



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

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



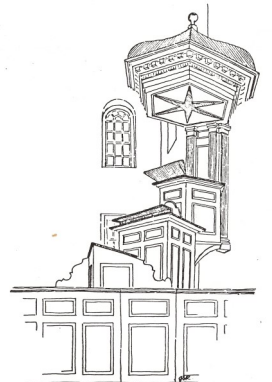
DO JUSTICE ...

love kindness ...

WALK HUMBLY

with our God.

MICAH 6:8





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

Assistant Treasurer

Charlie Bingay

Music Director

Trystan Bennett

Dir. Christian Education

Kristen Morgan

Parish Administrator

Dennise LaBarre

Executive Assistant

Sue Selz

Nursery Supervisor

Dawna Spaulding

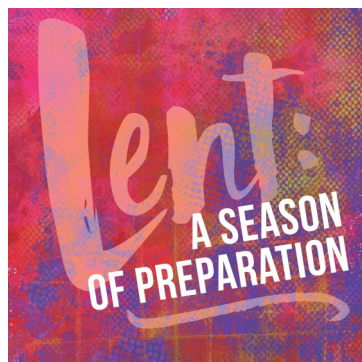
FROM THE RECTOR

Before Easter Begins

Before the occurrence of a major event such as a party, a wedding, or a reunion, some preparations are necessary. Among other things: guests have to be invited, plans have to be developed, expectations have to be established, reservations have to be arranged, and decisions have to be made. Regardless whether the occasion entails a formal banquet with ballroom dancing and lovely gifts from two hundred people or whether a small and casual gathering will suffice, some basic organizing is required. If there will be any travel for the event, then even more planning in advance will be needed.

Before Easter begins (this year on April 12), Aquia Church will take our annual journey through the season of Lent. Before our joyful celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead can commence, we must first go through Lent. And while Lent is the period of crucial preparation for Easter, some work even before Lent starts is necessary—at least if Lent is to become as helpful as it should be.

First comes the invitation to everyone, as I shall say on Ash Wednesday (this year on Feb. 26): "I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, 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. And, to make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel before the Lord, our maker and redeemer" (BCP 267). We get our cue for Ash Wednesday on the day before it arrives, with our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper.



There is also the prior planning for worship, formation, fellowship, and service to our Lord and his people. Your church staff and other leaders have been planning ahead for this Lenten journey. Hymns and anthems are being chosen carefully. Our Lenten dinner-and-discussion series will deal with devils, discernment, the difficulties of temptation, and other relevant topics in *The Screwtape Letters* by Anglican author C. S. Lewis, while our youngsters will experience age-appropriate discussions about related matters in their Sunday school lessons and in youth group meetings. Parishioners will be encouraged to spend time together strengthening the bonds of friendship and serving the needs of others.

What should we expect to find during Lent? A season for spiritual refreshment through spiritual disciplines, for candor about our sinfulness and the challenges of life, for assurance about the importance of seeking God, and for hope that comes from trusting in the Lord instead of trusting in ourselves. Yet the transformations that can occur during Lent will not likely begin unless we reserve time for the message and meaning of Lent to pierce through our crammed calendars and welcome the Lord into our lives. In order to Lent to succeed, we need to set aside time for prayer, for immersing ourselves in his holy Word, and for relying on his help in mending our broken relationships with God and with others.

Perhaps most importantly, decisions about Lent have to be made ahead. Will we respond favorably to God's invitation this time around, or will we ignore his call yet again? Will we let this Lent pass us by, leaving us unchanged, unrepentant, and unprepared? Will we travel together with fellow parishioners during this Lent, or will we continue to conduct our lives in isolation from one another? Will we try to rush toward Easter—just going through the motions of Lent in hurried, thoughtless, and careless ways—or will we instead try earnestly to work through what should happen before Easter begins?

Jay Morris



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

Wisdom

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 your encouragement that you offer for my ministry at Aquia. A large part of that is that you offer me the opportunity to continue my education as a priest. My natural proclivities lead me to undertake continuing education in the form of classes and books on Scripture. That is exactly what I did during the month of January.

From January 5-10, I was in Pennsylvania at Trinity School for Ministry (an Episcopal seminary). I took a course with renowned Old Testament biblical scholar Dr. Tremper Longman III. Dr. Longman, himself a devoted follower of Jesus, taught on the subject of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament—mainly Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. As this was an area of Scripture in which I had not done extensive study, I knew that it would prove beneficial. The purpose of the class was to focus on the historical context of the three books and how they related to the larger narrative of the Bible. This meant that we did a Christotelic reading of the books. In effect, we asked the question: “How do these three books point to Christ?” What we found was enlightening.

In Proverbs, we see a collection of sayings that tend to have clear application.

As we looked at Proverbs, we realized that the book had several levels of meaning: a practical level, an ethical level, and a theological level. The book of Proverbs tells us much about how God works and how he desires his people to live in the world. We discussed as well that Proverbs points to Christ because we know that Christ is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:22-25). The wisdom of Proverbs is an encouragement to live life in a manner pleasing to God. We can’t forget that Jesus Christ is the only person who has done that perfectly.

In Ecclesiastes, we walked alongside the Teacher (the speaker for the majority of the book). The Teacher reminded us that striving for things “under the sun” is ultimately a futile effort. God must be at the center of our lives. If he is not, then life itself is without meaning. It is a stark picture to draw, but one that the church today ought to hear a bit more often. Ecclesiastes ends with a word from the narrator of the book. This narrator, speaking to his son, lays out three important rules for living: fear God, obey his commandments, and live in light of the coming judgment. This is the message of Jesus when he began his public ministry by saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15).

Finally, we looked at how Job viewed his suffering. We heard the words of Job’s friends. We saw that Job and his friends totally misunderstood the reason behind Job’s suffering. And when Job lost his cool with God, we heard God bring Job back down to reality. The wisdom of the book of Job is in realizing that while God can take any frustration you might hurl at him, no one should make the mistake of thinking that we are God’s equals. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, lived humbly and obediently. We can take a cue from him.

For more on these books, look for some upcoming Bible studies soon. 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*



AQUIA CHURCH VESTRY

Chris Arey

*Finance Committee
Administration Committee*

Charlie Bingay

Finance Committee

Dickie Boes

Finance Committee Chairperson

Bob Brandon

Building & Grounds Committee

Carrol Frederick

Administration Committee

Bill Hoffman

*Senior Warden
Acting Chairperson of
Administration Committee*

Ron Korth

*Junior Warden
Building & Grounds
Committee Chairperson*

Christopher “Kit” Stoltz

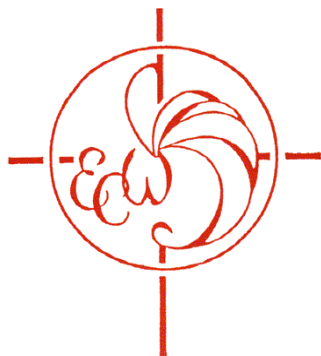
*Youth Representative
Administration &
Finance Committees*

Chris Wanner

Buildings & Grounds Committee



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN



As the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons come to a close and the season of Lent begins, I am left with feelings I don't always understand. During the festivities, celebrations, and commitments that start shortly before Advent, I feel pushed and tugged with activities. These activities are not always church-related. Traditionally, it is meant to be a time of joy and a time of celebration. Over the last several years, I have found the Lenten season brings me back to the calm and serenity I need within my family, friends, and most importantly my faith.

While February is also a busy month, the ECW and Aquia Church have many activities that nurture my faith and beliefs: attending St. Mary and Mary Guild's meetings, sharing prayer and time with women of Aquia, experi-

encing Shrove Tuesday as a day of feast and celebration before Ash Wednesday, and participating in Lenten Fast—these things ground me again. We are given many other activities in our parish and our diocese to ground us in faith. I hope you will join other women of the church during this season.

Last year, I was fortunate to attend the ECW Lenten Quiet Day. I hope to attend this year as well, and I invite all women of Aquia to attend with me. I have more information available, and it is available on the ECW website.

Your help and support of the many activities of the ECW is only a contact away: bkwnings_n_things@yahoo.com, or contact the church office for my phone number.

*Yours in Christ,
Briget*

Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Virginia Lenten Quiet Day

Thursday, February 27, 2020

Led by:

The Rt. Rev. David C. Jones,
Bishop Suffragan (retired)

The Very Rev. Kim Coleman

and with
music directed by
Mrs. Ellen Johnston

Roslyn Conference and Retreat Center
8727 River Road
Richmond, Virginia 23229

Cost for the day is \$35 and includes lunch.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Each year Aquia Church offers a special Communion study and preparatory class for children in elementary school. Holy Communion is a free gift of God, offered to all baptized Christians. Even if your child has been receiving communion, but has not had formal instruction, we encourage you to take advantage of the classes being offered. This year's class will meet on

Sundays, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23, 3/1, and 3/8 immediately following the 10 a.m. service. Please contact Kristen Morgan at christianed@aquiachurch.org for more information and to register your child. If your child was not baptized at Aquia Church, the office will need to have a copy of his or her baptismal certificate.

Kristen Morgan



Our annual Vacation Bible School program will take place June 8-12. Stay tuned for more details.

STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service and Fellowship

Sts. Mary and Martha Guild has a busy month planned for February 2020. Our regular meetings will fall on Feb. 6th and 20th. Our first service project of the year comes on Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 25th. Starting at 2:30, we will cook the bacon and sausage for the pancake supper, and then help set up the great hall. If you are interested in the full "Fat Tuesday" experience and would like to help, please contact Mary Jane or Briget. This is quite the culinary adventure!

The guild has just begun a new study book: *Unshakable Hope* by Max Lucado. We have enjoyed the writings of this Christian author before and find his works very uplifting.

We are constantly looking for new ideas for the Fall Fest craft room. If you have a 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.

Speaking of the craft room, do you remember those darling sock monkeys? They are handcrafted by Becky Monger. When the monkeys do not sell at church, they go on to a higher calling. Becky takes them to the pediatric floor of Mary Washington Hospital for the nursing staff to give to anxious little ones after surgery!

Please do consider joining Sts. Mary and Martha Guild for Morning Prayer led by a member of our clergy,



followed by a simple study and wonderful fellowship. Our meetings, which are scheduled for the first, third, and fifth Thursdays mornings of the month, begin at 9:30 and end by noon. We have plenty of room around our table for you and a friend.

For further information, contact Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfs.w.biz).

P.S. Please note that we do not meet when winter weather closes Stafford County Public Schools or delays their opening.

Mary Jane Cole

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING

God Is Love

The Scriptures have a wealth of references on the importance of God's all-encompassing love and what it means to our relationship with him. It is easy to find specific and clear descriptions of his expectations on love. "Love each other as I have loved you" in John 15:12 could not be clearer. Reminders of how much he loves

each of us are found throughout the New Testament, notably in the first Epistle of John, which states that "God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them."

Strengthening our relationship with him through our daily prayers helps the Aquia community of faith grow together in love. The Daughters of the King

focus on how to strengthen our prayers and reflect the love that we have through his Grace. Join us at noon on the first Saturday of each month in the church and let's learn together.

FHS



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Dec. 17, 2019

Dinner and Fellowship. Started at 6:30 p.m. and hosted by Bill Hoffman and Ron Korth with the wardens' chili cookoff. In attendance were Rector Fr. Jay Morris, Asst. Rector Fr. James Rickenbaker, Sr. Warden Bill Hoffman, Jr. Warden Ron Korth, Treasurer Chris Arey, Youth Rep. Christopher (Kit) Stoltz, Mary Nixon, Chris Wanner, Dickie Boes, Jean Golas, Jackie Chichester, and Register Douglas McGinty. Fr. Jay opened with a prayer and the Lord's Prayer. *[Subsequent events are italicized and bracketed.]*

Business Session started at 7 p.m.

Treasurer's Reports by Chris Arey. \$12,000 was redeemed from the Dipple fund for cemetery operations in 2019 and 2020. The nuts sale netted about \$2K.

Minutes from Previous Meeting by Register Douglas McGinty were unanimously approved.

R-2019-16 Revision of Bylaws (approved 11/19)

Parochial Report on 2018—Demographic Data (approved 11/19)

R-2019-18 Alcohol Use Policy (approved 11/19)

New Business

R-2019-19 Designation of Housing Allowance for Rector (finance committee). Unanimously approved.

R-2019-20 Designation of Housing Allowance for Assistant Rector (finance committee). Unanimously approved.

R-2019-21 Adjustments to 2019 Budget (finance committee). Unanimously approved.

Vestry Nominees for 2020. Four nominations were approved – Christopher (Kit) Stoltz for Youth Representative for a one-year term, plus Dickie Boes, Bob Brandon, and Carrol Frederick as adult members for three-year terms

each. *[The nomination of Charlie Binnagay for a three-year term was approved without dissent by email on Dec. 21, 2019. All five members were elected by acclamation at the Jan. 5, 2020 Annual Meeting.]*

Reports from Vestry Committees

Administration: by Jean Golas. The vestry already is up to date as to committee status.

Finance: Dickie Boes discussed the Budget for 2020. Amendments to line items were discussed. The budget as amended was approved unanimously. The question was raised as to whether the Church could pay for at least some of the cleaning at the Parish House. The pledges so far are \$394,999.92 from 91 adult pledges, plus over \$704.00 from 10 youth pledges as of 12/16. Current Total for Matching-Challenge Opportunity: \$60,201.35 as of 12/16. Dickie further reports that Goal 8 for the committee has been completed. Chris Arey indicated that the e-giving program needs to proceed. Fr. Jay asked if \$200K should be applied to reduction of the principal on the mortgage for the CFFB, and the vestry agreed.

Building and Grounds by Ron Korth. The floor project has gone well on the Administrator's side of the Fleurries. Fr. Jay's section will be done in January 2020. A motion to proceed with Prudent Homes for the crawlspace project at the Fleurries was approved unanimously, with funds coming out of the Anne E. Moncure fund. Everything is going well.

Reports from Senior Warden and Junior Warden

Sr. Warden by Bill Hoffman. 2019 was a good year.

Jr. Warden by Ron Korth. His report on the Building and Grounds Committee is provided above.



Vestry Highlights

Report from Rector by Fr. Jay. The Annual Meeting is on Jan. 5, 2020, and the Open House is on Dec. 29, 2019.

Upcoming Dates and Information

[12/22: ECW Christmas breakfast reception (8:30 a.m.) and Holy Communion with the children's Christmas pageant, in the great hall (10 a.m.)]

[12/24: Holy Eucharist for Christmas Eve (5:30 p.m., 8 p.m., and 11 p.m., with Christmas music 30 minutes before each service)]

[12/25: Holy Eucharist for Christmas Day (10 a.m.)]

[12/29: Holy Eucharist with Christmas Lessons & Carols (10 a.m.)]

[12/29: Open house for vestry, committees, and families at Rector's home (3 p.m. until ...) (time revised)]

[1/5/2020: Holy Eucharist with parish's annual meeting and election of new vestry members, in the great hall (10 a.m.)]

[1/11/2020: Vestry retreat (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)]

1/21/2020: First monthly vestry meeting of 2020

1/23/2020: Bishop listening meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas McGinty

Register, Aquia Episcopal Church



Check Out Our New Software

We have a new software system called “Realm” that soon will enable parishioners to make financial contributions to Aquia Church online, check their contribution records confidentially, update their contact information, receive e-mail updates, and stay in touch with ministry groups. Realm can be accessed through a personal computer, tablet, or smart phone: simply download the free app, then follow the directions that will be included when you receive an invitation to join Realm.

Starting in February, you should receive two e-mails that say the same thing: one will arrive from our old system (MailChimp), and one will arrive from Realm. If you do not receive the one from Realm, then please notify the church office. If you have any questions about Realm, please contact Sue Selz in the church office (540-659-4007 or sue.selz@aquiachurch.org).

Sue Selz

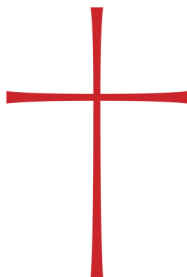


Aquia Church Family,

Thank you so much for the year end gift! We are so excited for all that 2020 holds – so many long term missionaries being sent out, training students to know and love the Word and how to share it with others, campaigns in Asia and Africa to see reformation in different areas of society. So thankful you get to be a part of it all!

Much Love!

Rebecca Hedger



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.



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

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

James Ronald Petterssen.

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

Larry Moxley 1946-2020; Jean Golas 2020.

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 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

Patrick and Anna Hedger



www.aquiachurch.org

office@aquiachurch.org

(540) 659-4007

Aquia Church Prayer List – February 2020



Faye Andrews, Rhett Blythe and Family, Eloine Bolton, Elijah Colliver, Richard Craven, Jeff Davis, Donnie Davis, Paula Davis, Becky Dixon, Brian Driscoll, Zofia Dubicka, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, the Golas family, Larry Hartzler, Chris Hundley, John Jackson, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Patty Montgomery, Rebecca Poole, Kenny Reilly, Janice Shelton, Gwen Smith, Scott Smith, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Gayle Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, Patrick Weber, Walt & Elizabeth Yager.



Come Join Aquia's Table

Aquia's Table is an outreach ministry of Aquia Episcopal Church

Through the help of volunteers and patrons alike, Aquia's Table successfully provides free meals and support to all who come to our doors every Wednesday night. We look to continue our positive impact in the community with continued support of members of Aquia Church.

As the numbers of patrons grow weekly, it is important for our ministry to continue using the resources in our community, to grow in numbers of volunteers, and to begin our plans for our 11th Annual Golf Tournament on May 8. This tournament is the largest fundraiser for our ministry. It brings together members of the community and golfers

in our parish for a day of competition and fun. You are invited—Save the Date for May 8!

Can you find a fit for Aquia's Table ministry in your life? Our ministry may speak to your talents: prep cooks (1 to 4 times a month on Wednesdays), servers (1 to 4 times a month, clean-up and dishwashing (1 to 4 times a month), Panera Bread prepping and wrapping to share (1 to 4 times a month), Golf Tournament (ONCE a year, lots of little tasks starting now until tournament). For more information, simply contact Briget Kane (bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com, or contact the church office for her phone number).

Briget Kane



Field Trip

Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Monday, Feb. 17, 2020

Tickets: \$15, covers cost of motor coach

Snacks will be provided.

Contact: Michael Golasz at
golaszmichael@yahoo.com





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Lent is Coming! Here's how it begins.

Tuesday, Feb. 25: Our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper will take place in the great hall, starting at 5 p.m.; tickets will be available for purchase in advance or at the door.

Wednesday, Feb. 26: Our Ash Wednesday worship services, with the Imposition of Ashes followed by Holy Communion, will be held in the historic church at noon and 7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 27: Our Thursday evening Lenten dinner-and-discussion series will run for six evenings (Feb. 27, every Thursday in March, and April 2: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.), in the great hall, with a focus on C. S. Lewis's imaginative book *The Screwtape Letters*, in which a senior devil offers guidance to his nephew, who is a junior devil-in-training.

At the back of the church is a sign-up sheet for indicating that you are coming for dinner, that you want us to order a copy of the book for you at \$12 each (cash or check payable to Aquia Church, with "Adult Education" in the memo line or on your envelope -- alternatively, you may bring your own copy or purchase an e-book version on your own), and that you need to have childcare provided for someone in your family.



Stay tuned at church and in the March issue of the *Cross Section* newsletter
for more details about more events during Lent.

February 2020 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

As Aquia Church prepares for our observance of a holy Lent, which starts later this month, I want you to know about the book that will be featured during our Thursday evening Lenten dinner-and-discussion series: ***The Screwtape Letters*** by the British Anglican author C. S. Lewis (HarperOne, 2015). Written during 1942, when the United Kingdom was in the midst of World War II, this work of fiction comprises thirty-one letters written by Screwtape, who is a senior devil in charge of training his nephew, an apprentice demon named Wormwood, to become a tempter and to exercise his powers on an unsuspecting person (named “the Patient”) toward that man’s damnation. In this satire, Lewis displays a shrewd awareness of human character and its foibles in his analysis of temptation and discernment, but with a turned-upside-down perspective because of how the theological presentation is made from a devil’s point of view. In reading this work, you will want to be careful as you keep track of the characters: mention is made not of Our Father (as in the Lord’s Prayer) but of Our Father Below, for instance, and you might be surprised to discover who is called “the Enemy.” The book has been published as a stand-alone work, just as it has been bound in multi-volume editions with other titles by this wildly acclaimed author (Lewis’s *Mere Christianity* is a typical accompaniment). There are audio recordings available (including one read by John Cleese of Monty Python fame), a live-theatre adaptation that I attended several years ago, and at least one audio-visual review of the work (available on Amazon Prime under the title *Affectionately Yours, Screwtape*), plus various essays among the secondary-source literature. Still, nothing seems quite as effective or as enduring as one’s thoughtful reading of the book for oneself. If you are interested in joining our dinner-and-discussion series, then simply sign up on the sheet at the back of the church, letting us know that you will be coming for dinner, how many people in your household will need childcare for the evening, and whether you want the church to order a copy for you (for \$12.00, cash or check payable to Aquia Church, with “adult education” marked on the memo line of your check or on the envelope) or whether you will use your own copy (either some printed version or an e-book, at your discretion—both are available, as are other media, including audio versions). With Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday (26 February this year), our Thursday evening Lenten dinner-and-discussion series will begin on the very next day (27 February), running through the four Thursdays in March and concluding on the first Thursday in April (2 April), with each evening starting at 6:30 and ending by 8:30. I hope that you’ll be able to join in the fun and the fellowship of the series, not to mention the learning. If however you cannot attend the series, then perhaps you can read this remarkable work independently and at your own pace.

Separately: As a number of parishioners have been working through the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy with me in our Wednesday evening Bible study during January, February, and March, I thought that you might be interested in a related work that can be helpful for your own reading and reflection on that monumental work of Hebrew faith. After all, Deuteronomy is the third-most-frequently quoted book from the Old Testament in the New Testament (after Isaiah and the Psalms), such that making sense of the New Testament would be improved by some familiarity with Deuteronomy. While my primary guide for this Bible study series has been the illuminating work of Old Testament scholar Daniel I. Block, there are other resources that can make a difference, too. And one such book is ***Reading Deuteronomy: A Literary and Theological Commentary*** by Stephen L. Cook (Smith & Helwys, 2015). This volume is not too long (just over 250 pages of text) and is probably geared first and foremost toward educated laypeople in the pews, in college, and in seminary alongside pastors; it begins with a 25-page overview of the history behind Deuteronomy and then covers roughly a biblical chapter at a time before taking up the next segment. Cook has a gift for taking the complexities of biblical scholarship and distilling the results into manageable information in accessible language. As with other titles in this particular series of biblical commentaries, the author does not work tediously verse-by-verse in painstaking fashion; instead, he helps the reader understand the central ideas and core themes of each passage in Deuteronomy, in clear English, while incorporating enough technical details so as to enrich the reader’s understanding without being esoteric or boring. Cook is an Episcopalian and teaches at Virginia Theological Seminary, where both Father Rickenbaker and I occasionally studied with him; but truth be told, Cook’s accomplishment in this book seems considerably greater to me than what I ever found in his classroom (as is often enough true of professors), and I certainly think that you can benefit considerably from *Reading Deuteronomy* (both Cook’s book and the biblical text itself!). It is formidable at times but by no means impossible, and sometimes challenging but surely uplifting.