



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

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

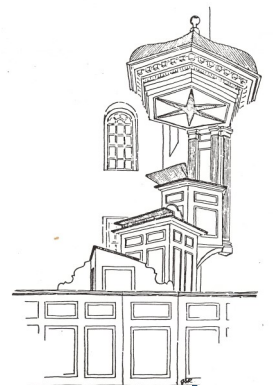
GOD SAID TO MOSES,

“

I AM WHO I AM

”

E X O D U S 3 : 1 4 , N R S V





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

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Trystan Bennett

Dir. Christian Education

Kristen Morgan

Parish Administrator

Dennise LaBarre

Executive Assistant

Sue Selz

Nursery Supervisor

Dawna Spaulding

FROM THE RECTOR

Come Labor On

Labor Day is not a holy day, and it is far more commonly observed through the conclusion of summer vacations and through schools reopening than through worship at church. After all, churches are usually closed on Labor Day as a way to honor the good work of church employees, and as a way to honor the time away from work that employees elsewhere might enjoy. Yet tucked away in the Book of Common Prayer is a rarely used but thoughtful collect for this American occasion:

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP 261)

As we approach this year's Labor Day amidst all our current challenges, we are rightly reminded about the insights found in this prayer.

First is the notion of our interdependence and interconnectedness: whatever one person or one group does or suffers can eventually affect everyone else. That point is true in any economy—local, regional, national, or international. That point is also true with the coronavirus pandemic: what a person will do or fails to do or refuses to do about wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and following other precautions for the sake of public health will have some bearing on the health of others elsewhere. You might believe that you are entitled to avoid wearing a mask in public; but if your refusal enables you to spread a virus to someone else or vice versa, then how has exercising your supposed right in

that arrogant way helped anyone? By complying with official guidance for public health, we do not simply maintain etiquette; more importantly, we demonstrate love and concern for our neighbors and for ourselves in ways that fulfill God's commands for our lives.

Also present is our need for God's guidance in whatever efforts we undertake—whether in the time before employment, in our jobs and careers, or in retirement after working—so that those efforts might not be selfish but rather altruistic in contributing toward the common good. We ought not take advantage of one another economically, politically, or socially. That is true in the contemporary labor market as in the historical past. We today continue to see the ill effects from many decades ago when slaveowners exploited the labor of slaves for personal gain, with unfair and inhumane treatment of those enslaved. God's commands serve better than greed as a reliable guide for a just and enduring society.

In addition, this prayer mentions the fact that everyone who works or wants to work will have certain aspirations that should be honored when possible, including desires for steady employment, opportunities for improved performance and career advancement, and the need for a working environment that is safe physically and socially. You already know how the coronavirus pandemic, for instance, has required many changes for many workers. Some workers have been deemed 'essential' and must now carry out their work at increased risk to their health. Other employees have been laid off as public health requirements and reduced consumer demand have shut down restaurants, recreational facilities, and other job sites; alternatively, other employees have been given fewer hours to work yet still face the same bills as before. Some positions can be modified in order to allow work-from-home, but those situations can get complicated; and personnel who hold positions that cannot be adapted for work-from-home will face additional

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FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

A Christian Reading of Exodus

Dear Family in Christ,
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank our God for you, especially for your diligent study of his word in Holy Scripture. It is of great importance for us to study both the Old and New Testaments as both are divinely inspired. Since we have wrapped up our Bible study series on Holy Baptism, we are now moving on to a twelve-week study of the Book of Exodus from a Christian perspective. This is important to note, as I did with the series on Genesis and the one on Job, so that we can be clear from the outset that we see the Old Testament always from the vantage of knowing the end of the story. In light of the revelation of God in Christ, we see Exodus not just as the story of Israel fleeing Egypt, but also as symbolizing the new Exodus enacted in the teachings, cross, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: the exodus away from sin into eternal life.

From the beginning of the Book of Exodus, we know that there is trouble afoot. A pharaoh arises who does not remember what Joseph did for the people of Egypt. So this new pharaoh enslaved the people of Israel. As an enslaved people, Israel endured great hardship and back-breaking labor. The story of the Exodus begins with a rescue mission: God acts to rescue his beloved people from the bonds of slavery to the Egyptians. He brings the plagues upon Egypt in order to break Phar-

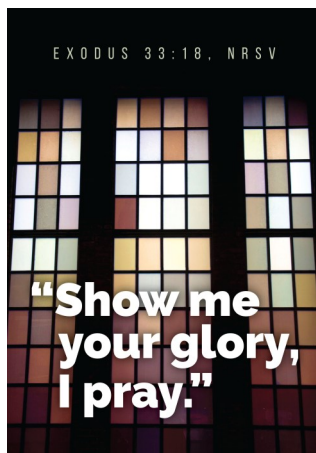
aoth's will. Pharaoh's heart and will were hardened against the cries for release. But when the people of Egypt were decimated by the tenth plague, the plague of the first-born, Pharaoh finally relented and let Israel go. Israel crossed the Red Sea (or the Sea of Reeds), which subsequently swallowed up Pharaoh's men, and began their journey toward Zion.

Exodus is a book about the presence of God. He remained with Israel as they made their way toward the Promised Land. He did not abandon them. The presence of God is a profoundly important theme in the Book of Exodus. God presents himself to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus 3. God went before Israel in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13). God manifests himself on Mt. Sinai to give the Law to the people of Israel and to establish a covenant with them, all of which will be to establish a place wherein he can be present among them: the Tabernacle (Exodus 19-40).

Throughout the series, we will look at different themes in Exodus, including salvation and God's presence. We will also address the Law and its importance in the lives of Christians. In addition, we will look at how the early Church Fathers read Exodus in light of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. We will even look at how, from the 19th century onward, the African-American community in the United States has identified so heavily with that narrative. The effect that the Book of Exodus has had on the life of the Church throughout the ages cannot be overstated.

I look forward to being with you for this series over Facebook Live. If you have never been a part of a Bible study at Aquia, we would love to have you join us on Wednesdays, beginning Sept. 9 at 10:30 a.m., and continuing through September, October, and November. We hope to see you then and there, because Exodus is a great introit into the study of Holy Scripture. May the Lord bless you.

*In Christ+,
Fr. James*



AQUIA CHURCH VESTRY

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Finance Committees*

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Buildings & Grounds Committee

AQUIA'S TABLE



HE WILL
FEED HIS
FLOCK
LIKE A
SHEPHERD.

ISAIAH 40:11, NRSV

The original, primary goal for Aquia's Table in 2008 still continues today: provide nutritious hot meals and fellowship to adults and children on a weekly basis in a secure and welcoming environment. **This goal became our mission.** Although the faces change from week to week, our numbers continue to grow with parish and community need.

In order to achieve our goal, members of the parish met in an initial meeting in the fall of 2008 to develop what the needs for Aquia's Table would be, including funding, space, equipment, menus, demographics, and outreach. The volunteers came together to define and name our new ministry. Working steadily through the winter and spring, with blessings from Bishop Lee, Aquia's Table prepared and served our first meal on July 1, 2009, in the parish hall.

Volunteers identified the gifts they would bring to this ministry and formed committees for start-up. Planning for menus, food cost, publicity, assessment of our parish hall, training in food handling, and presentation to the parish became the first order of the ministry. The next tasks addressed were preparing the parish hall, conducting an inventory of the ministry's needs, and promoting community liaisons for partner-

ship with our ministry. Additional volunteers from the parish stepped into these roles in support of our original start-up group. As work progressed, there was and continues to be excitement in the community about Aquia's Table.

Budget planning became an important part of the ministry. Unable to plan for the exact number of meals served from the menus developed, we were able to assess the cost for each meal. We estimated the number of guests we would be able to serve. Plans were made for storage of food donations and for food that would not be served immediately. Costs for place settings were determined, along with ways to help our parish hall be a welcoming environment for the ministry.

As the project grew, Aquia's Table expanded to include business liaisons, community participation, schools, scouting programs, and other volunteers as partners in feeding adults and children. Our aspirations and goals included food drives, in-kind donations, and working with businesses in Stafford. Currently one business partner provides bread for our guests each week for the meals served and extras for our guests to take with them.

Aquia's Table reached out to the community and members of our parish with brochures. Parishioners were given an orange ribbon to wear showing their support of Aquia's Table ministry. Members of the parish and community volunteers contribute homemade desserts. Our ministry goals are still being met and increased after 11 years.

The move to the great hall enabled Aquia's Table to grow and partner with other parish ministries. Technology use via e-mail and the web brought us more effective communication tools. Our technology also allows our parishioners, volunteers, and the public to know our planned menus and time of service and to address any special needs of our patrons.

In 2020 our mission to serve changed in compliance with diocesan and state mandates during the coronavirus pandemic. In May our main fundraiser, the Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament, had to be cancelled. Our serving format also changed to curbside carry-out, and our serving time was reduced to one hour (6 - 7 p.m.).

Volunteers continue to serve the ministry as it grows in the numbers we serve each week—as many as 200 guests some weeks! Parishioners continue to demonstrate support in the small day-to-day things they contribute. We sometimes receive calls about someone who needs a meal delivered. Members of the parish will come to 'buy' a meal to deliver to someone else. Donations for Aquia's Table can be sent to Aquia Church or dropped off on a Wednesday evening at the great hall.

Aquia's Table extends our sincere thank-you for your support over the last 11 years! We look forward to sharing our ministry with you in the future. Remember that next month, October, is Hunger Awareness Month.

Briget Kane



**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.**



AQUIA'S PANTRY

Did you know that during the month of July, Aquia's Pantry distributed nearly 6 tons of groceries to our guests? SIX TONS! Aquia's Pantry offers drive-through delivery of groceries on Wednesdays (6-7:30 p.m.).

Some of our Aquia's Pantry guests have needs for diapers, especially infant-size and size 4. If you can donate any diapers, then please bring them to any Sunday worship service or bring them to Aquia's Pantry at the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building (the new building) on Wednesday afternoons anytime after 3 p.m.

If you have any brown paper grocery bags that you can share with Aquia's Pantry, please drop them off at the bin near the main entrance to the new building; Aquia's Pantry will then fill your brown paper grocery bags with groceries as signs of God's grace and deliver them to neighbors in need. If you have any brown paper grocery bags but cannot drop them off, please contact Michael Golasz (golaszmichael@yahoo.com) and he will pick them up from you.

Michael Golasz



... Continued from p. 2

exposure to the virus. In a different facet of labor, the 'Me Too' movement has raised our awareness about the burdens of sexual harassment (among other things). The economic and social insecurities exposed by these situations reflect just some of the challenges that anyone can face at work.

The employees of Aquia Church are no exception. As soon as the coronavirus became a pressing matter in our area, we immediately changed many of our operations for the sake of protecting our staff, our parishioners, and our neighbors in the public.

Our church office has typically been closed, except when parish administrator Dennise LaBarre and executive assistant Sue Selz and the clergy have needed to go in for limited tasks that can be accomplished only in the Fleuries. When these folks are present in the office, they diligently wear masks, wipe down frequently touched surfaces, and observe other important protocols. Our staff members have been carrying out many duties from their homes, including taking paperwork home and keeping up with correspondence there.

Our director of Christian education, Kristen Morgan, has distributed Sunday school lessons and materials and even conducted this summer's vacation Bible school through electronic media, just as

she is planning to do with the start of Sunday school in September.

The nature of responsibilities for our director of music and organist, Trystan Bennett, are such that he simply cannot perform many of his ordinary tasks through alternative procedures like our other staff can do. Yet both Trystan and his wife Caitlin Bennett have provided valuable support with video recordings of our Good Friday worship with Stations of the Cross and of occasional music for Lent, Easter, and Pentecost that have been broadcast over Facebook Live. Trystan will keep making those offerings available periodically, just as he has given us important assistance on information technology and continues to rehearse and to organize for our eventual return to ordinary worship.

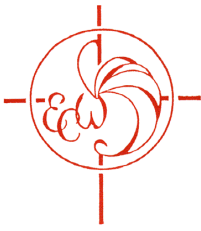
As employees who are also priests, Father Rickenbaker and I have obviously had to make some adjustments in our work routines, like our lay colleagues have needed to do; and like our lay staff members have experienced for themselves, other aspects of our clergy work are necessarily suspended for a time. Throughout this pandemic, all of Aquia Church's employees have contributed their talents and dedication in labor for God's glory. So too have many, many parishioners in their unpaid labor on campus and off.

At various moments in history, there have been profound changes in labor markets and in labor practices: the abolishment of slavery and the slave trade, increased mechanization in farms and factories, child labor laws, the rise and decline of labor unions, Rosie the Riveter and expanded opportunities for women workers, and OSHA requirements come to mind for starters. Years from now, we might reflect upon the changes that have occurred in our work situations during this remarkable time of our own history. It is worth noting that one insight from the Protestant Reformation was a newfound appreciation about the dignity of human labor in virtually every case: nuns and monks might belong to religious orders and members of the clergy might belong to holy orders, yet these vocations are not the only kinds of holiness available to human beings. Moreover, most any task or job can become a way by which any human being can contribute to the greater good for God's glory. Perhaps the month of September will give us some occasion for reflecting on the significance of labor in our lives—not so that someday we might rest from our labors (Revelation 14:13), but so that we all might be strengthened to do well the work that God has given us to do (BCP 366).

Jay Morris



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN



Carry-out Picnic Meal

Sunday, Sept. 13

Following the 9 a.m.

Outdoor Service

RSVP by Sept. 7

bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com

or call the church office,

540-659-4007



Upside down in some context or another, we have changed almost every aspect of our lives. That being said, our process of communicating and sharing physical time with one another certainly is one of the changes. Our social media skills are honed, our e-mail accounts are swamped, and we are making or changing plans in order to accommodate what may or may not be our new norms.

One long-standing tradition in late summer at Aquia is Homecoming Sunday in September. Homecoming brings our parish family together and welcomes newcomers back after the summer break to a celebrated form of communion hosted by the ECW. The Homecoming luncheon for 2020 is on the calendar. With some modifications to fit our current diocesan- and state-mandated restrictions for gatherings and food service, the ECW will change our picnic luncheon in order to be compliant.

We are excited to invite you to partake in a carry-out picnic meal, prepared by the women of the ECW—including ham, fried chicken, baked beans, salads, and dessert. Immediately following the outdoor morning service on September 13, we will have the drive-through/take-out meal ready for you at the great hall.

We are asking each household to RSVP by Monday, Sept. 7, indicating your name and the number of takeout meals you will be picking up to share at home or some other place off-campus. This will help us in planning our numbers. If you usually attend the virtual service at 7:30 a.m. or the outdoor evening service at 5 p.m., then plan on coming by and picking up your Homecoming picnic meal between 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. that day, and enjoy your meal at your leisure on Homecoming Sunday, Sept. 13. To RSVP, e-mail Briget Kane bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com or call the church office (540-659-4007).

We hope you will plan to partake in our modified annual event, bringing members of our parish together with fellowship, looking and feeling a little different, yet always with good food and in joyous celebration of the creativity of our ministry.

As you sit down to enjoy your carry-out meal, our calendars are already marked for 2021's Homecoming celebration!

Briget Kane

Cross and Cupola Roof Project: An Update



The Stafford County Architectural Review Board has unanimously approved our proposal to cover the cross atop the historic church building with new copper, and to replace the copper shingles on the roof of the cupola beneath the cross with new copper shingles, for the sake of enhancing the structural integrity of these features and protecting our building. In due time, the copper across the entire top of the building will have a uniform appearance. We offer our thanks to the ARB for their endorsement and to the vestry (especially to the buildings and grounds committee, led by junior warden Ron Korth) for its preparation on this project. The construction team hopes to begin work within the next few weeks, depending largely on a week-long forecast of clear weather.



STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service and Fellowship

Sts. Mary and Martha Guild has fallen into a wonderfully comfortable and comforting routine over the past six months. On Mondays, we receive an e-mail complete with an attachment that has the entire Morning Prayer service in it for the coming Thursday, with that being our usual meeting day. In the service printout, there are all the readings, psalms, collect, and prayers. In the prayers is an extensive list of intercessions and thanksgivings that we have built together. During this quiet time of physical separation from each other, we lift up our prayers together

Thursday mornings at 9:30. It is comforting to know that others are also praying for our friends and families, our church family, our community, the world, and each other. If you would like to join us from your home on Thursday mornings, please reach out to us via e-mail. If you have a prayer request, send it to us. We will be glad to include your request in our intercessions.

Mary Jane Cole

maryjane@cfsw.biz or

Carolyn Hendrickson

cvhendrickson35@gmail.com

"It is comforting to know that others are also praying for our friends and families, our church family, our community, the world and each other."



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Starting on Sept. 13, our Sunday school ministry will begin new Sunday school lessons via weekly, live electronic broadcasts and with materials available for your family. Several of our regular teachers for elementary-age children have already agreed to make this approach work until we can resume meeting in person for Sunday school classes. If you have a child or grandchild who might participate in virtual

Sunday school, then please register him or her with the director of Christian education, Kristen Morgan, via email: christianed@aquiachurch.org. Meanwhile, we encourage children and their families to attend our outdoor worship services or to watch our worship broadcasts via Facebook Live, until we can reconvene in the historic church

Kristen Morgan

Matching Challenge Grant

Near the end of last month, we have received over 17% of the goal for our current matching challenge—the goal of \$100,000.00—toward retiring the construction loan debt on our Christian Formation and Fellowship Building. Thanks to an anonymous pledge, we have a new opportunity to pay off the loan for the CFFB even sooner than planned, and for less money overall. Every contribution that we receive for the new building between April 21, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2020 (unless otherwise specified) will be matched dollar-

for-dollar, up to a total of \$100,000.00, with all such contributions plus the matching amount being used to pay down the principal on 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 or contact Sue Selz in the church office sue.selz@aquiachurch.org.



**Matching Challenge
Grant**



Reflections on Slavery and Race



As another decennial birthday passes, I am a bit more introspective than usual. Like many others, I have concluded that the national phenomenon concerning race, social justice, and the legacy of slavery must be a catalyst for reexamining attitudes and understanding. I could choose to minimize or ignore this subject, but that is an evasion that I am no longer willing to brook. Though many white Americans may not know much about their family history, I have a great amount of detailed information about mine. This history reveals that I have been a beneficiary of slavery and the compound social interest that accompanied this economic and cultural vortex. My great-great-great-grandfather was a landowner in North Carolina, and the 1840 census reports that he owned fifteen slaves. His oldest son—my great-great-grandfather, who left the Lutheran ministry after 15 years in 1860—was a farmer with five slaves. His oldest 3 sons were conscripted into the Confederate Army and were wounded or killed at Antietam. In 1862 he and his wife had seven children, five of them under the age of 10. Would he have been able to farm and feed his family without the slaves he kept? He was a former pastor, a Union sympathizer, and married to a woman from Philadelphia; and though he may have been a kind and compassionate man, nonetheless he was a slaveholder. It is impossible to know what could have occurred, but what did occur was the survival of the family. Three generations later, we have my reasonably happy childhood and modestly successful launch into adulthood—aided and abetted by a tailwind of slavery.

On April 17, 1960, in an interview on “Meet the Press,” the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., commented that “it is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.” Attempts to bridge this divide seem incredibly difficult; it is now over 60 years since that statement. The price paid to do so has been severe. We have been reminded of this fact in remembering the late John Lewis, the

Congressman from Georgia who led a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama in March 1965, only to be met by baton-wielding state troopers who fired tear gas in the marchers as they prayed. In the summer of that year, an Episcopal seminarian, Jonathan Myrick Daniels (VMI ’61), was ministering in Selma, Alabama. He stayed with an African-American family and tried to bring their children to worship at a local Episcopal church, but he was not welcomed. August 14 is traditionally the feast day commemorating his martyrdom, as he was murdered while shielding a teenage co-worker on Aug. 20, 1965, after being released from jail with other civil rights workers. Annually, there is a march in Alabama to commemorate his work and sacrifice. His story can be found at the following website: <https://episcopalarchives.org/church-awakens/exhibits/show/escru/jonathan-daniels>.

I know that I have been the beneficiary of systematic injustice and immense, institutional cruelty. I had no direct voice in receiving this privileged place in society as an economically secure white male. I do bear responsibility to help confront and redress the legacy of cruelty and repression from which I have benefited. Reconciliation starts with removing the mote from one’s eye, and with listening to and understanding the other perspective. An analysis of the human genome reveals that all human beings are 99.9% identical in their genetic makeup. The superficialities of life blind us to our massive commonality. Moreover, I am moved by Jonathan Myrick Daniels’s words: “*I began to know in my bones and sinews that I had been truly baptized into the Lord’s death and resurrection...with them, the black men and white men, with all life, in him whose Name is above all names that the races and nations shout...we are indelibly and unspeakably one.*” Now is not too late to start.

Christopher M. Arey



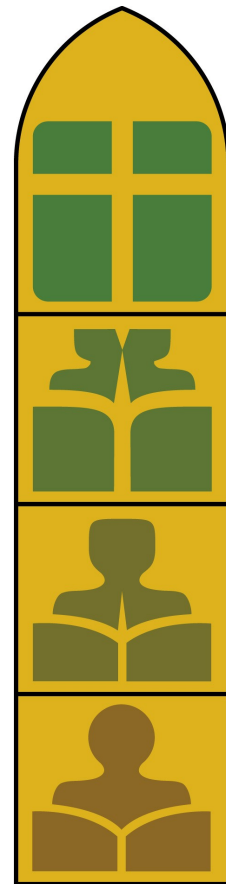
Online Series About Race

I am preparing a Thursday evening online series that will offer some Bible study and theological reflection on race, ethnicity, and related matters, starting in September. This series will be provided as part of our ongoing engagement about the social unrest that has arisen especially in recent months over issues of racial injustice, the Black Lives Matter movement, riots and other responses to these tensions, and so forth. Consistent with what I began to say following the death of George Floyd, my concern in this series is not to provide platitudes or simplistic reactions to what are obviously complex matters, nor to offer political punditry for what I believe requires something even more fundamental than politics or economics, but rather to explore with you what the resources of our faith-tradition might suggest for a more favorable and more promising way forward. I believe that originally these problems are deeply ethical and spiritual and (even more so) that lasting solutions to them will likewise be ultimately moral and theological. Accordingly, this is the perspective that I shall bring to the discussions we shall have.

Two books that will be featured prominently in the conversations are *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* by Old Testament scholar J. Daniel Hays (InterVarsity Press, 2003) and *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* by theologian Willie James Jennings (Yale University Press, 2010). I read these books two summers ago, well before the most recent unrest emerged, and I hope that these volumes will be helpful for our situation today. These are not the only volumes that shall be mentioned in the series, but their contributions will be important and meaningful for us. Reading them might be worth your while as well, but this online series will introduce you effectively to their concerns and their findings. More information on these books is available in my "Reading Room" article that accompanies this edition of the newsletter.

If you have questions about this series or any suggestions to make for it, then please contact me directly (morris@aquiachurch.org or 540-659-4007 at the church office).

Jay Morris



Learn
&
Grow

Diocesan Prayer Initiative



The Diocese of Virginia is launching an initiative towards creating a website through which anyone in the diocese may request prayers, with a team of volunteers ready to offer their prayers for the various needs and to follow up after a while in order to see whether more prayers are needed (much like Aquia's own prayer chain, but this one would serve the entire diocese). The diocese is inviting Episcopal churches in our Fredericksburg region to conduct a test-run of this approach for two months, starting around Sept. 1, before expanding it

throughout the diocese. You may submit your prayer requests through the following website <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqIilbyf-Jr-FBlsWdgCpGXXKhevXl8bJLCJQUvX6MRCgRcA/viewform> or through the following e-mail address fxbgregionprayer@gmail.com. If you want to join the Fredericksburg region team of people praying, or if you need more information about this initiative, then please e-mail Jim Carlock of Trinity Church, Fredericksburg jimcar2424@gmail.com.



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

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 in the service of our country who are deployed.

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.

STAYING IN TOUCH

During the coronavirus pandemic and eventually afterward, we would be glad to keep in touch with you in ways that you will find helpful. That way, you can stay informed and up-to-date about the news of our parish.

If you would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list for receiving this monthly *Cross Section* newsletter, please notify Sue Selz in the church office (sue.selz@aquiachurch.org).

If you would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please notify Dennise LaBarre in the church office (office@aquiachurch.org).

If you want to be added to our e-mail distribution list for weekly announcements and parish-wide updates, then contact Sue Selz in the church office (sue.selz@aquiachurch.org).



*How to
reach us:*

www.aquiachurch.org

office@aquiachurch.org

<https://www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch>
(540) 659-4007

Aquia Church Prayer List – September 2020



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



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

July 21, 2020, meeting, (via Zoom)

In Attendance: Fr. Jay Morris, Rector; Fr. James Rickenbaker, Assistant Rector; Bill Hoffman, Senior Warden; Ron Korth, Junior Warden; Chris Arey, Treasurer; Charlie Bingay, Dickie Boes, Chris Bowie, Bob Brandon, Carroll Frederick, Michael Golasz, Patty Montgomery, Patricia Springer, Kit Stoltz, and Chris Wanner.

Business Session

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer: Fr. Jay Morris

Treasurer's Report

It was reported that the 2019 audit was conducted satisfactorily and was finished on July 21, 2020. Fourteen months of funds for the CFFB mortgage payment are available in the United Bank money market fund. Giving was down in June and pledged income fell in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, online giving was robust. Some expenses were reduced due to reduced use of buildings and resources. Non-operating expenses were up slightly due to work in the historic church. Significant reduction in average weekly income compared to June of 2019 was reported.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Approved by vestry as amended with this revision to the last sentence of the Treasurer's Report: "The balance sheet reported principal for the construction loan was a \$1.604M liability based on year end 2019 values; the actual current liability is \$1.160M and will be updated for future balance sheets."

New Business

Resolution 2020-8 provided for delegates to the Diocesan Convention scheduled for November of 2020. It was resolved that Chris Arey, Michael Golasz, and Mary Nixon would represent Aquia Episcopal Church at the conven-

tion, and the resolution was approved by the vestry unanimously.

Old Business

Resolution 2020-6s was proposed by Fr. Jay Morris for the buildings and grounds committee. This resolution reflected the option from Pioneer Roofing to cover the wood trim under the eave of the cupola of the historic church with white aluminum to match the current aesthetic/historical look of the church. A presentation to the Stafford County Architectural Review Board will be made in the first part of August 2020 and will include the preferred white aluminum covering. Resolution 2020-6s further clarifies Resolution 2020-6, which had not included Pioneer Roofing's proposal to use the white aluminum as trim. This substitute resolution was approved unanimously.

The vestry discussed specifics surrounding the John Peyton Memorial Plaque as proposed by the Peyton Society. The Peyton Society had proposed to affix the plaque to a section of the cemetery fence of the historic church, attempting to adhere to Vestry guidelines. The plaque would be affixed at the same maximum height of the already-existing David Wirman plaque, on an arched area of the fence, which would equalize the look of both plaques. Some concern existed regarding whether the section of fence would bear the weight of the plaque. The Peyton Society will be expected to incur the cost of replacing the section of fence, should it not be able to support the weight of the plaque. The vestry preferred use of appropriate brackets to affix the plaque. The vestry discussed an assessment of the parish during the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest regarding race relations. For the past five Sundays of outside worship, an average of 40 people attended our outside worship services. Regarding social unrest due to race relations, the clergy reached out to



Vestry Highlights

various parishioners for advice and counsel. The clergy stated that all responses would be spiritually and liturgically sound as they seek to provide appropriate responses to the unrest.

Reports from Committees

Reports previously filed electronically.

Report from Rector

Fr. Jay Morris stated that Fr. James Rickenbaker is scheduled to take a class from an African-American Anglican priest who studied under the Rt. Rev. Dr. Tom Wright. Fr. Rickenbaker is looking forward to this study and how it could aid Aquia Episcopal Church's response to social unrest regarding race relations.

Upcoming Dates and Information

The next vestry meeting will be Aug. 18.

Good of the Order, Closing Prayer, Adjournment

Aquia's Pantry gave away 5443 lbs. of food in June 2020. Aquia's Table served 154 people this past week. A parishioner was watching virtual worship while stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Aquia Episcopal Church was once again listed in the religious section of the Free Lance-Star. Fr. James Rickenbaker closed the meeting in prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Carol F. Korth
Register, Aquia Episcopal Church*





Aquia Episcopal Church
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22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Come and Join Us: Aquia Church Is Busier Than Ever!

Find out about all of these fellowship gatherings in this newsletter, by calling 540-659-4007, or by accessing <https://aquiachurch.org/connect/announcements/>

- ◆ Sunday morning Worship Online on Facebook @ 7:30 a.m., remains viewable after event
- ◆ Sundays Outdoor Worship at 9 a.m. & 5 p.m. (Weather permitting)
- ◆ Sunday School: Beginning Sept. 13, online
- ◆ Weekday Morning Prayer at 8 a.m. on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch>
- ◆ Wednesdays @ 10:30 a.m., beginning Sept. 9—online Bible Study with Fr. Rickenbaker: Book of Exodus
- ◆ Wednesdays @ 6 p.m.: Aquia's Table & Aquia's Pantry, Christian Formation & Fellowship Building
- ◆ Wednesdays @ 7 p.m.: online Bible Study with Fr. Morris—Book of Ezekiel
- ◆ Thursday mornings @ 9:30: Sts. Mary and Martha Guild
- ◆ Thursday evening series about race with Fr. Morris, beginning in September

Check out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch>



September 2020 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

Two summers ago, some of my clergy continuing education introduced me to several books dealing with racial and ethnic identities as theological issues—all of which seems even more pertinent now than before, in light of the attention that our country's social unrest over race relations has garnered. A good deal of my thinking on these matters has been shaped by such works as these, which will play a significant role in the Thursday evening series on race, ethnicity, and related matters that I shall begin offering via Facebook Live on September 10. These texts might be helpful for you, too.

One such book is *From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race* by J. Daniel Hays (InterVarsity Press, 2003). The title is taken from Revelation 7:9, where John receives a vision of the great multitude of people in heaven so vast that no one can count them all, with folks from across the spectrum of racial, ethnic, national, and other cultural groups. Much of Hays's attention concerns presenting details about these matters of history from Old Testament times. That approach is appropriate, not only since the geography and timeframe of Old Testament history is much broader than that of the New Testament texts, but also because there are simply more (and more complex) cases to handle in the Hebrew sources. Consider, for example, what all happens in the early chapters of Genesis, where we first learn about the fact that humans are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and also encounter the introduction of sin into human life (Genesis 3), its momentary culmination in the scattering of people into various language groups after the arrogance at Babel (Genesis 11), and the ultimate blessing of all people-groups through the initial blessing of Abraham and his family (Genesis 12). Hays offers perspectives about the diversity of nations and cultures playing important roles in Scripture, including Cushites, Egyptians, Philistines, Hittites, and non-Hebrew Semites. Related to these matters are sojourners from other lands, foreigners from other nations, and intermarriage with people from other religions—again, all still relevant for contemporary situations. Hays then deals with the national and cultural complexities of the New Testament era, including Jewish and early Christian interactions with Greco-Roman society and with folks from north Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere. In the New Testament, Hays concentrates on the Gospel of Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Paul, and the Book of Revelation. In just over 200 pages of text, Hays's conclusions about the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural realities of life in biblical times and the moral demands of Scripture upon Jewish and Christian believers are soundly supported and largely irresistible by fair-minded followers of Jesus, who himself interacted with people from places and races and ethnic groups well beyond those of his upbringing and background and who himself insisted that the Gospel be shared with everyone around the world. Hays rarely comments here about contemporary situations in race relations, simply because they generally lie beyond the scope of this book (which limits itself to matters of race and ethnicity in the Bible); similarly, he rarely ventures at length into details about race relations apart from the lens of blacks and whites in the United States (say, relations with Native Americans, Hispanic people, or folks of Asian backgrounds). Hays is professor of biblical studies at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, where he serves as dean of the Pruet School of Christian Studies and professor of biblical studies; he has also been a foreign missionary in Ethiopia for five years and a member of short-term mission trips to several other countries.

A different kind of book altogether is *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* by the African-American theologian Willie James Jennings (Yale University Press, 2010). Approximately two-thirds of this book is devoted to four chapters, launched with noteworthy vignettes, that trace the intricate role that Christianity played in the historical developments of European colonialism in Africa, the transatlantic slave trade, and racial identity (whereby a person becomes identified first and foremost by skin color instead of, say, by ethnic, national, or religious group). Part of these accounts explain how Christian leaders helped to initiate the rounding-up of Africans in their native lands, the loading of such people onto ships bound for various parts of the Western hemisphere, and the beginning and expansion of race-based slavery, even when conversion to Christianity and the spread of Christendom was explicitly intended as part of this enslavement. Those developments were made possible in large part by the tendency of European Christians to ignore the essential dignity of Africans deserving to remain in their homelands, treating them instead as commodities available to be removed forcibly from their native soil, transported to a foreign world, and exploited ruthlessly for national and personal gain. Among the figures discussed are the Roman Catholic Portuguese prince Henry the Navigator (who began gathering and trading slaves from Guinea in west Africa as early as 1444) and the prince's historiographer Zurara (who wrote through tears about amassing slaves); the Spanish Jesuit José de Acosta Porres (who taught theology in Peru), and the white Anglican bishop John William Colenso (who worked in the South African region of Natal in the mid-1800s and became a staunch champion for the Zulu people). Perhaps most remarkable is the report of how Olaudah Equiano was born in the 1740s, captured in his native west Africa (present-day southeastern Nigeria), exported on a British ship for sale in the Caribbean, and later traveled to England, where he was baptized into Christianity, became a freedman, and wrote what might well be the first autobiography by a sub-Saharan African. Consider the statistics that Jennings presents:

From 1707 until 1808 [when the British ended the slave trade they began in the 1560s], over seven hundred thousand Africans gave their lives to the Atlantic plantation complex, laboring in the British Caribbean colonies. During the same period, more than five hundred thousand Africans perished on the march to the slave ships; four hundred thousand died on board the ships; and a quarter million died shortly after the ships docked. Yet during this time Britain was alive, powerfully alive, at sea. This is the world Olaudah Equiano was born within. (170) [Note that these figures concern *only one century* in the *British* transatlantic slave trade. Document-supported estimates for the number of deaths throughout the multinational transatlantic slave trade from 1500 to 1900, from capture in Africa to arrival in the West, run up to four million Africans, with perhaps some twelve million Africans seized for the transatlantic slave trade—not to mention the number of Africans who were enslaved yet remained on that continent even before the onset of European slave-trading and afterwards!]

Jennings's stories constitute a grand if gruesome tale of history, geopolitical competition, economic greed, and the failure of Christians to love one another as Christ loved us. The final third of Jennings's book steers the human imagination in a new direction for the chance to view one another without the kind of racial prejudice that emerged after the exportation of African slaves. An ordained Baptist pastor, Jennings taught theology and black church studies at Duke Divinity School for over twenty years and was a long-time administrator there before moving to Yale Divinity School in 2015.

A third, more provocative work with a more contemporary, more American scope has likewise stimulated my thinking on these important topics: *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James H. Cone (Orbis, 2011). Cone died in 2018 after teaching theology for several decades at Union Theological Seminary in New York City; he was long recognized as a leading figure in the black liberation theology movement and was ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, even though he was often dismissive toward institutional religion. This book addresses the irony that one tree is the most prominent symbol of Christianity through its association with the crucifixion of Jesus, whereas another tree is the most prominent symbol in America of racial hatred and intolerance of some people by others who considered themselves followers of the same crucified Lord. The paradox that a tree (whether the cross of Jesus Christ or the site of infamous and unjust hangings perpetrated by white Christians against African-Americans [who were nearly always Christians too]) could be used so viciously for violence and could so profoundly influence the identity of so many folks in such different ways, is a notion that Cone mines instructively. He aptly insists that when white citizens were lynching black citizens, people in *both* communities (and not African-Americans alone) were becoming victims of attitudes and actions that were admittedly far from Christ-like. To his credit, in many cases Cone sings while he guides his readers through the complex history of racial tension and the spiritual need for racial reconciliation in our land in our own day. He frequently draws upon the phrases and themes of 'Negro spirituals' and Gospel music (with which many readers will already be familiar—the tragedy of suffering and the need for consolation, as so often sung in the blues as well) in order to illustrate the cultural setting from which his observations have emerged. This volume has under 170 pages of text, and its penultimate paragraph provides a convenient glimpse at what Cone has in mind:

The cross of Jesus and the lynching tree of black victims are not literally the same—historically or theologically. Yet these two symbols or images are closely linked to Jesus' spiritual meaning for black and white life together in what historian Robert Handy has called "Christian America." Blacks and whites are bound together in Christ by their brutal and beautiful encounter in this land. Neither blacks nor whites can be understood fully without reference to the other because of their common religious heritage as well as their joint relationship to the lynching experience. What happened to blacks also happened to whites. When whites lynched blacks, they were literally and symbolically lynching themselves—their sons, daughters, cousins, mothers and fathers, and a host of other relatives. Whites may be bad brothers and sisters, murderers of their own black kin, but they are *still* our sisters and brothers. We are bound together in America by faith and tragedy. All the hatred we have expressed toward one another cannot destroy the profound mutual love and solidarity that flow deeply between us—a love that empowered blacks to open their arms to receive the many whites who were also empowered by the same love to risk their lives in the black struggle for freedom. No two people in America have had more violent and loving encounters than black and white people. We were made brothers and sisters by the blood of the lynching tree, the blood of sexual union, and the blood of the cross of Jesus. No gulf between blacks and whites is too great to overcome, for our beauty is more enduring than our brutality. What God joined together, no one can tear apart. (165-166)

Please be cautioned that I cannot endorse every claim or suggestion that Cone makes throughout this book or in other writings. He has been criticized for tending (among other things) to resist calls for racial reconciliation, to favor Marxist analysis of society's problems, and to give undue (even uncritical or unchallenged) privilege to the perspective of members of racial and other minority groups; he also seems to assume at times that the experience of every member of the African-American community is universal, whereas that is not the case. Moreover, his understandable righteous anger at past injustices has helped to shape a shrill tone in much of his writing—especially in his earlier texts, but even occasionally in this one—that will be off-putting to many readers as strident in the extreme. Yet for a patient and sympathetic reader, the discussion Cone generates in this book is certainly thought-provoking and gives one occasion for reflection about his legitimate concerns, which deserve to receive a hearing. Cone himself finally said that this book had become his favorite among those he wrote, and I believe that this opinion is justified because in my experience this is the most theologically and socially persuasive of his writings.