



**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

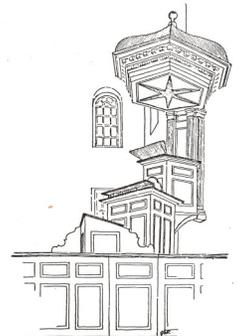
# Cross Section

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

"GO AND  
SEARCH  
DILIGENTLY  
FOR  
**THE  
CHILD**



AND ... BRING ME WORD SO THAT  
I MAY ALSO GO AND PAY HIM HOMAGE."  
**MATTHEW 2:8, 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

### Is It All Really Worth It?

After Christmas Day ends and the extended Christmas season is past, as we reflect on our various forms of festivity—decorations, music, presents, food, gatherings, and so forth—we risk feeling drained. The tree and trimmings seem to stay up forever, obnoxiously so. The secular holiday music blares out for nearly two full months and then disappears the day after Christmas just as swiftly as it had arrived. Buying and wrapping the right gifts require time and care, while the unwrapping lasts every bit of five seconds. Much the same goes for cooking and eating our favorite foods with family and friends: after all that setup, then the fun vanishes, yet the cleanup remains. So we might ask: Is it all really worth it?

Well, Christmas is neither an ordinary occasion nor an everyday event. Anyone can list lots of reasons for having a party, yet the motive for Christmas is not merely a moment for making memories. Christmas, truth be told—not Christmas the way the world thinks it celebrates, but rather what we in the Church do in order to honor the reason for the season—is our annual reminder that God so loved the world that he entered it by being born into it in human form for the purpose of redeeming and transforming our world toward its glorious and divinely appointed future. Christmas is not simply the birthday of the babe in Bethlehem, but instead the time when God became human and decisively began to save us from ourselves. Christmas is more than a day or a season to be experienced in passing; rather, it is our chance to rejoice in how the human race and all of history and the entire cosmos have been changed for the better because God came to us in Jesus. There's nothing common or ordinary about that: it's utterly uncommon and profoundly extraordinary.

If we are to celebrate all this properly and share in the joy that the Lord intends for us to have, then we ought not be casual about our observance. We prepare for Christmas through the time of Advent, with its stark warnings about readying our-

selves to face Jesus' judgment of our lives. Precisely when that will occur, we cannot know in advance—not even our Lord himself knows!—so that we must be vigilant about being always alert, ever pure. After Advent, however, comes our joy at the Incarnation of God in that newborn King, lying in a manger before he would eventually defeat the powers of evil and death by his victory on the cross. His birth began the process by which he freed us from enslavement to sin and Satan. Who wouldn't want to celebrate that?

So at Christmas we adorn the church with beautiful flowers, fresh greenery, glowing light, and sacred song. We share gifts with one another, reminding ourselves that the wise men brought their offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the King of kings who came from Heaven in order to give up his life out of love for us. We eat and drink with gladness among family, friends, and fellow Christians in gratitude for all that we cherish at this holy moment. Then the heart of Christmas can really come alive when we recall the reason for the season that sustains us beyond Christmas Day, transforming our lives and our world.

Is it all really worth it? If our ways of celebrating Christmas offer hope and healing to our sinful and broken world and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, then the obvious answer is: Youbetcha!

*Jay Morris*



## FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

### Post-Christmas Slump

Dear Family in Christ, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank God for you, especially for how together we rejoice in the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as how we celebrate and prepare for his second coming. This is a wonderful time each year in the life of the church. The preparatory fasting and direct penance of Advent leads to the feasting during Christmastide. Christmas lasts for twelve days until the Feast of the Epiphany on Jan. 6. The church recognizes that we feast for the full twelve days. On Dec. 26 out in the world, however, decorations come down, the peppermint flavoring is taken from the shelves, family goes home, and Christmas re-enters its roughly 300-day stupor until the next year. The reality of our plight as Christians is that the world builds up Christmas as a consumer holy day, but when the day is over, the benefit is gone.

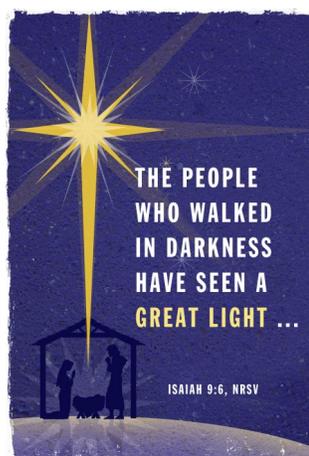
The way we treat Christmas in our society is unfortunate. There is a huge buildup to Christmas every year that spans all the way from early November until the day of Christmas. As the actual day of Christmas wanes, the joy is packed away, awaiting the following November's reopening of the celebration. We are propelled from that time of joy into the heart of winter, where darkness and cold run rampant. That can certainly affect our demeanor. Secular Christmas celebration does not prepare us for the harshness of winter. This can lead to very real problems like seasonal affective disorder (SAD). If you are feeling like winter is affecting your mood negatively, feel free to get in touch with your clergy. We would be happy to talk with you. We would also be happy to offer a referral for counseling.

The cycle of the secular, almost-liturgical calendar creates a kind of post-Christmas slump. Nothing good happens, so the world would have it, until Valentine's Day rolls around. Then the hypersexualized and paganized (once Christian, but now deeply hedonist) celebrations can begin. This worldly way has led to winter

being rather a dreary season. However, the Christian calendar offers some help with this. We celebrate Christmas for almost two full weeks. We celebrate not because a jolly facsimile of a Christian saint burgled our home, but because our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ has promised that he will return on the great and last day. This promise for us is paramount to our faith. Christmas is joyful because we celebrate the promise to be with our Lord. We celebrate Christmas until we celebrate Epiphany, the feast wherein we rejoice that our Lord was manifested to the Gentiles. Epiphany is a rather underrated holiday in my opinion. We are the beneficiaries of that revelation of Christ to the Gentiles.

When Dec. 26 rolls around and the world has moved on, continue to say Merry Christmas to folks as you walk by. Keep your Christmas tree up until Epiphany. Share the love and joy of Christ with others so that they too can join in the celebration. You may find that the promise of our Lord will brighten your heart as we enter into a season known for its darkness. May your Advent be brooding and penitential in preparation of the second coming. May your Christmas be joyful and filled with the hope of the fulfillment of Christ's promised return. The grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*In Christ+,  
Fr. James*



### AQUIA CHURCH VESTRY

**Chris Arey**

**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**

**Kit Stoltz**

*Youth Representative*

**Chris Wanner**



## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

In mid-October, our United Thank Offering (UTO) chair Becky Monger and I traveled to Pohick Episcopal Church to celebrate the 129th meeting of the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia and the 130th UTO Ingathering. I hadn't visited this historic church before our meeting.

Pohick Episcopal Church is the home church of George Washington and George Mason. Our day was filled with history, good news from the ECW Diocese of Virginia about this past year, and optimism about many of our future ministries. Guest speakers presented information, stories, and amazing photographs of the pilgrimage of Episcopal youth to Ghana as they completed the Triangle of Hope. We learned about the Church's response to the opioid crisis from the diocesan addiction and recovery team and their program on "Hope and Healing" for the 2020 year. It was uplifting and an enlightened day. During Holy Eucharist (held in Pohick's historic chapel) Becky participated with other church UTO Coordinators in the presentation our parish's United Thank Offerings to be used for the missions and work of the church.

On Dec. 22 we are planning a busy morning, beginning with a break-

fast/brunch immediately following the 7:30 a.m. service in the great hall. ECW will prepare a "fellowship breakfast/brunch" for everyone to enjoy during ECW's annual meeting; the children's Christmas pageant will begin at 10 a.m., followed by Holy Communion. Enjoy communion and fellowship of the season with your family and friends over breakfast/brunch beginning at 8:30 a.m.

We hope you will plan to attend the ECW annual meeting, which will be held in the great hall beginning at 9 a.m. that same day. We will not be meeting for Morning Call. Immediately following a short business meeting, the ECW we will honor members of our parish who work and support Aquia Episcopal Church, its ministries, and our community. Our honorees will be added to the Book of Life at the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia. Aquia's ECW will make a monetary gift in honor of Carolyn Henrikson, Carole Stadnyk, and Kristin Stanford to the Gift of Life ministry at the Diocese of Virginia. This program makes possible scholarships for students of the diocese, including seminarians.

We invite all women to share in the ministry and mission and enjoy the fellowship of ECW. I can be contacted at [bkwings\\_n\\_things@yahoo.com](mailto:bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com) with

any questions.

In sharing your time and talents we are all enriched.

Sts. Mary and Martha's

Guild meets the first and third Thurs-

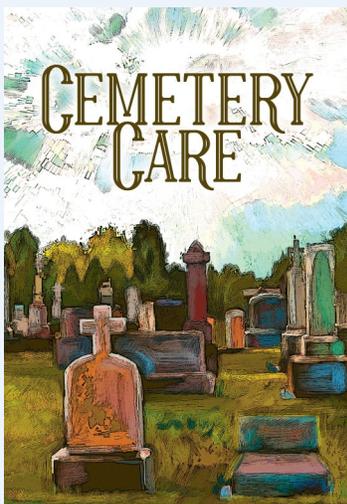
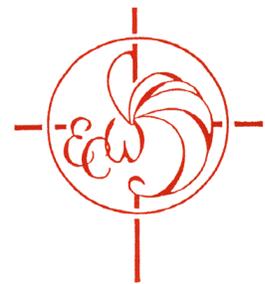
days monthly for study and reflection.

Sts. Mary and Martha time is divided between service to our parish and community. On the fifth Thursday of a month, our service projects encompass the needs of our campus. There is always a lot to share and do as we unite in the service of our Lord. It is important as we work in service with joy, that we ask his blessing and give thanks:

*Almighty God, we pray that You will bless our work in mission and ministry in the world. We give thanks for the gifts of joy and wonder to be found in Your works. Make us so thankful for the power of Your love, given through Your Son, Jesus, that we may pray, labor and give liberally to make known that love throughout the world.*

(from *Prayers for Episcopal Women*)

**Briget Kane**  
ECW President



### Removal of Cemetery Decorations

Twice each year—in the fall and the spring—we remove all cemetery flowers. The removal of flowers in the fall not only ensures that the older and weathered decorations are removed, but also makes way for leaf removal, which is encumbered by decorations on the ground. As a reminder, the only decorations allowed by the Aquia Cemetery bylaws are real or artificial flowers. All flowers and other decorations will also be removed between now and Dec. 7. Leaf removal this year is later than normal due to late leaf fall this year. Leaf removal should be completed by mid-December.

**Bill Hoffman**



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## STS. MARY AND MARTHA

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### Worship, Service and Fellowship

Do you need a set of candles for your Advent wreath or a small, last-minute Christmas gift? Would you like an Aquia Church ornament for your own tree? During all four Sundays of Advent starting Dec. 1, come to the great hall and see what we have to offer on our ECW gift table. There you will find a lovely assortment of handmade Christmas ornaments and wreaths, along with Aquia Church gold ornaments, note cards and cookbooks, sets of Advent wreath tapers, plus wax angels and star candles made from Aquia Church Altar candle stubs. This year we have added a collection of cider-for-Christmas mugs—great for teacher’s gifts.

During the months of December and January, Sts. Mary and Martha Guild will continue with its traditions of service, worship, and Christ-centered fellowship. On Thursday, Dec. 19, we will enjoy Morning Prayer together but forgo a craft in order to spend a bit more time on an Advent study as we prepare our hearts and minds for

Christ’s second coming. We will also wrap the gifts that we have purchased for three residents of Woodmont Nursing Center, a long-time ECW tradition at Aquia Church.

In January our meetings fall on the 2nd, 16th and 30th. We shall start a new study, *Unshakable Hope*, by Max Lucado. Our guild has enjoyed the writings of this Christian author before and we are looking forward to his uplifting review of the promises of God. We will also get started on the crafts for Fall Fest 2020!

If you can join us for any of the above occasions, please do so! We treasure our sisters-in-Christ friendships founded in our parish and our guild, and we welcome any who seek a morning of women’s fellowship. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mary Jane Cole [maryjane@cfsw.biz](mailto:maryjane@cfsw.biz).

*Mary Jane Cole*



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## DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

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### Reflect and Prepare

Before I became a Daughter of the King, I remember being a little girl many years ago when my dedicated Sunday school teachers taught a song that I remember to this day. It began with “Advent tells us Christ is near. Christmas tells us Christ is here.” Those two short verses focused our youthful attention on the beginning of the Episcopal Church year and gave us the beginning of a lifelong framework for our spiritual lives.

Advent remains a focused time of reflection and preparation for the commemoration of Christ’s birth. It consists of four weeks of study, grateful prayers

and thoughtful preparation. It is a time when we strive to prepare our hearts in gratitude for Christ’s birth and all that he has meant and continues to mean to the world and each one of us.

As Daughters of the King, we work hard to develop and continually improve our prayer practices. Our international organization is a dedicated group that would welcome your contribution to the Aquia chapter so that we can grow together. We would love to have you join us on the first Saturday of the month at noon in the church.

*For His Sake,  
Patricia Springer*



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## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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### Children's Pageant

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Children in our Sunday school classes will present our annual Christmas pageant on Sunday, Dec. 22 during the 10 a.m. worship service in the great hall. This year children can participate both in the pageant and a pageant choir. We will have rehearsals on Sunday, Dec. 15, and on the morning of Saturday, Dec. 21, with specific times to be announced soon. For more information about this year's pageant, please contact Kristen Morgan at [christianed@aquiachurch.org](mailto:christianed@aquiachurch.org).

There will be no Sunday school on Dec. 29 due to Christmas break. On Sunday, Jan. 5, we will have a combined program for children in pre-K through fifth grade during our church's annual meeting.

*Kristen Morgan*

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## OUTREACH

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At our Nov. 5 meeting, 50 tide-me-over bags were packed. The bags were then delivered to Stafford Junction the following Thursday.

Our 2020 budget request was turned in. We are planning our fundraisers for next year.

The Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box campaign started the day after Fall Fest and was concluded on Nov. 17. The shoe boxes will be delivered to Hull Memorial.

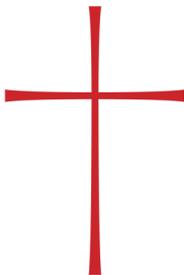
The Thanksgiving food bags are due to the Department of Social Services on Nov. 20. This year the bags will be delivered to Stafford Crossing

Community Church instead of Register Chapel.

We anticipate starting the adopt-a-family collection on Nov. 17, if we get the names and wish lists in time, or otherwise soon thereafter. The deadline for gifts is Dec. 8. Stafford Crossing Community Church will be the collection site.

We are short of help and are looking for new members for our committee. If you are interested in joining this active and rewarding ministry, please come to our next meeting on Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the great hall.

*Johanna Jones*



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.



## 2019 Christmas Flower Order Form



Enclosed is my donation for Christmas and Epiphany altar flowers, wreaths, and garland. I understand that I am giving my donation toward the overall preparation of the church for Christmas.

I would like my gift to the Christmas Altar to be:

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

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

I would like to take a poinsettia after Dec. 25 (Circle One)    YES                  NO

Otherwise, I understand that the poinsettias will be taken to shut-ins or other people in pastoral need during the Christmas season.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please enclose a check for \$20.00 made out to Aquia Episcopal Church. Please include "Christmas Flowers" on the memo line.

**DEADLINE IS MONDAY, DEC. 9.**



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## Where is the Diocese of Virginia Going? Update after a Year

One year ago, I wrote in these pages about a flood of changes underway in the Diocese of Virginia. Our diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston, had announced that his retirement would begin in the middle of the diocesan annual convention in November 2018, and so it did. Other key members of the diocesan staff were departing, too, for one reason or another. Our bishop suffragan, the Rt. Rev. Susan Goff, remained in office and was also named the ecclesiastical authority (thus having basically the same responsibility as a diocesan bishop). While our bishop associate, the Rt. Rev. Robert Ihloff, continued to assist on a part-time basis, we were (for whatever reason) unable to secure the full-time ministry of a provisional bishop or another assisting bishop. Additional challenges, such as suggestions about difficulties in the work environment of the remaining staff at diocesan headquarters and deeply troubled relations between the diocese and its main investment organization (the Trustees of the Funds, or TOTF), were complicating matters and muddying the waters for everyone. Taken altogether, there seemed to be an unusual amount of transition and considerable uncertainty, especially about our direction for the future.

In what follows, I want to explain what has been happening during the past year.

For much of that interim year, diocesan treasurer Ted Smith served simultaneously as the diocesan chief of staff. Ted has earned a good deal of respect and admiration throughout his time on the diocesan staff; I have worked closely with him on several matters and can attest to his strong capability. In September 2019, former fundraiser and school headmaster Mark Eastham began to serve as chief of staff, and he appears to be off to a solid start. Some other key positions have been filled as well, such as the canon to

the ordinary (a principal assistant to the bishop), the transition ministry officer (who supports congregations and clergy during changes of clergy leadership), and the bishop's executive assistant (with whom I was fortunate to serve in a previous parish and whose talents I was able to observe first-hand). As noted during the diocesan annual conven-



tion of November 2019 and on other occasions, some communications and operations from our diocesan headquarters have been improving, and at long last all members of the diocesan staff now have job descriptions to guide them in their tasks.

In recent months, a new relationship between the diocese and the Trustees of the Funds has begun. The long-time head of TOTF resigned, some new trustees and a new president have begun their terms, and a former investment advisor with several decades of experience is leading TOTF as the interim executive director. In addition, the diocesan executive board now has the ability to appoint one of its members to serve as a trustee, and the TOTF leadership has recommitted itself to forging a more collaborative connection with the diocese. In turn, the diocesan executive board has suspended its tentative plans to withdraw its funds from TOTF's management and has actually announced its determination to continue investing with TOTF for at least another two years. All this means that there is a healthier rapport between the diocese and its investment management service, with the very likely prospect of an even stronger affiliation growing in the next few years. All of this bodes well not only for the diocese, but also for Aquia Church, as we have chosen across many

years now to entrust most of our investments to TOTF.

Another development from the recent diocesan annual convention was a public and personal introduction of our new assistant bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, who had served previously as the bishop suffragan of West Texas (anchored in San Antonio) and who will be visiting our parish on June 21, 2020 for confirmation. She gave a warm address at convention and was a guest of honor at an evening reception there, where I had the chance to speak with her for awhile. She seemed affable, personable, and down-to-earth in ways that I found encouraging. While she has served as a bishop for just two-and-a-half years now and was ordained only in 2009 (even if she has prior professional experience on a church staff), perhaps she will have the gifts and skills that our diocese needs at this time.

Undoubtedly the big news from this year's convention was Bishop Goff's announcement that she will call for the process of electing a new diocesan bishop to begin at the 2020 annual convention. That is to say: she will call *not* for the election itself to happen in November 2020, but rather for the formal *start* of the entire process for that election, which she expects to occur in late spring 2022. Bishop Goff also stated her intention to retire at some point in 2023, after there has been some time of overlapping service with the new diocesan bishop, for the sake of continuity and smooth transition. Similarly, Bishop Ihloff explained a key reason for his decision—announced just a month beforehand—that he would leave our diocese on New Year's Eve 2019 and return to the Diocese of Maryland, in order to provide episcopal support there. That reason, quite simply, is that he would like to spend more time closer to his home base in Baltimore and avoid

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## FROM THE TREASURER

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### Qualified Charitable Distributions

More than 70 years old? You may be able to make charitable contributions to Aquia Church from your IRA, take the standard deduction, and deduct the charitable contribution from your taxable income. A recent article by Alan Sloan in the *Washington Post* described this process. Please see <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/heres-a-tax-break-that-is-only-available-to-people-over-70/2019/11/01/2c970770-f75f-11e9->

[a285-882a8e386a96\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/heres-a-tax-break-that-is-only-available-to-people-over-70/2019/11/01/2c970770-f75f-11e9-a285-882a8e386a96_story.html) for further information. This is not tax advice, but information that you can investigate with your financial planner or tax professional in order to determine if it applies to your circumstances. If you have questions, please contact [treasurer@aquiachurch.org](mailto:treasurer@aquiachurch.org).

Chris Arey



### End-of-Year Giving

Monetary contributions for 2019 must be received by the church by Dec. 31, 2019, or be postmarked by Dec. 31, 2019. Contributions, such as checks which are dated in 2019 but which are received after Dec. 31 or postmarked after Dec. 31, will be counted towards 2020. The church office will be closed on Dec. 31, so if you have a contribution to be made in person that day, it will need to be put through the mail slot in the Fleurries.

After Dec. 31, 2019, for in-kind donations made during 2019 that have not previously been identified, parish-

ioners are asked to provide the receipts to the office as soon as feasible. In the event that end-of-year statements are already produced by the church office, the Treasurer will provide a separate statement for these in-kind donations.

Statements for 2019 will be made available by the end of January 2020.

Beginning in 2020, parishioners will be able to have access to their own accounts, via our use of Realm. Realm Connect is a Web-based tool that enables you to see your contribution status and to make electronic contribu-



tions. More information will be forthcoming during December.

Please correspond by email with Treasurer at this new e-mail address: [treasurer@aquiachurch.org](mailto:treasurer@aquiachurch.org).

Chris Arey

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his extensive, time-consuming commuting throughout our diocese. As much as I have enjoyed various occasions with Bishop Ilhoff, we can respect his entirely understandable decision. Bishop Goff also announced that she hopes to call another bishop to assist us on a part-time basis starting sometime in mid-2020.

The upshot of all this, ultimately, is that the Diocese of Virginia remains somewhat in a state of flux, though with generally less uncertainty and largely more stability now than a year ago. Some transitions undertaken in the past several months are beginning to solidify, and there will be more transitions

ahead (at least regarding personnel), which is typical in an organization of this size and scope. Whatever our bishops launch or continue during the next year or so could be modified after a new diocesan bishop begins to exercise leadership, so I would not expect too much upheaval or wild changes of direction anytime soon. While the jury is still out on some developments mentioned here, the people involved deserve some time in order for their ministry to start flourishing, and these various situations will require some patience on our part before we can see buds turn into blossoms and full flowers. They all still need our prayers, as I stressed in last year's article.

I am about to begin a second three-year term on the diocesan executive board, which functions as something like a vestry for the diocese in-between meetings of our annual convention. In this capacity, I hope to see our diocesan life and ministry become even more effective and even more faithful to Jesus Christ. Aquia Church will continue to be involved in the work of our diocese, partly through our hosting many meetings and special events for our diocesan family. And I shall continue to keep you apprised of news from our diocese.

Jay Morris



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## FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

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### FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms: "... sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever"

Clive Michael Moran, Lincoln Samuel Wisner

### NEWCOMERS/VISITORS

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2)

Jose & Katherine Orellano, Michael & Jennifer Gould

### FUTURE BAPTISMS

The next scheduled date for a baptism is Jan. 12, 2020. 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.

### PRAYERS FOR EXPECTANT PARENTS

Zac and Samantha (Hedger) Chesley, Patrick and Anna Hedger, Brandon and Samantha Evans

### 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 want to put you on our prayer list for all those who are deployed in the service of our country.

*Sue Selz*



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

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

(540) 659-4007

### Aquia Church Prayer List – December 2019/January 2020



Faye Andrews, Rhett Blythe and Family, Edward Chaplin, Judy Chaplin, Elijah Colliver, Jeff Davis, Donnie Davis, Paula Davis, Becky Dixon, Brian Driscoll, Brandon Evans, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Larry Hartzler, Chris Hundley, John Jackson, Molly Lewis-Suttles, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Patty Montgomery, Joan Nebel, Rebecca Poole, Kenny Reilly, Janice Shelton, Scott Smith, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Gayle Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, Patrick Weber, Walt & Elizabeth Yager.



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## VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

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Oct. 15, 2019

**Dinner and Fellowship** started at 6:30 p.m. and was hosted by Chris Arey and Fr. Jay Morris. In attendance were the Rector Fr. Jay Morris, Asst. Rector Fr. James Rickenbaker, Sr. Warden Bill Hoffman, Jr. Warden Ron Korth, Treasurer Chris Arey, Chris Wanner, Jackie Chichester, Dickie Boes, and Register Douglas McGinty. A quorum was present. Fr. Jay opened with a prayer and the Lord's Prayer. *[Subsequent events are italicized and bracketed.]*

### Business Session

Treasurer's Report by Treasurer Chris Arey. Church accounting is switched to the accrual system. Questions were raised as to whether the Budget vs. Actual Report is useful and as to whether an Actual vs. Year Report would be useful. With respect to Fall Fest, the question was raised as to whether the cost of Pod rental should be split with the ECW. Ron Korth was thanked for his work on the HVAC system which saved the church money. Janitorial expenses were high. Chris Arey discussed the transition to Realm. The church is on track for e-giving with a fee of 2.35%. Fr. Jay noted that the third quarter statements are more transparent.

**Minutes from Previous Meeting** presented by Register Douglas McGinty. Approved as submitted.

- R-2019-15 Delegate and Alternate to Diocesan Annual Convention (approved 9/17).

### New Business

- R-2019-16 Revision of Bylaws (Finance Committee). Several changes were discussed. Fr. Jay indicated that the proposed revisions will be electronically circulated and voted on by vestry after 14 days. *[By Nov. 1, 2019 email, Fr. Jay*

*asked that the vote be suspended until the matter is discussed more fully at the Nov. 19, 2019 meeting of the vestry.]*

- R-2019-17 Honoring Christine Hammer (proposed by Rector). Approved unanimously. Dawna Spaulding will take her place.
- Parochial Report on 2018. Provided by the Rector. The vestry approved the Financial Report but the membership data still needs to be sent.
- Current Total for Matching-Challenge Opportunity: \$39,249.00 (as of 10/14/2019). The opportunity was extended to Dec. 31, 2019.

### Reports from Vestry Committees

*Administration* by Fr. Jay. The contract with the Iglesia Church is renewed with increased rent.

*Finance* by Dickie Boes. The budget will be approved in December. Money market funds were discussed.

*Building and Grounds* by Ron Korth. He delivered a report. Work is needed on the parish hall and Fleurries.

### Reports from Senior and Junior Wardens

*Sr. Warden* by Bill Hoffman. The Fall Fest went well.

*Jr. Warden* by Ron Korth. Delivered Building and Grounds Committee report.

*Report from Rector* by Fr. Jay. The vestry accomplished a lot despite illnesses of members and their families. The net for Fall Fest was \$16,336.71, minus shared cost for the Pod. Six members are needed to join the Vestry in January. Hopefully there will be a full slate of candidates by December, and possibly two extra. The Wardens



### Vestry Highlights

will try to recruit candidates. Pledge drive letters will be signed by vestry members. Testimonials are sought from vestry members to be given before the congregation. Chris Arey noted that new diocesan Website training is available on sexual abuse prevention.

### Upcoming Dates and Information

- Meal hosts for Nov. 19: Boes and Korth
- Meal hosts for Dec. 17: Hoffman and Korth (wardens' chili cookoff)
- 11/14-16: 225th Diocesan Annual Convention, Crystal City
- 11/17: Newcomer luncheon after 10 a.m. service ends
- 11/24: Deadline to order for nut/candy fundraiser
- 11/27: Thanksgiving Eve service (7 p.m.)
- 12/7: Fall Cleanup
- 12/22: ECW Christmas reception (9 a.m.) and Children's Christmas Pageant with Communion (10 a.m.)
- 12/24: Christmas Eve services (5:30 p.m., 8 p.m., and 11 p.m.)
- 12/29: Open house for vestry, committees, and families at Rector's home (4 p.m. until ...)
- 1/5/2019: Annual Meeting

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

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Douglas McGinty*

*Register, Aquia Episcopal Church*





**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Aquia Episcopal Church  
Post Office Box 275  
Stafford, VA  
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Come Join Us

**Dec. 8** 7:30 a.m.: Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m.: Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m.: Advent Lessons and Carols

**Dec. 22** 7:30 a.m.: Holy Eucharist  
8:30—10:00 a.m.: ECW Christmas Breakfast Reception in the great hall  
10:00 a.m.: Holy Eucharist with Children's Christmas Pageant in the great hall  
5:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist

**Dec. 24** 5:30 p.m., 8:00 p.m., and 11:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist for Christmas Eve,  
with Christmas music offered 30 minutes before each service

**Dec. 25** 10:00 a.m.: Holy Eucharist for Christmas Day

**Dec. 29** 7:30 a.m.: Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m.: Holy Eucharist with Christmas Lessons and Carols  
5:00 p.m.: NO Holy Eucharist

**Jan. 5** 7:30 a.m.: NO Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m.: Holy Eucharist with Parish's Annual Meeting and Election of New Vestry Members in the  
great hall, with Sunday School for children immediately after the Eucharist  
5:00 p.m.: Holy Eucharist  
*In case of snow/ice on Jan. 5, the above schedule for that day will be observed on the following  
Sunday, Jan. 12.*



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

John the Baptist is a strange, often-neglected, and usually misunderstood figure who serves effectively as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He is well known for being an itinerant Jewish preacher whose ministry focused on baptizing in and around the River Jordan for the forgiveness of sins, for wearing clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt, for eating locusts and honey, and for being a cousin of Jesus. John was born just before our Lord in order to prepare his way. John continued much of the tradition of Old Testament prophecy and was so willing to speak truth to power that he incurred the wrath of Herod Antipas (for criticizing Antipas's marriage to Herodias), who eventually had him beheaded in such a way that John's head was displayed on a platter. He was recognized widely and even admired for his holiness, and he is often venerated as a saint in Christian tradition; and yet it is not remotely clear that he ever considered himself a follower of Jesus. In fact, it is quite clear from the New Testament that John had his own disciples who were distinct from those of Jesus, and so there has been speculation about possible competition between these two groups. Even if John had plenty of remarkable connections with Jesus, we remain uncertain about how best to characterize their relationship. (And just so we are clear about something else: he is called 'Baptist' not as though he belonged to a Christian denomination [such that he is not a Methodist or a Lutheran or whatever], but rather because baptizing was so central to his ministry. Calling him "John the Baptizer" makes that point clearer, even if that phrase is less familiar.) John's perplexing importance—combined with his prominence during the season of Advent that dominates the month of December—is our reason for focusing our attention on him during our Wednesday evening Bible study this month; we hope that you can join us for that series on the evenings of December 4, 11, and 18. What I want to mention here in this column is the research that will serve as the basis for that series.

After years of being somewhat neglected by biblical scholars, John the Baptist received considerable scrutiny nearly three decades ago in the volume *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) by Robert L. Webb, with whom I was privileged to study the Gospel of Mark in June 2005. This book, written by an expert on the historical Jesus, is a slight revision of his Sheffield dissertation. The first part of Webb's work here devotes sixty pages to tracing what we learn about John the Baptist from the various perspectives in the New Testament and in *The Antiquities of the Jews*, a lengthy document written by the Roman Jewish historian Flavius Josephus around the end of the New Testament era. Webb's next three hundred pages labor to connect John carefully with Jewish traditions of worship and prophecy—including the Old Testament, the Qumran community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Jerusalem Temple before and during the first century—in order to show the religious roots of John's ministry for ritual cleansing, spiritual reconciliation, and prophetic proclamation. While this volume is useful as a starting-point, its approach and style (not to mention its length) is perhaps not exactly what will engage every reader.

Two other books that continue much of that same method but are more direct and more lively have appeared more recently. Joan E. Taylor's *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (Eerdmans, 1997) examines the life and ministry of John the Baptist more specifically in his historical context: Judaism in and around Jerusalem during the two centuries prior to Jesus, without quite the extensive, detailed attention to the full background of the Old Testament that Webb supplied (though Taylor's book is similarly long, at just over 320 pages of text). Taylor places a good deal of emphasis on her argument to differentiate John's ministry from the Essene movement (the Essenes were one of the major Jewish groups of his day, distinct from the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Zealots) and from those who lived at Qumran near the Dead Sea. I am unsure how persuasive I find her claim, but it goes against much of the typical assumptions about the social sources for John's career. Also, there is the nearly hot-off-the-press book by Joel Marcus, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (University of South Carolina Press, 2018). Marcus's book is the shortest and most accessible of these three; it covers John the Baptist in the New Testament and related documents in one hundred twenty pages and offers several interesting follow-up discussions in forty pages of appendices. To the average parishioner, I would recommend Marcus's book before the other two, largely because of his sharp focus on the New Testament depictions of John the Baptist—even if Marcus is building on the previous work of Webb and Taylor in some ways. Marcus was born and raised Jewish but converted to Christianity later in life; he is a specialist in the New Testament and the origins of Christianity, and he retired from Duke Divinity School several months ago. Yet if you do not wish to do all of this reading during the already hectic month of December, then please join us for our Wednesday evening Bible study series on John the Baptist, and get the summary for free.