# The Peninsula Ministry Partnership

The Peninsula Ministry Partnership (or what we fondly call the PMP) is **St. Augustine's** in downtown Newport News, **St. George's** in the Denbigh neighborhood of Newport News, and **St. Mark's** worshipping at First United Church of Christ on Todds Lane in Hampton. We are a lively and engaged collaboration of three distinct churches on the Virginia Peninsula.

Following in the footsteps of Jesus and the model of the early church, the churches of the PMP cross boundaries – geographic, cultural, demographic, racial, socio-economic, and sometimes theological boundaries – to grow the Kingdom of God together. As Anglican theologian and bishop Tom Wright put it recently: "This theme of church unity across ethnic boundary lines was absolutely vital in the New Testament; it's a great community of every nation and language and tribe and tongue. The church is supposed to be the small working model of new creation. And new creation is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female; no, all are one in Christ."

The PMP is the image of diversity – people of different histories, backgrounds and stories who share a mature and yet still passionate faith in Jesus, and a common commitment to live it out across the moments of our lives. We have chosen to come together as partners in ministry, in worship, service to the community, Christian formation, and fellowship. While the partners share a common heart for service and for hospitality, each member church has its own identity with its own particular history, traditions, culture, and demographics.

The PMP gathers together regularly for worship and fellowship on major feast days, such as during Holy Week and Easter, Christmas, and All Saints' Day, as well as on each church's feast of their patron saint. The partners join together for weekly bible study on Zoom. There is collaboration, mutual support, and real participation in seasonal shared worship, ministry, Christian education, fellowship, fundraising, leadership development, and other efforts. As we engage together, we build trust, deepen relationships, and discover new things about each other and ourselves. The Beloved Community grows a day at a time.

Begun as a faithful response to a rapidly changing world, grown over several years through the commitment of senior lay leaders to a shared vision, today the partnership's strength can be seen in every corner of the churches. As a vestry member put it: "the church members participate because they want to, not because they have to." Grounded by sacred scripture, tradition, and reason, we remain open to new and creative innovation. Together the future looks bright, filled with uncommon possibilities. Some have suggested that this very special community of churches might provide a model for others. All we really know for sure is that the Peninsula Ministry Partnership seeks each day to be faithful to the call of God as revealed in Christ Jesus and through the movement of the Holy Spirit. And, day-by-day, with God's help, we are finding the joy that life together brings.