



**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Cross Section

*All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27*

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and

...hope does not  
disappoint us,

ROMANS 5:5, NRSV

because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. Romans 5:1-9, NRSV



## CROSS SECTION

### Aquia Episcopal Church

2938 Jefferson Davis Hwy.  
P.O. Box 275  
Stafford, VA 22555

#### Contact us:

(540) 659-4007  
office@aquiachurch.org  
www.aquiachurch.org

#### Office hours:

8 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Monday– Friday,  
except Tuesdays (closed)

#### Rector

**The Rev. Jay Morris**

#### Assistant Rector

**The Rev. James Rickenbaker**

#### Treasurer

**Chris Arey**

#### Music Director

**Trystan Bennett**

#### Dir. Christian Education

**Kristen Morgan**

#### Parish Administrator

**Dennise LaBarre**

#### Executive Assistant

**Sue Selz**

#### Nursery Supervisor

**Christine Hammer**

#### Nursery Assistant

**Dawna Spaulding**

## FROM THE RECTOR

### How to Approach Lent when Lent is Approaching

Occasionally, each of us has to do tasks that we don't quite want to do. Perhaps domestic duties like disposing the garbage, cleaning house, or doing the laundry. Perhaps health and hygiene like flossing teeth or getting an annual physical. Perhaps social obligations like writing thank-you notes, chipping in for workplace gifts, or mowing the unkempt yard before neighbors complain. You know you have to do it, you know you need to it, and yet you don't want to do it. So there remains the choice: will I do it?

Perhaps that is how we approach Lent. You know you have to get right with God again, you know you need that spiritual cleansing, and yet you don't want to admit your faults and weaknesses. So your reluctance or refusal to acknowledge the truth about the sinfulness of life wins out over your deep yearning for a renewed and restored relationship with God and neighbor, and then you avoid kneeling with repentance on Ash Wednesday, you skip the Lenten gatherings for growth in the faith, you ignore the spring calls to refresh your spiritual life. And yet you wonder why life seems to have lost its meaning or wonder why you're not as happy as you used to be.

When we find our lives cluttered with so many distractions and tensions, isn't it time to take out the trash of our lives? When we recognize that we are immersed in filth and waste and wonder why we don't feel good, isn't it time to look around ourselves and to look inside ourselves with the help of others? When we know we have been blessed but no longer take delight in expressing our gratitude to God and others, or when we are no longer satisfied with our various relationships because we know how many of them are actually broken, isn't it time to ask for help in mending those relationships and to commit ourselves to being healed?

That's why everyone needs Lent: not just the noisy or nosy neighbor, not just your political opponent or ex-boss or former spouse, and not just the heathen pagans who pass us by, but *everybody* needs



# Lent

Lent. It's a breath of fresh air after the chilling cold before the earth breaks forth with new life. It's a chance to rid ourselves of spiritual junk and mess, including our arrogant self-righteousness. It's a chance to diagnose what ails us in the cracks and crevices and secret empty compartments of our lives, and to have them made whole once again. It's a chance to reconnect with God and with others and to repair what has been broken in those relationships, whether by sins of omission (the good things we fail to do) or sins of commission (the wrong things we do so casually). Lent graciously comes to our rescue every spring, and just not by chance. Yet if we fail to seize the day of Ash Wednesday and the other forty days of Lent, then we shall have missed out on something seriously salutary.

Lent is the annual spring cleaning for the spiritual lives of those who follow Jesus, who himself began his ministry with forty days of reflection and preparation for what he was about to face on his way toward the cross. Lent is approaching, whether or not you are ready for it. Fortunately, you don't have to enjoy Lent in order to benefit from it. You know you should observe a holy Lent, you even want what Lent offers, and yet Lent might actually change you. So will you join us on this journey this Lent?

*Jay Morris*



## FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

### The Need for Quiet

Dear Family in Christ,  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank our God for you, especially for how faithful you are in your devotion to our Lord. This devotion and fervor in the faith is especially important as we make our way into the Lenten season. The Lenten pilgrim road to the cross is marked by reflection and penitence. We are to look at ourselves, the ways that we have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. And we are to repent and return to the Lord. This process is meant to occur not just every Advent and every Lent, but every single day of our lives. However, Lent—like Advent—simply affords us a set time to devote ourselves to repentance and to amendment of life.

Setting aside time during Lent for reflection, prayer, quiet, and confession is important. As such, during the Lenten season, we will have a quiet day on campus at Aquia. During the day, we will discuss the Lenten Collects (BCP, pp. 218-219). Collects are prayers said near the beginning of the liturgy each Sunday. The Lenten Collects (specifically the collects for the five Sundays preceding Palm Sunday) touch on different themes: the power of God, mercy, grace, repentance, the Eucharist, and many more. Each of these themes has an important place in our Lenten observance. Knowing the theological and biblical background of these prayers will deepen our experience of the Lenten season. There will be much on which we can reflect together.

As with any quiet day, we will have some time for intentional quiet and reflection on the words of the collects. Like the last Lenten quiet day we held, we will have the ability to spend time in personal prayer and reflection throughout the church campus. Should anyone feel so inclined, at least one of our clergy will be available at the end of our time together to hear personal confession, i.e. the sacramental rite for the Reconciliation of a Penitent. If there is a desire for childcare, we can see

about scheduling someone. Please let Fr. Jay or me know if you (or someone you know who is interested in coming) might need this service.

Lent is terribly important in the life of the church. Our Lord Jesus Christ's first words in his public ministry were, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Our Lord was clear: we must repent, believe in the Gospel, and follow him. Therefore, your clergy invite you, as we say in the Ash Wednesday liturgy, "to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (BCP, p. 265). Our prayer is that we all take this time set aside to examine our lives and conduct against the standard of what our Lord calls us to do and be. Upon examination, we are called to amend our lives, by God's grace and with his help, to fall in line with his call. This quiet day is a helpful tool to do just that. Our date is Saturday, March 30. Please keep your eyes open for further e-mail announcements about date, time, and location on campus of the event. We look forward to walking this Lenten journey with you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*In Christ+,  
Fr. James*

Lenten Quiet Day  
at Aquia Church

Saturday  
March 30, 2019



### AQUIA CHURCH VESTRY

**Dickie Boes**

*Finance Committee Chairperson*

**Jackie Chichester**

**Jean Golas**

*Administration  
Committee Chairperson*

**Bill Hoffman**

*Senior Warden*

**Ron Korth**

*Junior Warden  
Building & Grounds  
Committee Chairperson*

**Doug McGinty**

*Register*

**Larry Moxley**

**Mary Nixon**

**Ethan Shoen**

*Youth Representative*

**Chris Wanner**



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## FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

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I am honored to be elected to the vestry of Aquia Episcopal Church, and to further serve as its Junior Warden. Thanks to my predecessor, Bob Brandon, the physical aspects of the campus are in great shape. I hope to continue that great stewardship.

In the month since my election, I have worked to establish a 'honey-do' list of smaller tasks, which has proven to be important, since we all know that taking care of smaller chores with the building and grounds may prevent larger issues from cropping up. My future considerations include ensuring a safer environment for our children on the grounds of the church, and also to work to main-



tain the structure that houses the HVAC equipment. General maintenance of all the structures on campus is a priority as well.

With faith in God and commitment from all of you, we can accomplish many great things in His name.

*In Faith,  
Ron Korth*



We, as Aquia Church, joyfully respond to the grace, love and fellowship of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at work in our midst by celebrating His presence, sharing His abundance, and proclaiming His word throughout the world.

## Building and Grounds

Arriving at church one morning, I could not help but think of what a beautiful setting God provided for Aquia Episcopal Church. Care and keeping of that setting is the priority of the Building and Grounds Ministry. It is work that is gratifying and helps to provide this beautiful setting. It is also a vital ministry to our worship, and also as we open our doors to the community. Would you please consider joining the Building and Grounds Ministry? Many



**Come Join Us!**

hands make lighter work, and we all benefit from your time and talent.

*Ron Korth*



## Looking for Space to Host an Event?

From the simplest gathering to the most elegant of celebrations, look no further than your own church campus. We are blessed with wonderful facilities at Aquia Church that are available for your use.

### Great Hall:

This 2600 square-foot hall with its lovely balcony, high vaulted ceiling, baby grand piano, and well-equipped kitchen is located on the upper floor of our Christian Formation and Fellowship Building. The Great Hall is a bright, spacious area, capable of comfortably seating 130 guests for dinner, up to 220 people for an assembly using aisles and interlocking chairs, and up to 300 people for a standing reception. The building, including the restrooms, is fully handicapped-accessible. We can provide up to 15 round tables that seat eight guests each, plus additional six-foot tables. These tables and chairs are included in the rental fee.

The great hall is perfect for wedding receptions, concerts, baby showers, dances, family reunions, large business meetings, and retreats.

### Conference and Classrooms

In the lower level of the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building, we have one conference room and several large classrooms. The conference room can accommodate 14 to 16 people at its large table. Classrooms can easily seat 12 to 14 people at six-foot tables or 30 people for a lecture or presentation. All these areas are great for classes, workshops, or quiet work spaces.

### Rental Rates

The great hall usually rents for \$200/hour, but that amount is cut in half to \$100/hour for parishioners, their friends, and non-profit organizations. Afternoon functions such as baby showers have an even lower rental fee. For the larger celebrations, there is a cleaning fee of \$200 which is paid to our professional cleaning contractor. If wine or beer is to be served, we require an Event Liability Insurance Policy for the function.

To inquire about booking your birthday party, baby shower, corporate meeting, or conference, contact Mary Jane Cole: [maryjane@cfsfwbiz](mailto:maryjane@cfsfwbiz).

*Mary Jane Cole*





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## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

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As March begins, we are excited to be a part of our larger community of faith and service. Shrove Tuesday is the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent and a day of penitence for cleaning the soul. But first comes a day of celebration as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. So on Shrove Tuesday, March 5, members of the ECW and Sts. Mary and Martha Guild will host our pancake supper in the great hall, starting at 5 p.m. There are many tasks, beginning with setting up the great hall, followed by cooking, and clean-up. We invite you to come, volunteer, feast and enjoy; it adds to the deeper meaning of Shrove Tuesday.

All women of Aquia are invited to attend a Lenten Quiet Day in Richmond. Contact Briget Kane if you would like to attend ([bkwings\\_n\\_things@yahoo.com](mailto:bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com)). Registration forms will be in the sanctuary and the great hall.

In closing this month, I searched for a prayer that would add meaning to the season of Lent. I found a prayer for perseverance and renewal on the national ECW website. I hope it will feed your soul often.

*Living God, long ago,  
faithful women proclaimed  
the good news of Jesus' res-  
urrection, and the world was  
changed forever.*

*Teach us to keep faith  
with them, that our witness  
may be as bold, our love as  
deep, and our faith as true.  
Amen*

Here are a few of our partner ministries: Aquia's Care Team, Take Them a Meal, Fall Fest, and Aquia's Table. If one peaks your interest and you would like to hear more, please contact me: [bkwings\\_n\\_things@yahoo.com](mailto:bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com).

**Briget Kane**  
President

### LENTEN QUIET DAY IN RICHMOND

**"Here I Am, Lord"**

Led by:  
The Rt. Rev. David C. Jones,  
Bishop Suffragan (retired)  
Diocese of Virginia

Offered by:  
The Episcopal Church Women  
of the Diocese of Virginia

*Roslyn Conference and  
Retreat Center*

*8727 River Road  
Richmond, Virginia*



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## STS. MARY AND MARTHA

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### Worship, Service and Fellowship

Sts. Mary and Martha Guild has a busy month planned for March. Our second large service project of 2019 comes on Shrove Tuesday, March 5, when we help prepare the Pancake Supper for the parish. We will be getting started on the bacon and sausage in the kitchen of the great hall at 2 p.m., then roll right into setting up the hall, mixing the pancake batter, warming the syrup, and cutting up the fruit. Dinner is served from 5 to 7 p.m. Cost is \$7 for adults, \$4 for children, or \$19 for the

entire family. If you are interested in the full "Fat Tuesday" experience and would like to help, please contact Mary Jane or Denise. This is quite a fun culinary adventure!

The guild is constantly looking for new ideas for the Fall Fest Craft Room. If you have a fun fall or Christmas decoration that you think we could make, please share it with us. We appreciate new ideas to keep our inventory fresh and interesting.

Our regular meetings for March will be on the 7th and 21st in the parish hall starting at 9:30 with Morning Prayer. It is a large room. We have extra books, lots of chairs, great snacks, happy goals, heartfelt discussions, and plenty of room for all the ladies of the parish. Please join us. For more information, please contact Mary Jane Cole ([maryjane@cfsw.biz](mailto:maryjane@cfsw.biz)) or Denise Thornton ([neisieb@aol.com](mailto:neisieb@aol.com)).

**Mary Jane Cole**



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## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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### First Communion

March 7  
10 a.m. Service

Aquia Church offers a Communion class for children in elementary school during Lent each year. Our class will meet on Sundays 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24, and 3/31 at 11:15 a.m. We will have a celebration dinner on Saturday 4/6 and then have First Communion Sunday on 4/7 at the 10:00 a.m. service. For more information about this year's class, please contact Kristen Morgan at [christianed@aquiachurch.org](mailto:christianed@aquiachurch.org).

*Kristen Morgan*

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## OUTREACH

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Outreach will have a "Build Your Own Omelet" Bar on March 31, 2019. Come after the 7:30 a.m. worship service, during Morning Call, and after the 10 a.m. worship service to enjoy a delicious omelet for only \$10. Omelet toppings will include bacon, ham, cheese, green onions, green peppers,

jalapeños and banana peppers. Sausage links, oven-fried potatoes, and fruit also will be served.

Come out, support our Outreach Ministry and enjoy delicious omelets!

*Jean Golas*

Aquia Church,

Thank you so much for your prayers and support! It means so much to continue to do ministry together in the nations! Hundreds of students have been transformed to know God more and have been sent out across the world to make Him known. Just in 2018, your prayers and support led to 64,000 giving their lives to Jesus and seeing over 2,000 Bibles distributed! We cannot wait to see what God does in 2019! Love this family at Aquia Church and am praying with you to see Stafford know God more and fall more in love with His Word!

Much Love,  
Rebecca Hedger

[NOTE: Aquia Church supports Rebecca's ministry with the International House of Prayer.]



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## VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

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### January 15, 2019

#### Dinner and Fellowship

The meeting started at 6:30 p.m., and was hosted by Jean Golas and Mary Nixon. Rector, Fr. Jay Morris, and Asst. Rector, Fr. James Rickenbaker, attended, along with the following vestry members -- Sr. Warden Bill Hoffman, Jr. Warden Ron Korth, Treasurer Chris Arey, Larry Moxley, Youth Rep. Ethan Shoen, Dickie Boes, Jean Golas, Mary Nixon, Jackie Chichester, Chris Wanner, and Register Douglas McGinty. Fr. Jay opened with a prayer and the Lord's Prayer. *[Subsequent events are bracketed and italicized.]*

#### Business Session

Treasurer's Report by Chris Arey: The balance sheet shows the transition to accrual accounting. \$341,786 has been pledged.

Vestry minutes for the December 2018 meeting were delivered by Register Douglas McGinty and adopted unanimously. The minutes from the previous meeting included:

- **R-2018-20:** Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Rector (approved 12/18)
- **R-2018-21:** Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Assistant Rector (approved 12/18)
- Budget for 2019 (budget approved 12/18)
- Vestry Nominees for 2019 (slate approved 12/18). Slate elected at Annual Meeting.

(The vestry appointed Dickie Boes to the vestry by unanimous electronic vote on Jan. 9, 2019.)

#### New Business

##### *Election of Officers:*

Senior Warden – Bill Hoffman

Junior Warden – Ron Korth

Register – Douglas McGinty

Treasurer – Chris Arey

Assistant Treasurer – Charles Bingay

##### *Work of Committees:*

Administration, Buildings & Grounds, and Finance. Fr. Jay discussed the work and meeting times of the committees.

##### *Meetings and Meals*

A sign-up sheet was passed around with dates for the vestry members to sign.

The April meeting is moved to the following Tuesday, April 23, because of Holy Week.

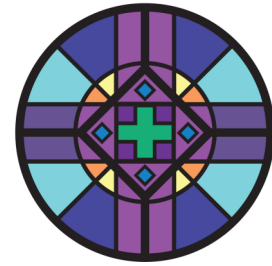
#### Reports from Vestry Committees

*[At the Jan. 19, 2019, Vestry Retreat, the following vestry members signed up for committee memberships:*

*Building and Grounds – Ron Korth Chair, and also Larry Moxley and Chris Wanner.*

*Administrative – Jean Golas Chair, and also Larry Moxley and Mary Nixon.*

*Finance – Dickie Boes Chair, and also Jackie Chichester, Mary Nixon, Chris Arey (Treasurer), and Douglas McGinty.]*



### *Vestry Highlights*

#### Reports from Junior Warden and Senior Warden

Sr. Warden Bill Hoffman said he will undergo surgery next week.

Jr. Warden Ron Korth discussed replacing the sign at the church entrance, as well as the alarm system and tree removal.

#### Report from Rector

Fr. Jay provided the Rector's Report.

#### Upcoming Dates

*[1/19 Vestry retreat occurred at 9 a.m. in the conference room downstairs of the CFFB.]*

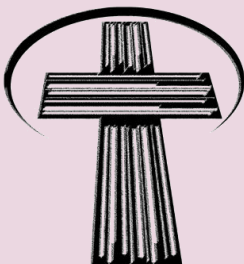
2/19 Vestry meeting

#### Good of the Order, Closing Prayer by Fr. James, and Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

*Douglas McGinty*

Register, Aquia Episcopal Church



### Lenten Cross

Each year, the Lenten Cross offers an opportunity for church members to contribute time, money or items to the ministries of Aquia Church. To all leaders of Ministry Groups: please submit your Lenten Cross needs in writing to Michael Golas (mb\_golas@yahoo.com) as soon as possible.

*Michael Golas*





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## June 2019 Mission Trip: Scranton, Pennsylvania

Every summer, Aquia Church sends a team of missionaries on a week-long journey of service to others in the Name of Jesus Christ, in order to help spread the Gospel to others who need hope and a helping hand. This summer is no exception.

This year our parish-wide mission trip led by the youth group will venture to Scranton, Pennsylvania, during the week of June 23-29. Our team, led by mission trip veterans Linda Burghart and Tim Spaulding, will assist residents of Scranton with home repairs that they cannot accomplish by themselves. In some cases, those senior citizens have neither the strength nor the mobility needed to make the repairs; in other cases, the residents have limited skills or financial ability to maintain their property well. In past years, our mission trip teams have painted the exterior and the interior of homes, replaced porch screens and door screens, winterized porches, constructed wheelchair ramps, hauled away trash and debris, and made the residences brighter, more cheerful places for living.

When Aquia Church sends its crew on the mission trip, we generally travel in a rented van (lest undue damage happen to a parishioner's own vehicle) and participate in a workcamp operated by Group Mission Trips, a Christian organization with years of experience in organizing such events. They provide the music and videos for large-group worship and small-group devotionals, they arrange for shelter in a local school and for meals, and they make connections with local leaders for support on site. This year's trip to Scranton offers a rare treat: the chance to stay in a college

dorm, for a glimpse of what life after high school can be like.

Our crew of teenagers and adults will join approximately four hundred others active in a youth group elsewhere for an eye-opening experience involving teamwork, manual labor, sharing our faith in tangible and personal ways, and growing closer to each other and to Jesus throughout the week. The Wednesday afternoon will include some

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Aquia Church sends a team of missionaries on a week-long journey of service to others in the Name of Jesus Christ, in order to help spread the Gospel to others who need hope and a helping hand. ... And you can make your own contribution to their success.

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down-time for a bit of recreation nearby among the participants from Aquia Church, but otherwise the week includes a remarkable mix of collaboration with adults and teens from various other states as they join forces to assist others who are less fortunate and would welcome some reassurance of God's love.

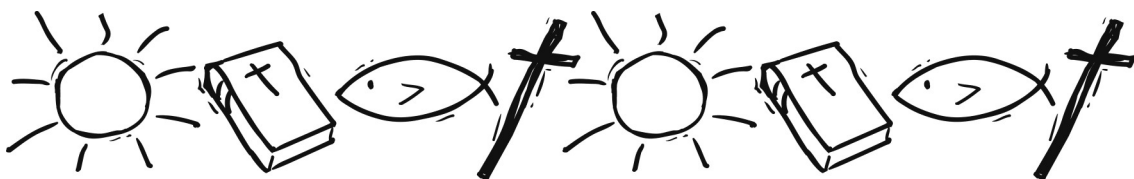
Scranton used to be a place with a booming economy, but in recent years many citizens there have fallen on hard times as factories have closed and jobs have disappeared, leaving the residents with expensive home repairs that they cannot afford to complete or cannot



even begin to undertake. That's where the Group Mission Trip workcamp can make a big difference in an action-filled week. And you can make your own contribution to their success.

If you cannot attend this mission trip because of work or other obligations, then please pray for our teens and grown-ups to be safe in their labor and faithful in their spiritual growth. You might also make a financial contribution to their effort (cash or check payable to Aquia Church, with "mission trip" in the memo line or on the envelope) in support of participation fees, travel expenses, supplies, and scholarships. (Recall the lines from the hymn "O Zion, haste": "give of thy wealth to speed them on their way" and "pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious.") If you can attend this mission trip and are ready to offer a week of service to others in the Name of Jesus Christ, then please reserve your space on this exciting journey by speaking with me as soon as possible.

*Jay Morris*



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## FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

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### FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

Funerals: *"Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord; and let the light perpetual shine upon them."*

Francis Marion Stein, 1923-2019; Lillian Graves Kendall, 1925-2019; Frances Elkins, 1925-2019.

### SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AT AQUIA CHURCH

*New Babies:* Thanksgiving for the birth of a child will be offered as part of the service on the second Sunday of the month (youth Sunday). This will be scheduled as needed. Please call the church office the week prior, if your family would like to be included. Also, please call the church office after a birth so that a red rose can be placed on the altar in thanksgiving.

*Those being deployed:* Please call the church office so that we can offer special prayers at a service prior to your departure. Also, we would like to put you on our prayer list for all those who are deployed in the service of our country.

### FUTURE BAPTISMS

The next scheduled date for a baptism is April 28, 2019. If you would like to have a baptism on this date, or if this date doesn't work for you and you would like to request another date, please contact the church office so that counseling with the clergy can be scheduled.

*Sue Selz*



**2 a.m., Sunday, March 10**



[www.aquiachurch.org](http://www.aquiachurch.org)

[office@aquiachurch.org](mailto:office@aquiachurch.org)

(540) 659-4007

### **Aquia Church Prayer List – March 2019**

Faye Andrews, Rhett Blythe and Family, Dickie Boes, Debbie Byers, Edward Chaplin, Judy Chaplin, Elijah Colliver, Jeff Davis, Scott Davis, Jodie Evans, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Peggy Hall, Chris Hundley, Joy Johnson, Elaine Lewis, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Rebecca Poole, John Pribble, Kenny Reilly, Janice Shelton, Scott Smith, Charlotte Stemmler, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, Patrick Weber.



# EASTER LILIES

Enclosed is my donation of \$20 for Easter lilies to adorn the church on Easter Day.

I would like my donation to the flower guild to be:

In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to take my Easter lily home after Easter, April 21.

(Circle One)      YES      NO

Please enclose a check for \$20 for each lily made out to *Aquia Episcopal Church*.

Note on the memo line: "Easter Lily"

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**DEADLINE IS APRIL 8TH**





**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Aquia Episcopal Church  
Post Office Box 275  
Stafford, VA  
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## March 2019 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

For a number of years now, the Archbishop of Canterbury has annually and personally selected an author and commissioned that person to write a book that can be used by individuals and groups for Lenten reading and reflection. Archbishop Rowan Williams chose Graham Tomlin to write the book for Lent 2014, by which time Justin Welby had become the new Archbishop of Canterbury. Tomlin's book is what Aquia Church will explore this year in our Thursday evening Lenten dinner-and-discussion series (March 7 through April 11, from 6:30 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. in the great hall of the new building). His book is *Looking through the Cross* (Bloomsbury, 2013). By the time of publication, Tomlin had overcome the atheism of his teenage years and had become a priest in the Church of England, a theologian and theological educator, and a leader for a new, dynamic training center for church leaders, St. Mellitus College. Not long after publication, Tomlin became the Bishop of Kensington, an area in the Diocese of London.

Tomlin begins this book by noting the difference between looking *at* something and looking *through* something. When one looks *at* an object—say, a flower or a building—then that object itself is supposed to be the focus of attention. One wants to learn about its dimensions, colors, textures, possible uses, beauty or lack thereof, and so forth. That is where Tomlin's first two chapters begin: with focus upon Jesus' cross itself and everything pertaining to it, including the ways in which the Roman imperial forces used crosses as means of torture and execution of criminals, and the implications we might draw from Jesus' crucifixion to the cross's significance about God and about ourselves in relation to him. When one looks by contrast *through* an object—say, looks through a window to discover whether someone is at home, or looks through a lens toward some other object—then one is seeking information and perspective beyond the initial object. A window can reveal a room or a world beyond itself. A lens through which one can look at something else can surely enhance one's view, and the lens can be changed from situation to situation as needed: think of how we use a pair of eyeglasses, a pair of binoculars, a microscope, and a telescope for viewing different kinds of objects and different kinds of scenes. In various ways, Tomlin contends, the cross of Jesus' death can be a lens through which we can gain insight and access to even deeper truths about our lives, our world, and our God. If we can learn not simply to stare at the cross itself, nor to glance around or beyond the cross, but rather to see all of reality *through* the cross, then everything about our assumptions and customary view can take on powerfully new significance and awaken us to something boldly enriching for our faith. That is precisely how Tomlin will help us, through his book and throughout this Lent, to see things *through* the cross of Christ.

Which brings to mind a different book that we could have chosen for this year's Lenten series if we had not chosen Tomlin's work: *The Cross of Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 2006) by John R. W. Stott. Given the length of this volume (around 350 pages of text), it is really too long to use as the basis for a study that is confined to Lent; but given its richness and comprehensive approach to the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion, Stott always repays re-reading. After introducing the importance of the cross by asking why Jesus died upon such a gruesome instrument of shame and death, Stott depicts the heart of the matter: Jesus' crucifixion is the means by which God forgave our sins, as someone who was at once divine and human offered himself as a sacrifice to God on behalf of the sins of the whole world. What Jesus accomplished on the cross was nothing less than a tremendous trifecta: the salvation of sinners, the complete disclosure of God's abundant love, and his total triumph over the powers of evil, personified in effect by the Devil and death. Perhaps the boldest of Stott's sections is the fourth, where he argues that in light of the cross, Jesus can rightly call us to joyful lives of gratitude to God and loving service to others—albeit with some suffering here and now for a glorious reward hereafter. I think Stott's greatest success in this book comes from unifying so many different loose strands in the Bible about Jesus' death and the divine love behind it (not only from the obvious source of the New Testament but even from the riches of the Old Testament too) in ways that are manifestly helpful for Christian living in the present age. Stott was raised in London's Church of All Souls, Langham Place, and after college he served there as a priest in the Church of England for many decades. Stott's ministry of preaching, teaching, and writing has exerted a profound influence worldwide.

Both of these works (Tomlin and Stott alike) are available in printed format, as e-books for Kindle, and as audiobooks through Audible; in addition, Stott's *Cross of Christ* can be ordered in an audio-CD version. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Stott's book (unlike my older version) even comes with a built-in study guide of questions that can help to focus your reading, and questions that specify particular passages of Scripture for review. For those who might be interested in what Stott has to say but might not be ready to read every word of this book, you can still get more than a glimpse of it here at Aquia, because I plan to use it as a major resource for my Wednesday evening Bible study during Lent (March 13 through April 10, from 7:00 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. in the downstairs conference room of the new building). Regardless whether you can join us for the Wednesday evening Bible study or the Thursday evening dinner-and-discussion series (or better yet:



both!), or even if your schedule requires that you do such reading independently and apart from a group, your undertaking of study and reflection from Tomlin's brief book or Stott's longer book will surely serve to guide you with the Good News of Jesus Christ toward "the observance of a holy Lent" (BCP 265).