



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

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



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.





CROSS SECTION

Aquia Episcopal Church

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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

How the Grinches Won't Steal Christmas

In *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, all the Hoos down in Hooville woke up on Christmas morning and found none of the usual trappings of Christmas—no gifts, ribbons, or tags, no packages, boxes, or bags, not a single decoration anywhere—because the Grinch had stolen them. And yet all the Hoos joined hands anyway and started singing for joy that Christmas Day had arrived. That's how things go in Dr. Seuss's classic. But obviously things are different for us in the midst of the pandemic. We'll wake up this Christmas morning and might find a Christmas tree or stocking around, and perhaps even a gift or two, but we certainly won't be joining hands and singing as a congregation. For Christmas 2020, there will definitely be fewer parties, celebrations, and reunions than before, and inevitably there will be a suggestion—like the one from Mr. Grinch—that “no Christmas is coming.”

Given the various restrictions imposed on us by authorities in the commonwealth and in the diocese, and given the brute force with which the coronavirus continues mercilessly to afflict us, we might be tempted to try assigning blame—as if to say not only “You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch,” but also to claim that other powerful figures are mean, too. Perhaps we could trust that they are aiming with their best intentions to keep everyone safe, even if sometimes such trust is hard to earn and easy to lose.

It is also very tempting for us so to grieve this year's loss of the ceremonies and traditions that usually accompany Advent and Christmas that we deceive ourselves into thinking that we have somehow lost Christmas itself. Many will mourn how much we miss the music, others the chance to travel and reconnect with loved ones, and still others yearn for the familiar festivities and fun that in so many cases will have disappeared in 2020. But do such understandable disappointments really amount to missing Christmas? Of course not—well, not if you keep a proper perspective.

At Aquia Church, throughout the seasons of Advent and Christmas and beyond, we shall still gather as best we can for continuing to grow in our community of faith: we shall still meet in person and electronically for worship, formation, and service to others, with those opportunities offering occasions for fellowship. Those who greet each other at our outdoor worship services are getting accustomed to the folding chairs and to keeping their coats on—at least it's not too hot and stuffy outside these days! Those who join together for virtual Bible studies, our online Advent series, and electronic Sunday school are digging deeper in the faith. When bakers bring desserts for Aquia's Table from their own kitchens, when volunteers bag groceries for Aquia's Pantry, when members of our prayer shawl ministry knit and crochet in the security of their homes, and when we all pray for each other, we share together in the labor of love that the Lord has given us to do.

By now everyone is sick and tired of the pandemic; some of us are also sick and tired from COVID. Yet there are steps anyone can take in order to ward off the sense of despair and defeat that we might be facing. Instead of letting a grinchy spirit delude us into assuming that “no Christmas is coming,” our best response is faithfully and joyfully to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ is born, and to celebrate that Good News resolutely—no matter how many grinches try to stop it from coming.

Jay Morris



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

The Feast of St. Nicholas

Dear Family in Christ,
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank our God for you, especially for how you desire to learn from the examples of the saints and rejoice in their witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. One such saint is St. Nicholas of Myra. Though he is often popularly adapted and secularized, his witness on behalf of the Lord Jesus was profound. His feast is celebrated each year on Dec. 6th, the anniversary of his death. This saint, for whom the popular jolly gift-giver is named, was a bishop and a defender of the faith. Alongside his status as a defender of the faith, St. Nicholas was also known to be a protector of children, earning him the title patron saint of children.

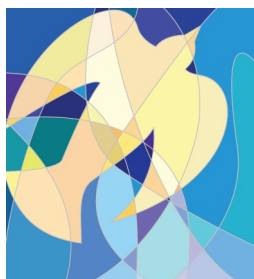
St. Nicholas's patronage over children largely comes from a story about how he saved three young women from a terrible fate. A father had three daughters for whom he was not able to pay the dowry for them to be married. The father determined that he would sell his daughters off into prostitution instead. Bishop Nicholas heard of this terrible decision and on three different occasions, while walking by their house, threw in a bag of gold through their window. The three bags of gold were enough to pay for the three young women to be married. Traditions have evolved around this story over the centuries since his death. Children over time began to put their shoes out on Dec. 6th in order for St. Nicholas to put coins in them. That tradition developed into the tradition of Christmas gift-giving in which we participate each year. (Note that the secular figure of Santa Claus has more in common with the Norse god Thor, whose pagan celebrations took place around Dec. 25th.) St. Nicholas loved and sought to protect children, and so each year he is honored by the faithful.

Even more important than St. Nicholas's love for children was his love for our Lord Jesus Christ and for the church. St. Nicholas was an avid defender of the faith against the Christological (meaning: relating to Jesus Christ) heresies of the fourth

century. St. Nicholas was present at the Council of Nicaea when they developed the Nicene Creed. St. Nicholas advocated for the language present in the creed as we have it today. He famously fought against the heresy of a man named Arius, who erroneously believed that the Father alone was God and that the Son and the Holy Spirit were in fact demigods or emanations from God. Arius taught that the Son and the Holy Spirit were creations of God. This teaching was deeply troubling as the implication was that the Son and the Holy Spirit were not worthy of worship. If that were true, then what should be done with Paul's obvious worship of Jesus or with the Book of Revelation? So St. Nicholas spearheaded a group that locked the doors before Arius and his party could come inside the building. When Arius eventually got in, St. Nicholas very publicly punched Arius in the face for spreading heresy. St. Nicholas's presence at Nicaea was profoundly important to the development of the creed that we still say each Sunday.

On Dec. 6th, remember St. Nicholas in your prayers. Remember what God did through him. Pray that God might work through you too for the defense of the faith and for the protection of children. 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*



LEARN FROM THE EXAMPLES
OF THE SAINTS

AND REJOICE IN THEIR
WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



AQUA 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



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

In October, the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia held its first-ever virtual meeting, celebrating the 130th Annual Meeting and the 131st UTO Ingathering. It was well attended, virtually, and a pleasure to worship with our sisters in Christ. Our meeting was opened with a prayer reflecting the theme: “Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace.”

In a short business segment, new officers for the diocesan ECW were elected; we also heard about the Triangle of Hope reflections project, the United Thank Offering, and ECW scholarships. In addition to the guest speakers, Bishop Susan Goff announced the next ECW president. The Bishop and the Very Rev. Kim Coleman, ECW chaplain, led us in worship.

The Rev. J. Randy Myers, president of GraceInside (which is the Chaplain Service of the Virginia State Prisons), spoke about his ministry in our state prisons. The ECW of Aquia has supported GraceInside for many years. Rev. Myers started working as a child

with his parents in their ministry instilling hope, values, and healing. He continues their ministry which began in the 1920s. We were so touched by his good works; GraceInside will continue to be a ministry we support.

On Dec. 20, in lieu of our local ECW Annual Meeting and introduction of the ECW’s “Gift of Life” honorees, the women of Aquia’s ECW will share a COVID-compliant curbside takeout brunch with members of our parish following our morning worship. Our ECW bulletin will be attached to your takeout bag. Our traditional reception also includes our annual budget presented for approval; it will be attached to the bulletin and your input would be appreciated. We will introduce honorees Kathie League, Lisa Schwartz, Penny Stevens, and Trudy Osborne with a biographical sketch and give you a window into why they are our 2020 “Gift of Life” honorees. We will have a sign-up sheet for the meal, and we invite you to join us again in celebration and fellowship for a

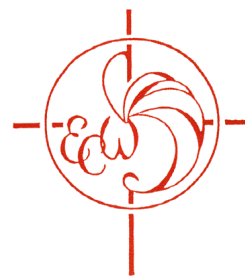
curbside takeout meal. More information will be coming in the weekly e-mail of announcements.

The outgoing officers and committee chairs will be announced in the bulletin; our new officer and committees will also be included. We invite you to join us in the service of our ministry.

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

—from *Prayers for Episcopal Women*

Briget Kane
ECW President



STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service and Fellowship

Do you need a set of candles for your Advent wreath or a small Christmas gift? Would you like an Aquia Church ornament for your own tree? During the four Sundays and four Wednesdays of Advent, come by the great hall to see what we have to offer on our ECW gift table. There you will find a lovely assortment of handmade Christmas ornaments and wreaths along with Aquia Church gold ornaments, note cards and cookbooks, sets of Advent wreath tapers, plus wax angels and star candles made from Aquia Church Altar candle stubs. There will also be a table full of the cutest sock monkeys you ever did see! There are only three of these sitting Santas (see the photo) painted by Joan Nebel, so be sure to



shop early if you would like one. We also have more of our alphabet-block elves (see the photo). Our shopping hours are Sundays from 11:30 a.m. till

1 p.m., and Wednesdays from 2 p.m. till 4 p.m., rain or shine, throughout Advent.

During the months of December and January, Sts. Mary and Martha Guild will continue to pray ‘together’ in our own homes at 9:30 a.m. on Thursdays (our traditional meeting day and time). We have added many names to our intercessions and would be glad to add more if you have a request. Simply reach out to us.

Mary Jane Cole
maryjane@cfsfw.biz

Carolyn Hendrickson cvhendrickson35@gmail.com

Sts. Mary and Martha Guild
Co-chairs



OUTREACH

During November the Outreach Ministry completed our Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box campaign and launched our Adopt-A-Family campaign for Stafford County Department of Social Services (DSS).

Because of the pandemic, shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child were not collected at the Church. We built a goal page on the Operation Christmas Child Website where shoeboxes could be purchased and packed online for \$25. We surpassed the goal we set! As of Nov. 16, we had reached 39 shoeboxes. The campaign ended on Nov. 23. If you packed your own shoe box and took it to a drop-off location, please send an e-mail to Johanna Jones (rjones1549@aol.com).

In September an inspiring Operation Christmas Child Project Leader Workshop was held online. They told us that it is even more important now during the pandemic to reach out to children all over the world and to tell them of God's love. We often wonder where the shoe boxes we pack are sent, but it is indeed possible to track where a shoe travels. We also wonder if the shoe boxes have an impact on the children who receive them. During the workshop, adults who received shoe



boxes when they were children were highlighted. They now spread the Gospel in their own countries. One of the workshop presenters related how she received a shoebox when she was a 13-year-old child living in Romania. She said it brought color into her world, and that God built a bridge to her heart. Her story is a little different than the others because she now lives in the United States. She is active in her church, is a project leader, and helps her children pack shoe boxes every year. She closed out the workshop with a beautiful prayer. It was a resounding yes that the shoe boxes do make a difference.

DSS advised us that they now have 1,000 more families registered in the Adopt-A-Family program than in 2019. Our little trees with the gift tags will not be used this year, because changes had to be made in order to ensure everyone's safety. This year we will be collecting gift cards for food and gifts

for 10 families and seniors. Please purchase the gift cards from stores where clothes, toiletries, toys, books, and/or food can be purchased, such as Walmart, Target, Kohl's, Giant, Aldi, CVS, Walgreens, dollar stores, etc. We suggest amounts between \$10 to \$50 each. Please take the cards to the church office and drop them through the mail slot in the front door of the Fleurries. The deadline is Dec. 7.

We will see how much money we have remaining before we decide on any monetary gifts to our missionaries, Stafford Junction, and ERD Disaster Relief.

We appreciate your support through this difficult time.

It will soon be a new year and we will say goodbye (thank goodness!) to 2020. Please consider joining the Outreach Ministry as part of your journey in 2021.

Johanna Jones

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Aquia Church continues to offer weekly online Sunday school classes for children in pre-K through 12th grade. Our Pre-K through 5th grade class and middle/high school class both meet using Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. For more information about Sunday school, please contact Kristen Morgan.

In particular, we hope that families of our younger children will be able to participate in the Advent project—much like “Flat Stanley” projects at school—that we have mailed out. If you have not yet received your Advent/Flat Nativity information in the mail, please

let me know right away. We will also be sending out weekly Advent newsletters with fun, Advent-themed activities that families can do together.



Thank you to our teachers for keeping their commitment to our young people and continuing to provide Christian education in this new, virtual format. Thank you Father Rickenbaker, Linda Burghart, Dana Van Metre, David Morgan, Kim Bamber, Chris Bowie, Holly Embrey, and Patty Montgomery.

Kristen Morgan
christianed@aquiachurch.org



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

October 19, 2020 (via Zoom)

In attendance: Fr. Jay Morris, Rector; Fr. James Rickenbaker, Assistant Rector; Bill Hoffman, Sr. Warden; Ron Korth, Junior Warden; Chris Arey, Treasurer; Charlie Bingay, Dickie Boes, Chris Bowie, Bob Brandon, Michael Golasz, Patricia Springer, Kit Stoltz, Chris Wanner

Business Session

Call to Order, Opening Prayer, Lord's Prayer: Fr. Jay Morris

Treasurer's Report:

- The Aquia Church Association remitted a check to the Moncure Robinson Fund for more than \$36,000.00, thus liquidating the assets of the Association.
- Due to increased activity of Aquia's Table as it supports the community by providing meals and food during this time of pandemic, some expenses have increased.
- Payments toward pledges are doing very well.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes was accepted, seconded, and passed unanimously.

New Business

- The Administration Committee finished drafting new bylaws, which will be voted upon during the next vestry meeting. The change in by-laws reflected the real work being done, as reported by Bill Hoffman.
- Trustees of the Funds: TOTF distributes proceeds from investments to parishes according to their holdings. Regarding Aquia Episcopal Church, all funds would be re-invested. Specific needs, such as new tractor equipment for the cemetery, can be requested from the current cemetery fund. Future action regarding the distribution in

2021 would be determined at such a time as necessary.

- Ron Korth initiated a discussion about the installation of a light pole at the main entrance to the grounds, due to the darkness of the entrance at night. A one-time fee of \$467.85 would be charged by the electric company, with a monthly maintenance fee of \$15.00. Due to the already cluttered area, conversation ensued regarding various spots at which to place the light pole. The objective is to have an entirely lighted main entrance to the church. Discussion will continue at a subsequent meeting.
- The vestry unanimously approved a proposal to delay the 2021 Annual Meeting (originally Jan. 3, 2021) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with hopes to reschedule on the first Sunday of March, 2021, at the earliest.

Old Business

- The Pledge Campaign for 2020-2021 was structured to be a narrative budget with more emphasis on qualitative aspects of the budget. Noting how many weeks of virtual Sunday School, the needs of various outreach ministries due to the growing needs of the community during the pandemic, and other statistics displayed in real-time, annotations will show the ongoing work of salaried employees of AEC and justification for those salaries. Using a variety of tactics to ease the act of submitting a pledge (return address envelopes, etc.), the vestry moved ahead with the 2020-2021 pledge campaign. Vestry members were asked to submit short testimonials to support the ongoing campaign.
- Regarding the diocesan budget adjustments, some reports were given that the diocese would need to enact certain austerity measures, such as not filling vacant positions



Vestry Highlights

and/or the layoff of certain staff due to financial conditions resulting from the pandemic. Aquia Church, to date, has not needed to enact such measures.

Committee Reports

- The *Administration Committee* will discuss the proposed new bylaws at the vestry meeting in November.
- The Finance Committee is currently conducting the Newsoms Peanuts fundraiser.
- The *Building and Grounds Committee* revisited the discussion involving the new light pole at the main entrance of the church grounds. The church grounds fall clean-up date is scheduled for Nov. 14, 2020. Some goals will be revisited in the spring of 2021 with the coming of better weather.

Reports by the Wardens

The senior warden had nothing additional to report. The junior warden had nothing additional to report.

Report from the Rector

- Sunday outdoor worship is well attended, with only three Sundays that were rained out so far.
- COVID-19 cases in the community were on the rise. Aquia Church continued to practice the safety guidelines. Two parishioners were reported to be ill with the virus.
- The 226th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Virginia will be conducted on Nov. 14, 2020, via virtual sessions presented on Zoom. The need to elect a new Bishop of Virginia was discussed, and the difficulties presented with that process

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Our Budget and You

By the time you read this article, your vestry will be working hard to prepare an operating budget for 2021. This is an important undertaking under normal conditions, and its significance has been magnified by the uncertainty created by the effects of COVID-19, which has created unprecedented challenges for all of us. I have served as Treasurer of Aquia Church for 15 of the last 17 years, and building a budget for 2021 has been the most challenging test yet.

The foundation of the budget is built upon the gifts forthcoming from the annual pledge campaign. Pledged income has long been and remains the primary income source for our operating budget. Our non-operating budget, which largely accounts for the maintenance of the cemetery, the historic church, and Clifton Chapel, uses endowed or restricted funds. Non-restricted funds are what supports our operating budget, which covers our personnel, property, selected ministries, and expenses for inreach and outreach. There are no endowment funds for our

operating budget. We don't we receive any funding from the Diocese or Virginia or from the National Church; in fact, we—like most churches—give funds to the diocese.

Prior to COVID-19, we had been able to lease space in the 1960 parish house to two small churches; additionally, we were able to rent space in the great hall in the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building to families and outside organizations for special events. The churches renting space have informed us that they will not be returning, and the diocesan restrictions concerning the use of indoor spaces like the great hall remain in place. This creates an income loss approximating \$25,000. We are pleased that Clifton Chapel remains rented and in use by St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church, though income from this agreement is dedicated to the upkeep and maintenance of the Clifton Chapel campus. Outreach and other ministry-supported events such as Fall Fest, our spring craft fair, and internal events such as a baked potato sale are

all in question for much of 2021. The prospect of a widely available vaccine has raised hopes for a return to normalcy, but uncertainty remains. For budgetary purposes, we are taking a conservative approach to income, so the importance of pledged income is elevated more than ever.

For the current year 2020, we received 97 pledges for \$416,039. As of November 29, 2020, the Sunday designated for submitting our pledges, we received 70 pledges (including 5 new adult pledges and 5 from children/youth) for \$325,421.92 This is an impressive start, but we still have work to do. We understand that COVID-19 has affected the financial position of many people and that some folks may be cautious of making a pledge for 2021. Even so, we ask that your prayerfully consider how you might be able to join us in sustaining our common mission and ministry.

Chris Arey
Treasurer



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due to COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines could make the process longer.

Upcoming Dates and Information

Fall clean-up: Nov. 14, 2020.

Next vestry meeting: Nov. 17, 2020.

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

- Bishop Goff was diagnosed with breast cancer earlier this year, has received surgery and follow-up treatments, and is now believed to be cancer-free.
- The future of outdoor worship could be decided on a week-to-week basis, due to the fall and winter weather seasons.

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

A Gift For the Person Who Has Everything: NUTS!

The Vestry is very pleased to offer the Virginia-grown nut products from Newsoms Peanut Shop again in 2020. As you know, the consequences of the pandemic cancelled Fall Fest, eliminated rental income from the churches which were using the 1960 parish house, 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 are available at our outdoor worship services and at the church

office; an order form is also included in this issue of the *Cross Section* newsletter, which is available on our website: www.AquiaChurch.org. Your paid orders are due by Dec. 7. **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



Pilgrims, Puritans, and Plymouth Rock

2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the *Mayflower*, with her 102 passengers and some 30 crew, off the coast of Cape Cod. They survived the 66-day voyage, which saw the birth of one child (and upon arrival the birth of a second), as they sought to establish the Plymouth Colony, coming ashore at present-day Massachusetts on December 18, 1620. This milestone in American history is rich in symbolism but fraught with confusion and error. Many books have been written about this event; for those interested in a great read about it, I recommend historian Nicholas Philbrick's award-winning book *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War*. Drawing in part from that book, this article will address some of the confusion and will point out some of the religious concerns that

animated these early settlers (to whom you might be related!). Indeed, the Mayflower Society reckons that (as of 2018) some 10 million Americans were descendants of Mayflower passengers, and worldwide there are 35 million descendants. That is a remarkable figure, especially since only 37 of the 50 who survived the first winter are known to have had offspring.

Of the 102 Pilgrims, about half were Separatists; the other Pilgrims were called Strangers. The term 'Pilgrims' dates to about 1800, so those original settlers did not refer to themselves as such. The Separatists were Christians from northern England, under the aegis of the Rev. John Robinson. Adhering only to what they saw the Bible as sanctioning, they rejected the liturgical practices and theological doctrines of the

Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. Dissenting from the Church of England was unlawful; so in order to escape persecution, these Separatists fled to Holland, from where they were eventually able to arrange transport to the New World. The Separatists subscribed to the following beliefs:

1. Predestination: They subscribed to the belief that the God's elect had been chosen before the foundation of the world. This was not uncommon among Calvinist Protestants of the time.

2. Liturgy: Only baptism (including infant baptism) and the Lord's Supper were recognized as sacraments. The other sacraments of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church were rejected as 'man-made' and not grounded

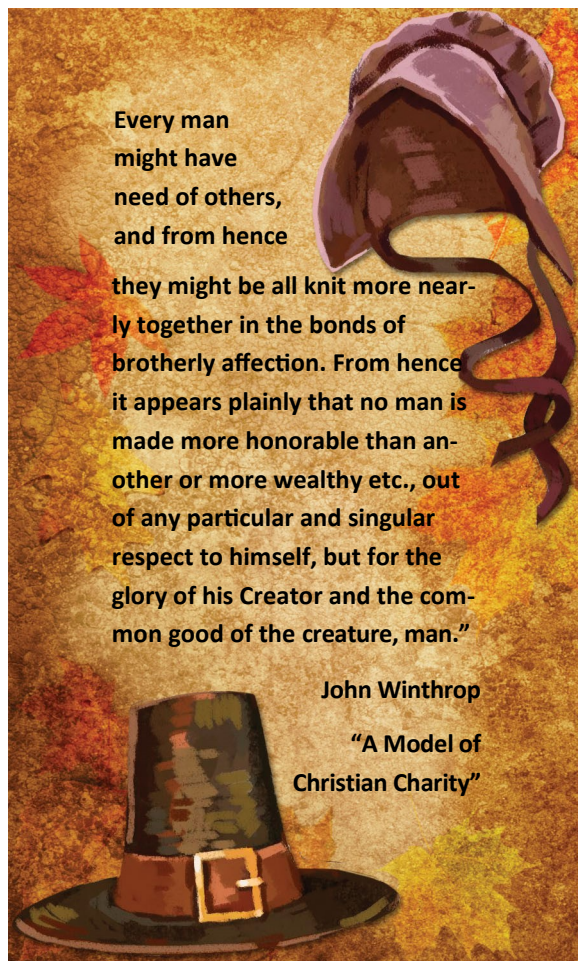
in scripture. Marriage was considered a civil affair, to be regulated by the state. The adornment of churches with crosses, stained glass, and other artifacts was considered idolatry. Church buildings were to be plain and simple. Prayer was only spontaneous, while scripted prayers such as those found in the *Book of Common Prayer* were rejected. They did not sing hymns, but sang the Psalms as found in the Geneva Bible, their preferred text. Disavowing priests and bishops, they created their own set of ministers, with deacons and elders, similar to what is found in the Book of Acts.

3. They diligently observed the Sabbath on Sundays, but rejected Holy Days, including Christmas and Easter, which they regarded as man-made and not founded in Holy Scripture.

The Puritans are different from the Pilgrims. Unlike the Separatists, the Puritans believed they could reform the church from within, and they tried to do so by establishing churches in the 'congregational way.' Their worship did not include sermons and preaching, but extemporaneous 'testifying' by the Holy Spirit. As an organizing principle, congregational churches are bound together by a covenant and make decisions democratically, including the selection of religious leaders. They recognized the Church of England's ecclesiastical structure but chose to operate their churches in this congregational way. In the summer of 1630, John Winthrop led a fleet of 11 ships and some 1,000 colonists to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They arrived with resources and resolve and built up a colonial theocracy. By 1640, the colony had grown to a stronghold of 20,000, while much smaller Plymouth was home to just 2,600 Pilgrims. Plymouth was absorbed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691.

At Holyrood Church in Southampton England, prior to embarking aboard the *Arbella* on March 21, 1630, Puritan leader John Winthrop gave his famous sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity."

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Matching Challenge Grant

Can you make a year-end gift toward reducing the construction loan debt on our Christian Formation and Fellowship Building? As of November 23, we have received nearly 92% of the goal for our current matching challenge (\$91,708.00)—a recent gift has given us a significant boost!—but we still have more funds yet to raise toward our goal, with the clock still ticking. Thanks to an anonymous pledge, we have a new opportunity to help retire our debt 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 being used to pay down the construction loan. Your gift should have “New Building” marked on the check or on the envelope. 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).

Jay Morris

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In this sermon, preparing the colonists for the rigors of the New World, and speaking to God’s reasons for the differences among mankind, he stated “that every man might have need of others, and from hence they might be all knit more nearly together in the bonds of brotherly affection. From hence it appears plainly that no man is made more honorable than another or more wealthy etc., out of any particular and singular respect to himself, but for the glory of his Creator and the common good of the creature, man.” In this sermon Winthrop also invoked the words of Jesus as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:14): “We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, may the Lord make it like that of New England. For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” (President Ronald Reagan later amended that phrase to “a shining city on a hill.”)

And now for Plymouth Rock. Some may have visited this venerable site, the traditional point where the Pilgrims disembarked. The authenticity of the loca-

tion is highly suspect. No contemporary Pilgrim accounts refer to this rock, and the first claim that it was the landing place was made in 1741, some 121 years after the Pilgrims arrived. Author Bill Bryson wrote, “The one thing the Pilgrims certainly did not do was step ashore on Plymouth Rock,” pointing out that the boulder would have made an impractical landing spot. Additionally, it was at Provincetown, in order to explore Cape Cod more than a month before they arrived in Plymouth harbor, that Pilgrims came ashore, which lessens the significance of where they set foot in Plymouth. In 1774, the rock broke in half during an attempt to haul it to Plymouth’s town square. One portion was kept there and was later moved to Pilgrim Hall Museum in 1834. It was rejoined with the other portion of the rock, which was still at its original site on the shore of Plymouth Harbor, in 1880. Due to souvenir hunting prior to 1880, it is estimated that only about 1/3 of the original rock remains.

Chris Arey

Matching Challenge Grant



For surely
I KNOW THE
plans
I have for
YOU,
says the
Lord...
TO GIVE YOU A
future
WITH
Hope.
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER



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

Mary Louise Myers, 1921-2020.

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 April 4, 2021. 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

Aquia Church Prayer List

Dec. 2020—Jan. 2021

Faye Andrews, Linda Beville, Rhett Blythe and family, Julie Burgess, Elijah Colliver, Richard Craven, Donnie Davis, Brian Driscoll, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Christopher, Shawna & Oliver Gray, Chris Hundley, Jerry & Dot, John Jackson, Will King, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Patty Montgomery, Rebecca Poole, Terry Prickett, 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.



How to reach us:



www.aquiachurch.org

office@aquiachurch.org

(540) 659-4007

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



Ministry in the New Year 2021

By most accounts, for most people the year 2020 has been an *annus horribilis*—a horrible year. Few folks will likely reflect on the year now ending as a perfectly pleasant period. Truth be told, however, some interesting developments during the present year at Aquia Church will help to shape our ministry together during the new year ahead.

One positive turn is the flexibility that so many folks have shown in using technology for godly purposes. When the pandemic initially closed down all of our public worship, right away we began to make broadcasts of simple worship services over Facebook Live. First with the liturgy of Morning Prayer for Sunday worship, then some opportunities for adult formation, then Morning Prayer on most weekdays, and even performances by members of our music ministry, these virtual broadcasts are available to folks using a computer, tablet, or smartphone—even to folks like me who do not have a Facebook account. Our Sunday school, youth group, vestry, and ECW have held many discussions using other electronic formats, such as Zoom and Google Hangouts. The willingness of so many in our parish (present and past) and so many friends of Aquia Church to engage electronically has helped to keep everyone better connected, and undoubtedly some of the good things happening at Aquia Church have become more widely known to the broader community this way.

Another positive turn has been the kindness with which so many folks have pitched in for adapting to changed circumstances. Having to relocate our worship services from the stately environment of our colonial-era building to the challenges of the outdoors (including heat, cold, wind, rain, and noise from traffic) has required a tremendous amount of sacrifice and cooperation. When Aquia's Table and Aquia's Pantry needed to assess how they could convert their operations from standard practices



indoors to innovative curbside delivery, these ministries rose to the occasion with the recruitment of new volunteers, the procurement of additional equipment, and the cultivation of more relationships for food and financial support. So much of the work undertaken by our lay staff has been transformed from top to bottom in order to help all employees stay healthy and safe while still enabled to accomplish their expected tasks. Some of our ministries (such as our altar guild and our men's breakfast group) have been largely stopped in their tracks—by necessity of limitation, through no fault of theirs—whereas other groups (such as our outreach ministry) have faced situations in which creative approaches and changed plans have kept their work alive. The determination that so many folks have shown to do what we can has been inspiring at times.

One turn that is already proving challenging is the decreased sense of fellowship that accompanies the reduced attendance at worship and else-

where. We are rightly concerned for the well-being of those folks who, because of their physical health situations or genuinely understandable insecurity about infectious disease, are needing to stay home far more than usual. They likely feel trapped and isolated in many respects, and they are missing out on opportunities to share tangibly in the life-changing, life-giving work that the Lord has called us to do. Simply put: we miss each other, even if this situation will eventually improve. Yet there is a related risk: those who enjoy the chance to watch a church broadcast in their pajamas—like those who don't even bother to do that—might not recognize or understand what they are missing (and what the broader community is missing) when they continue to stay at home and remain lackadaisical in their faith, even when the pandemic eventually begins to subside and everyone could return to worshipping together again.

Our parish will have to be diligent in appreciating the importance of every member and newcomer and visitor here, so that everyone will feel valued and cherished and thus heartily welcomed to return when doing so becomes increasingly safe for everyone. That might be our biggest challenge—and our best opportunity—for 2021.

Jay Morris





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Christmas Week Opportunities

Sunday, Dec. 20 (fourth Sunday of Advent):

Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. outdoors (weather permitting), followed by Takeout Brunch to be picked up from the new building's foyer, recognizing "Gift of Life" honorees, sponsored by ECW (rain or shine, serving at 11:30 a.m.)—be sure to sign up at outdoor worship services or by contacting the church office (540-659-4007 or sue.selz@aquiachurch.org)

Holy Eucharist at 4:00 p.m. outdoors (weather permitting)

Thursday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve):

Electronic Worship for Christmas Eve/Day available by 10:00 a.m. at our Facebook Live page
(www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch)

Thursday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve):

Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. outdoors (weather permitting) and

Holy Eucharist at 2:00 p.m. outdoors (weather permitting—note the special time)

Friday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day):

Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. outdoors (weather permitting)

Sunday, Dec. 27 (first Sunday after Christmas):

Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. outdoors (weather permitting)

Holy Eucharist at 4:00 p.m. outdoors (weather permitting)

December 2020 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

While introductory textbooks about the New Testament are a dime a dozen, good ones are not. In such books aiming toward high school, college, and seminary students and toward motivated readers learning away from a classroom, there is a lot of fluff and filler besides some wrong-headed information available to an unsuspecting audience. Similarly, there are a number of helpful introductions to the four Gospels, to the letters of Paul, and to other portions of the New Testament (not to mention its individual books), but there are not too many worthy textbooks surveying the entire New Testament. Even then, not all of them ever quite produce a comprehensive synthesis. Two of the volumes that come closest to succeeding for a magisterial probe of the New Testament's breadth with depth of detail and with keen insight—volumes that I have sometimes used myself—are Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library, 1997; abridged ed. by Marion L. Soards, 2016), and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Fortress, 2010). Yet of course there are necessary limitations with these otherwise fine books: for instance, Brown and Johnson provide only some attention to the cultural milieu of the New Testament, and they deliberately do not deal extensively with questions about the historical Jesus.

N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird have come to our rescue with what might be the best available solution: *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Zondervan Academic, 2019), from which I have been learning during this year. Let's make the heavy-weight acknowledgement upfront: the hardcover version weighs almost four-and-a-half pounds and runs nearly a thousand pages, even if ten percent of that total is bibliography and index. (The e-book version is just as long but weighs far less!) That's even longer than Brown and roughly twice as long as Johnson. Yet the pages in Wright and Bird are not so dense with verbiage as you might imagine, and their book is replete with attractive color photographs alongside maps, charts, and sidebars. Wright and Bird begin with a 40-page overview about the historical, literary, and theological elements that have shaped the New Testament witnesses to Jesus Christ, followed by some 80 pages about the religious, philosophical, social, and cultural backgrounds of Jesus' world, including Jewish history from the time of the Babylonian exile in 587 BC up to a century after Jesus while covering the Greco-Roman influences too. Those preliminaries offer a solid background for appreciating the context within which the New Testament developed. One then finds nearly 200 pages about the Jesus in history—Jesus as a prophet announcing and explaining the kingdom of God, Jesus as Son of Man and as crucified Messiah, Jesus' self-understanding—with 70 more pages devoted to Jesus' resurrection from the dead as presented in the epistles of Paul and in all four Gospels. Those two sections draw on material from all four Gospels in order to make a compelling, clear-eyed, evangelical case for the figure of Jesus to be the center of the New Testament in ways that largely surpass what Brown, Johnson, and similar authors have sought to accomplish in their comparable textbooks. Just over 200 pages present the epistles of Paul and related documents in something like (though not completely in) their presumed chronological order of composition. The Gospels plus the Acts of the Apostles are introduced as the work of the four New Testament evangelists, in around 150 pages, followed by another 150 pages about other writings near the end of the New Testament list (Hebrews, James, Jude, the letters of Peter and of John, and the book of Revelation) that reflect the missionary work of the early Church. The final 40 pages indicate how these various documents coalesced in order to constitute the New Testament as we have it today and how together they continue to shape the lives of so many people.

Part of the reason why *The New Testament in Its World* is such a valuable tool for biblical study is the fact that this textbook is accompanied by several supplements that can be purchased separately or as part of a package, including a 4-CD set of 37 video lectures (13 hours altogether) given by the authors themselves and filmed on location at various sites in the Holy Land (including the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and Corinth), an audio recording of the video lectures, and a 176-page workbook that reflects the structure of the main book and the lectures while providing space for taking notes, exercises and blanks for answering questions that help one follow the reading and the lectures more closely, and thus encouraging a deeper, more active engagement with the material. By anyone's reckoning, Wright is one of the foremost authorities on the entire New Testament, whose writings and lectures—for all the difficulty of their content—are brilliantly lucid; he is not only a scholar and professor but also a former bishop in the Church of England and a devoted churchman, and this set of materials combines his past scholarship with his concerns for the Church and the world. Bird is an Anglican as well, a layperson and scholar and academic administrator who (like Wright) has a gift for helping wide audiences grapple with the complexities of biblical studies. I am looking for ways to incorporate *The New Testament in Its World* into my teaching at Aquia—perhaps through one or more of our Bible studies broadcast over Facebook Live in 2021, perhaps through leading a new evening series on this work when we can reconvene in person together—and so I welcome your inquiries and suggestions for how to make that happen. Even before those occasions, you might be interested in securing some or all of these materials for yourself and beginning your own explorations.

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RT 918	8 oz. Chocolate Amaretto Pecans		\$10.00	
RT 914	6 oz. Honey Crisp Pecans		\$9.00	
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Due to Church Office by: Monday, December 7, 2020