



**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Cross Section

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



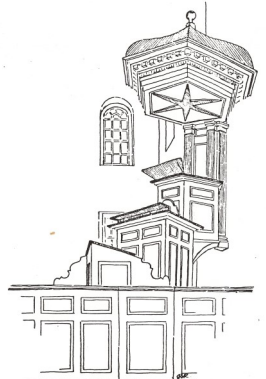
**DO JUSTICE ...**

*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

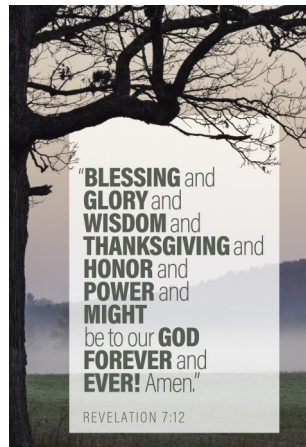
### An Early Thanksgiving?

Normally, whenever we think of thanksgiving, we focus our attention about that in November, for obvious reasons. But this year of all years, we can't wait that long: this year we should enjoy thanksgiving earlier than usual. We can give thanks and celebrate our opportunities for gratitude in a different way and on a different timeframe.

Judging by the news everywhere, you already know the difficulties we face these days. The coronavirus pandemic, social unrest and injustice in race relations, economic uncertainties, financial hardship, election battles, and all their implications are simply the most prominent among our concerns. We're probably tired of all that and depressed by all that. Yet if we pause to consider what else is going on in our lives and in our parish, then we might find more than glimmers and glimpses of hope.

The pandemic has not prevented us from conducting the ministry of the church. On the contrary: we have held online worship since March, online weekday Morning Prayer since May, outdoor worship in person since June, and the Holy Eucharist outdoors since September. Our music ministry provides electronic broadcasts of uplifting music even when we cannot gather indoors yet. Several weekly offerings for Bible studies and book discussions have continued online throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Our virtual Sunday school classes and youth group meetings have now resumed after a short summer break. Aquia's Pantry and Aquia's Table are serving more guests now than ever before, and more people are assisting in those ministries now than ever before. While some of our ministry groups have needed to suspend their in-person work for a time, others have been able to continue largely unabated.

Blessedly, most of our parishioners have been spared the worst effects from



the pandemic. Only a very small number of parishioners have had confirmed cases of COVID, know for certain they were exposed, or suspect they caught the bug. Many members are carefully venturing out week after week for worship together and serving others together, and we are grateful for their resolve and willingness to follow safety procedures. Still other members are not getting out much yet,

out of caution for their health, and we are grateful for their continued good condition and for their patience with electronic communications. Together we have shown great flexibility in adapting to the changed circumstances affecting everyone. That includes the number of people who have sent their financial contributions through the mail, dropped them off at the church office, or started donating electronically through Realm when they could not present their offerings in person, and we are grateful to everyone who has financially supported our faithful ministry throughout this adversity.

For all the ways in which many folks have suffered in recent months, there is still so much for which we should be thankful. We can express our gratitude to God for his generosity toward us by being generous toward him in return. Our gifts, tithes, and other offerings to Aquia Church can reflect our confidence in what the Lord is doing here and our readiness to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed. During October, you will receive an invitation to make a financial pledge for supporting God's work during 2021, and you will be invited to submit that pledge on or before Sunday, Nov. 8. That's a bit ahead of Thanksgiving Day, but it's a wonderful way of saying "Thank You!" to God. Our goal this year is simple: because we are grateful to God, we show our thankfulness by supporting his mission and ministry.

*Jay Morris*

## FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

### Liturgy of the Ordinary

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 desire to further your knowledge of the Christian life. One important way that we can grow in that knowledge is through reading.

You often hear from me in these newsletter articles about Bible studies, continuing education courses that I am taking, and relevant topics for the day. This is the first time I have written to you in order to offer a book recommendation. Over the last week, I spent some time reading through the book *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by author and priest Tish Harrison Warren. In the book, Tish seeks to lay out for her reader the parts of the Eucharistic liturgy and how they play into our everyday life. It is a good and accessible book for those who are interested in establishing a rhythm to daily life that keeps our eyes focused on Jesus. This is all the more important because the COVID-19 pandemic has deconstructed our daily lives in a way that we never expected. Perhaps this book can offer a constructive way of living in the midst of the pandemic that can continue even when the current situation is in our rearview mirror.

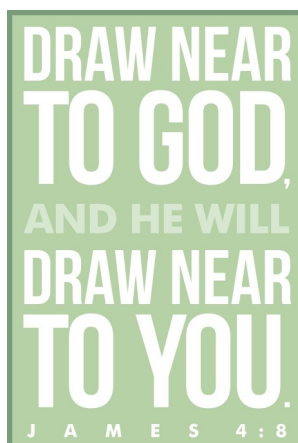
The chapters of the book are laid out according to an average day in Tish's life: Waking, Making the Bed, Brushing Teeth, Losing Keys, Eating Leftovers, Fighting with My Husband, Checking Email, Sitting in Traffic, Calling a Friend, Drinking Tea, and Sleeping. The chapters are relatively short. They go through the event itself and look at the deeper meaning to which each event points us. Waking up reminds us of our baptism. Every day is a new day in life with God. Every day we remember our baptism and depend again on God's grace. Making the bed reminds us of order, of how God ordered chaos in creation. Liturgy itself—structured worship offered to God by us—is an important way of ordering our lives in Christ. The lesson of brushing our teeth is that we live in bodies. We are not simply brains with legs; rather,

we are creatures created by God who need to clean ourselves and take care of ourselves. We are bodies. We kneel, bow, and stand in worship. As one biblical scholar said, "We don't *have* [bodies] we *are* [bodies]." Losing our keys and getting angry reminds us of the need to confess our sins before an all-holy God. Eating leftovers remind us that simple bread and wine—the daily food and drink in the ancient world—are for us food that sustains and wells up to everlasting life. Tish fighting with her husband reminds us of the exchange of peace during the Eucharistic service. We all have hurt someone. The peace is not a time to greet; instead, it is a time to reconcile with others.

I don't want to summarize the whole book for you because I want you to consider reading it. We have an unprecedented opportunity today. COVID has hit the reset button on our daily lives. If we take the time to reevaluate what daily life should look like, perhaps we will give up the need to be workaholics. Perhaps we will see the need to have our lives centered and grounded in God. How wonderful would that be?

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*

**Charlie Bingay**

*Finance Committee*

**Dickie Boes**

*Finance Committee Chairperson  
Building & Grounds Committee*

**Chris Bowie**

*Administration Committee*

**Bob Brandon**

*Building & Grounds Committee*

**Carrol Frederick**

*Administration Committee*

**Michael Golasz**

*Building & Grounds Committee*

**Bill Hoffman**

*Senior Warden  
Acting Chairperson of  
Administration Committee*

**Ron Korth**

*Junior Warden  
Building & Grounds  
Committee Chairperson*

**Patty Montgomery**

*Building & Grounds Committee*

**Patricia Springer**

*Administration Committee*

**Christopher "Kit" Stoltz**

*Youth Representative  
Administration &  
Finance Committees*

**Chris Wanner**

*Buildings & Grounds Committee*



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## FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

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### Aquia Church Planned Giving



While some of you may have thought about making a gift to the church from your estate, you might have questions about the best way to do this and what the church might do with such a gift. I bet you did not know that the Vestry has made provisions for this by establishing the “Planned Giving Program” to help you with making a such a gift.

The Aquia Church Planned Giving Program includes information on the

types of planned gifts that you can make and how the church ensures that your gift will be used in the manner you desire. One of the provisions of the program allows you to make a gift that provides a perpetual stream of income! If you are considering such a gift or are just curious about this program, an information card is available at the back of the church and in the church office.

**Bill Hoffman**

### Just in Time for Christmas: Vestry Fundraiser



The Vestry is very pleased to offer the Virginia-grown nut products from Newsoms Peanut Shop again in 2020. Last year we partnered with Newsoms, and it proved to be a very successful offering for the parish and our friends. As you know, the consequences of the pandemic cancelled Fall Fest, eliminated rental income from the churches that were using the 1960 parish hall, and has largely prevented us from offering our great hall for rental events. Accordingly, this fundraiser gives us a chance to offer a premium product at a modest price, just in time for Christmas, and help us raise some much-needed income. They are a very nice, affordable gift for relatives, friends, your newspaper delivery person, postal worker, barber, hair stylist, etc.

Newsoms is a third-generation, family-owned, small business in Southampton County, Virginia; Blair and Jenny Bunn are good Methodists. Order forms will be sent out with the weekly parish announcements, are available at worship services, and are also available at the office; an order form is also included in this newsletter. Your paid orders are due by Dec. 7, 2020. **For this year, we will deliver your order to your residence. Please request delivery on the attached form.** Please consider supporting your church and this Virginia small business. If you have questions, please contact either Dickie Boes or Chris Arey.

**Chris Arey**

*(Please see order form later in this document.)*



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.





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## FROM THE TREASURER

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One of my principal interests in traveling to the United Kingdom in recent years has been to visit various sites that feature the remains of Roman Britain. My amateur antiquarianism marvels at some of the engineering and artistic achievements still visible after nearly 2,000 years. Some of the most appealing art of this era is found in the decorative mosaics that Romano-Britons would build into the floors of their villas and public buildings. Often depicting mythological scenes or geometric patterns, these mosaics—comprising tens of thousands of tesserae (plural for the Latin *tessera* for cube or tile)—are visually enthralling and elegant, and they have survived for centuries. This art form was soon found in Christianity in wall art as early as the 4th century, as Christianity achieved acceptance and was adopted by the Roman emperor Constantine as the state religion.

As I have visited sites featuring these mosaics, it is not hard to see that every individual tessera—a small piece of stone, glass, or other material—is critical to the unity of the whole work. Missing pieces detract from the integrity

of the scene: the fewer missing pieces, the more profound the mosaic is. Like classical mosaics, the church is the work of a Master: Christ, who crafted the body of believers that would stand, and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it.

Each of us as a baptized member—a tessera in this human canvas—has a particular part and place. It is peculiar that the word mosaic may also be found as ‘Mosaic,’ in reference to Moses, who (according to Exodus 2:10) was so named by Pharaoh’s daughter because he was drawn out of the water. Indeed, we the baptized people also are named as we are drawn up from our baptismal waters; each of us is a living tessera in the mosaic of the church.

As we ponder our place in Aquia Church, and prayerfully consider how we can engage in financial stewardship, I hope that each member will consider their very precious place in our mosaic and endeavor to glorify God in their labors.

*Christopher M. Arey*



## Matching Challenge Grant

As of September 21, we have received over 21% of the goal for our current matching challenge (\$21,408.00)—but we still have more funds yet to raise, with the clock still ticking. Thanks to an anonymous pledge, we have a remarkable opportunity to help retire the construction loan debt on our Christian Formation and Fellowship Building even sooner than planned, and for less money overall. Every contribution that we receive for the new building between 21 April 2020 and 31 December 2020 (unless otherwise specified) will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to a total of

\$100,000.00, with all such contributions being used to pay down the construction loan. Your gift should have “New Building” marked on the check or on the envelope for your gift, and every gift will be welcomed. For information about how to transfer investments in tax-advantageous ways for this purpose, please speak with treasurer Chris Arey ([treasurer@aquiachurch.org](mailto:treasurer@aquiachurch.org)) or contact Sue Selz in the church office ([sue.selz@aquiachurch.org](mailto:sue.selz@aquiachurch.org)).



## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

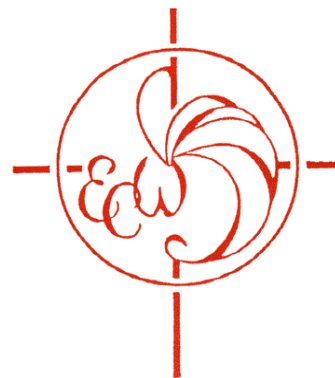
Homecoming 2020 was our annual event held this year on Sept. 13th. Unlike other Homecoming events of which I have been a part, 2020's Homecoming event included many traditions and created some new ones (based on our current COVID-19 mandates). The donations for our picnic meal, as prepared by our parish family, were handed out with curbside take-out service at the great hall immediately following our 9 a.m. outdoor worship service. We delivered meals to some members in our parish who are not currently attending our outdoor services. We also were able to provide meals with dietary restrictions to others who attended Homecoming in past year. The planning and day helped to reaffirm our ministry and our work with the grace of the Holy Spirit in joyful service. Mark your calendar for our next celebration of Homecoming on Sept. 19, 2021!

I am excited to announce the **ECW of the Diocese of Virginia Fall Meeting & UTO Ingathering** with the theme "Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace." I hope you will join the virtually planned meeting on Thursday,

Oct. 15, 2020, at 9 a.m. Please register by Oct. 8 in order to receive your Zoom Webinar link. To register, go to <<http://ecw.thediocese.net>> and click on the Events page.

In lieu of our Fall Fest fundraising event (which was cancelled due to COVID-19 mandates), we are going to hold a different fundraising event in order to support our ministry. The pulled pork curbside take-out lunch will be prepared by the ECW and by cooks from Aquia's Table. We will be asking for support from our church family and community on Facebook, on our church Website, and on a banner at the entrance to Aquia Church.

The United Thank Offering is a long-standing tradition of the Episcopal Church Women, encouraging people to collect coins, dollar bills, and checks in blue boxes and blue envelopes as signs of gratitude to God for his many blessings and then making grants around the nation for various church ministries. The ECW is providing blue boxes and blue envelopes at our outdoor worship services, so that you can be prepared for turning in your UTO contributions on



Sunday, Oct. 18. We did not hold a spring ingathering this year because of the pandemic, so we hope to see a successful ingathering this fall. Please indicate "UTO" on your envelope or on the memo line of your check for any UTO contributions that you mail to the church office or drop off there.

The ECW has many opportunities waiting for you within our ministry. If you are thinking of sharing your gifts and talents with your parish or community, we would love to talk with you. We have several teams who assist with receptions, communication, and support of our parish and community. Many hands always make light work and bring joy to your life.

*Briget Kane*



### Pulled Pork Curbside Take-Out Lunch

**Saturday, October 3**

**10 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Meal with 2 sides for \$10, or Sandwich for \$8,  
or 1 lb. Package for \$10,  
with additional sides \$1 each  
(choice of sides: chips, cole slaw, baked beans)

RSVP to [bkwnings\\_n\\_things@yahoo.com](mailto:bkwnings_n_things@yahoo.com),

or call (540) 659-4007

or see sign-up sheet at outdoor worship services



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## OUTREACH

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We have not been able to meet in quite some time because of the coronavirus pandemic, but we keep in touch via e-mail updates. We will not stop our mission in spite of the current circumstances.

When school starts each year, we normally pack Tide-Me-Over bags for the students in the Brain Builders program through Stafford Junction. At this time Stafford Junction is providing virtual help to their students and continues to provide the Tide-Me-Over bags and school supplies to the students in their program. As we cannot pack the bags, we will provide a monetary donation along with some school supplies.

We still want to do a shoe collection this year. Please keep those shoes ready!

Speaking of shoes, we **will** be doing the shoebox collection for Operation Christmas Child (OCC). OCC held a virtual workshop on Saturday, Sept. 12th, and they presented creative ways to collect shoeboxes during a pandemic. This year we have to improvise and adapt. There will be a way to pack a shoebox online, and we will have a group link for this purpose. Through this link, you will be able to select boy or girl, the age group, and items you

want to include in your shoebox. OCC will then pack the box for you. We also are thinking of ways to collect shoeboxes that you and your family pack. Stay tuned for information on how you can participate.

We will not be doing the collection for Dove gifts this year. We do not know if they will have their annual gathering.

Another challenge is our Adopt-A-Family program through the Stafford County Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS is also facing their own challenges. First, they have 1,000 more families registered now than last year. Next, they could not ask a church to house the program as in past years. That would put pressure on the church because of the social distancing that will be required. They therefore secured the old Moncure Elementary School for distribution of the food and gifts. They are considering spacing everything out and creating pick-up appointments for each family. They will let us know when plans have been finalized.

Please keep the Outreach Ministry in your prayers during this difficult time and consider joining us in our mission.

*Johanna Jones*



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## STS. MARY AND MARTHA

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### Worship, Service and Fellowship

As we enter the month of October, Sts. Mary and Martha Guild finds that our hands are not as busy as usual, with the 64th Fall Fest being postponed until 2021. We do find, however, that our hearts are joyful as we continue to pray together during our regular meeting time on Thursday mornings. We are thankful for our family and friends, our parish family and our clergy, and for God's continued protection. We are also thankful for the many ways that technol-

ogy provides for us to stay connected in fellowship.

If you would like to learn more about Sts. Mary and Martha Guild, please send us a note via e-mail. If you would like us to include you or your family and friends in our intercessions, do let us know.

Mary Jane Cole

[maryjane@cfsw.biz](mailto:maryjane@cfsw.biz) or

Carolyn Hendrickson  
[cvhendrickson35@gmail.com](mailto:cvhendrickson35@gmail.com)



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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 for ever" (BCP 308)

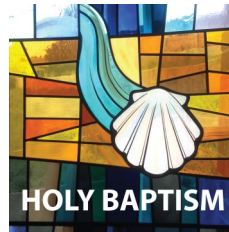
Madeleine Virginia McEvoy Proseus.

### SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AT AQUIA CHURCH

*New Babies:* Thanksgiving for the birth of a child 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 Nov. 1, 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

Derek and Emily (Selz) Wisner



*How to  
reach us:*

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

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

<https://www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch>

(540) 659-4007

### Aquia Church Prayer List – October 2020

Faye Andrews, Linda Beville, Rhett Blythe and Family, Julie Burgess, Elijah Colliver, Richard Craven, Donnie Davis, Brian Driscoll, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Robert Garrett, Christopher, Shawna & Oliver Gray, Larry Hartzler, Gary & Kandy Howard, Chris Hundley, Jerry & Dot, John Jackson, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Patty Montgomery, Rebecca Poole, Linda Raitovich-Parsons, Kenny Reilly, Arnie Schwartz, Scott Smith, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Gayle Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, Patrick Weber, Walt & Elizabeth Yager.

*Lord,  
Hear Our  
Prayer*





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## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

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Aquía Church is offering live, weekly Sunday school classes each Sunday morning using Zoom for children in pre-K through 12th grade. For children in pre-K through 5th grade, we are also providing weekly learning leaflets that accompany the program.

Please contact Kristen Morgan at [christianed@aquiachurch.org](mailto:christianed@aquiachurch.org) for information about login instructions and to register your child or grandchild. For students in middle and high school, please contact Father Morris or Father Rickenbaker for more information. We are also planning some activities and materials that families can use at home for the Advent season. Stay tuned for more details.

Our annual outdoor service for the Blessing of the Animals will be held on Sunday, October 4, at 2:00 p.m. near the Saint Francis statue in front of the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building. All animals attending should be on a leash, in a cage, or otherwise properly restrained, lest they get loose. All people over two years of age must



wear a mask and maintain six-foot physical distancing (except for household groups).

## AQUIA'S PANTRY

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August proved to be another big month for the pantry. Now that we have an industrial scale, we're able to keep better track of incoming donations from other sources beyond the food bank. We distributed 12,422 pounds of groceries (a record), with a weekly average of 3,105.5 pounds (another record). One Wednesday alone we gave away over 1,000 pounds of frozen meats. 836 people were the beneficiaries. Parishioners

have stepped up in both volunteering and donating, making our mission easier for everyone.



Donations of cash, dog food, and cat food will be received and conveyed to local animal care centers. Rain at the time cancels the event.

Also, we hope to be able to offer a version of our traditional Trunk-or-Treat for children on Saturday, October 24 (rain date: Sunday, October 25). Currently our plans involve opening the parking lot in front of the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building at 5:00 p.m., so that families may set up their vehicles and perhaps enjoy a picnic dinner, with children going from vehicle to vehicle for candy starting at 6:00 p.m. In addition, we hope to show a 30-minute children's Halloween film starting by 6:30 p.m. Every person over two years of age must wear a face mask (either as part of a costume or a medical-style face mask) and must practice physical distancing, except for household groups. Stay tuned to the weekly e-mail blast of announcements for more details closer to time.

*Kristen Morgan*



## Give While You Shop!

Many of us are doing more online shopping during the pandemic. If you use Amazon.com for some of your needs, please consider using Amazon Smile instead and gain contributions to Aquia Church. By designating a charity on Amazon Smile, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the cost of your purchases to Aquia Church. To date, shoppers on Amazon Smile have generated \$693 in donations to Aquia Church. In order to get started, go to

[smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and sign up; doing so doesn't cost anything. If you are a member of Amazon Prime, your membership will be valid on Amazon Smile as well. Be sure to choose **Aquia Episcopal Church** as your designated charity. Then, any time you go shopping, use

[smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) instead of [amazon.com](https://amazon.com). If you use an Amazon app on your phone, you can change it to Amazon Smile after you have signed up on the website: open your app and go to "Settings," then scroll down and select Amazon Smile.

*Charlie Bingay*





Aquia Episcopal Church  
Post Office Box 275  
Stafford, VA  
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Worship Times Change on Sunday, October 4



The times for our outdoor worship services will change soon, in anticipation of changes in available daylight and weather. Effective Oct. 4, the morning Eucharist will shift to begin at 10:30 a.m. (weather permitting in each case), and the evening Eucharist will shift to begin at 4 p.m. (weather permitting in each case). Also effective Oct. 4, virtual Sunday school for all students (pre-K through 12th grade) will shift to begin at 9 a.m., in hopes that Sunday school students and teachers and their families will have plenty of time after virtual Sunday school ends by 9:45 a.m. for arriving in time for the morning worship service by 10:30 a.m. The Sunday online service of Morning Prayer will remain at 7:30 a.m., and the weekday online service of Morning Prayer will remain at 8 a.m.

## October 2020 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

You probably know already—or *think* you know already—what an atlas is: a bunch of maps bound together. And sometimes that sense of the word suffices. Perhaps you take a travel atlas with you on road trips, so that you may find all your necessary maps together in the same place. Or perhaps you have seen an atlas as a massive, importable tome in the reference section of a library and can't imagine how to make constructive use of it as something other than a doorstop. Yet surely there must be something more to an atlas than maps and massiveness. When Gerardus Mercator (for whom Mercator projections are named) published the first atlas as we know it, he gave his work a rather fulsome title—*Atlas, or Cosmographic Meditations on the Creation of the World and the Created Form*—indicating provision not only of maps and drawings, but also of writings about the world so depicted by those illustrations. In other words, a real atlas is supposed to involve both show *and* tell: visual information and narrative information alike. A real atlas can transport you into another world and another time more fully than a mountain of maps or a tower of texts, precisely because a real atlas today comprises those same elements and others, including photographs, diagrams, statistical data, and so forth. In my own study of the Bible, I have learned how helpful such a book can be, and so here I would like to recommend the hardcover by Carl G. Rasmussen, *The Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*, rev. ed. (Zondervan, 2010), which is immensely informative and remarkably fascinating.

The first eighty pages of Rasmussen's work constitute a geography book—the sort of material you *thought* you would find in an atlas—yet here there is even more than you were first assuming would be available. This geographical section starts with an overview of the Middle East as a whole, and then spends most of its time depicting the geography of Israel and Jordan, while also providing attention to the geography of the related areas: Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Mesopotamia (the land of ancient Babylonia and of present-day Iraq). Part of Rasmussen's attention here is devoted to the land formations from the coasts and rivers to the mountains and valleys in all directions, with additional attention to climate, routes for trade and travel, and the various regions in and around the Holy Land. Here you can begin to see, for instance, how the geographical situation of ancient Israel and Judah amidst the neighboring lands of Egypt, Philistia, Phoenicia, Syria, Bashan, Moab, and Edom (with Babylonia not too far away) frequently made the people of the Holy Land subject to incursions by adjacent enemies and occasionally made the Holy Land a crossroads for battles between world superpowers, and how the topographical situation of ancient Israel and Judah made their self-defense against attack so very difficult. The next one hundred eighty pages constitute what you probably were *not* expecting to find in an atlas: a history book—in the sense of the Bible's grand narrative about the history of salvation—starting in the Garden of Eden and the division of nations after Babel, proceeding through the generations of the Hebrew patriarchs, the Exodus out of Egypt, the conquest (or the gradual settlement??) into Canaan, the rise of the Israelite monarchy, the division of the united kingdom after Solomon's death, the demise of northern Israel and later of southern Judah, the Exile into Babylon, the arrival of the Greco-Roman imperial armies, the influence of the Maccabees and the Hasmoneans and the Herodians, the times of Jesus and the twelve apostles, the missionary journeys of Paul, the seven churches of the Book of Revelation, and a return to the holy city of Jerusalem. Here you find photographs of archaeological remains, maps of travels and voyages, and visual scenes from great events in biblical history; such details give you clearer impressions about how deserted and isolated Jesus must have felt in the Judean wilderness during his temptations, what some dwellings and public buildings from biblical history looked like, and how closely connected various cities and regions could be. Having the Bible in one hand and this atlas in the other hand can certainly make your engagement with Scripture come alive with clarity.

Some of the brief section at the book's end make a perfect place to start: a 1-page glossary of geographical terms that will be handy for knowing as you read the rest of the book, a 2-page timeline of biblical history (ranging even wider than that, really—from 3100 BC to AD 400—and showing the overlap of Egyptian, Canaanite/Israelite, Syrian/Mesopotamian, and Greco-Roman periods of political and archaeological history), a 3-page index of Scripture references, a 2-page index of people (which helps you keep track of the difference, among other things, between Herod the Great and the other Herods mentioned in the New Testament, or between Joseph of the Old Testament and Joseph of the New Testament), and a 31-page geographical dictionary and index. Fortunately, this atlas is too light to serve as a doorstop; you can actually hold it in your hands comfortably or let it rest in your lap. Rasmussen is professor emeritus of biblical studies at Bethel University in Minnesota, where he began teaching in 1980 after spending the prior seven years as dean of the Institute of Holy Land Studies (now called Jerusalem University College). He has spent about two months each year leading academic groups in the Holy Land and around the biblical Mediterranean for some forty years, and he maintains a Website <[www.holylandphotos.org](http://www.holylandphotos.org)> that might interest you while you await the arrival of this book for yourself or for a relative or friend as a Christmas gift. For a more concise version of this book, try Rasmussen's *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible* (Zondervan, 2013), a paperback that is roughly half the length and half the cost of the original.

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