	7 	8	8	20	11	12
13 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II	14	15	16	17	18 7pm Open Mic Nite 	19
20 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 10:30am Holy Eucharist, Rite II After church – Vestry meeting	28	29	30			



- 1 Mary Cole
- 5 Joanne Willis
- 7 Kimberly Leazer
- 14 Noelle Goodwyn
- 25 Demere Bates
Alison Crocker
- 27 Jenny Michaeli

- 12 Donna Stanton
Rosemarie White
- 26 Bobbi Blesse