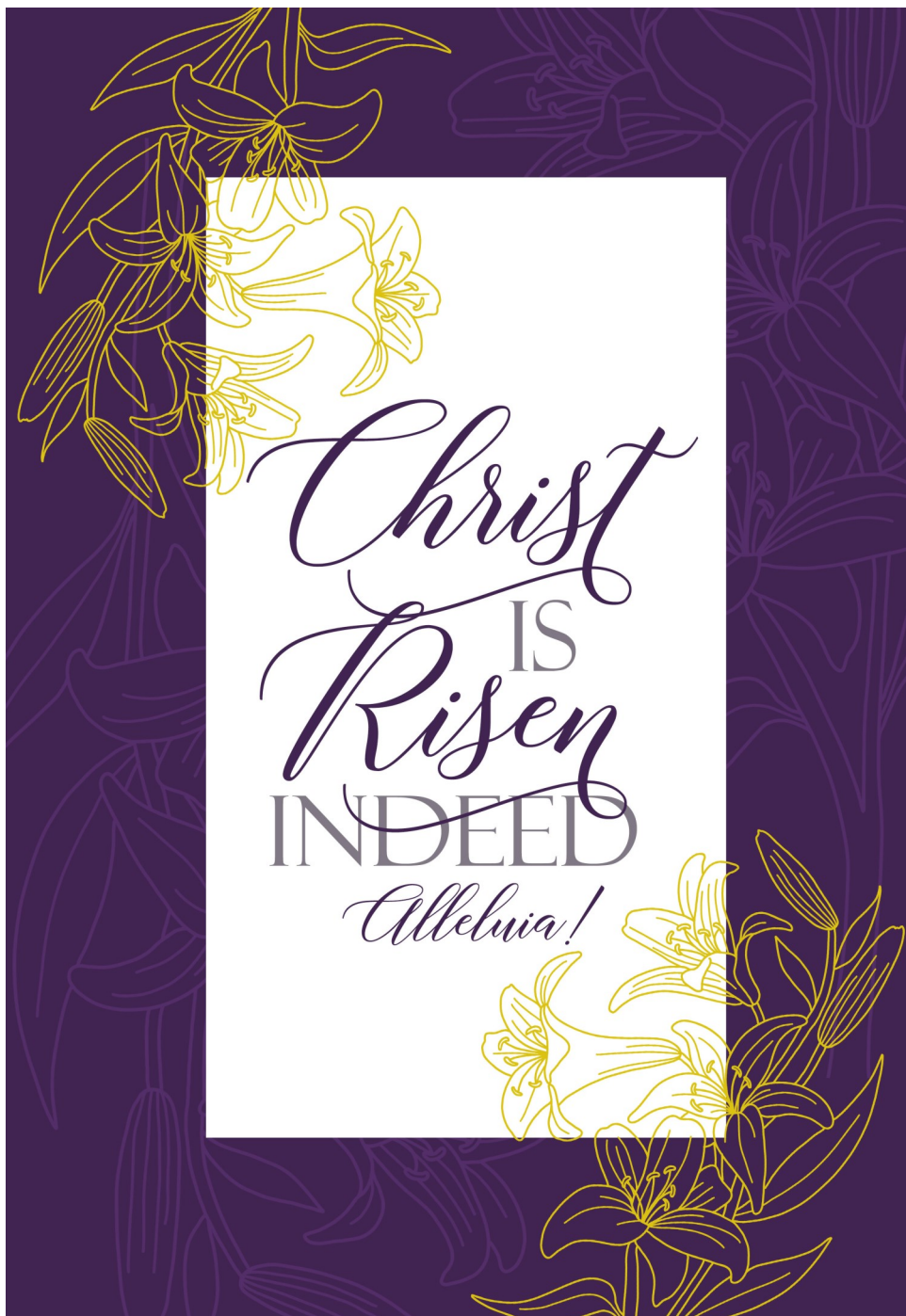




AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

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



INSIDE . . .

Schedule for Holy Week and Easter

An Invitation to "Return for Easter"

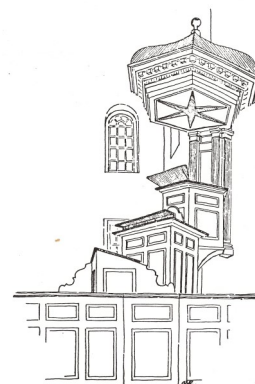
New Study Series: the Good News of Easter

ECW and Sts. Mary and Martha Still Serve During Pandemic

Inspirational Stories of Martyrs Who Peacefully Stood for Justice

Join the New Prayer Card Ministry

Vestry Continues to Meet Through Zoom! Highlights on page 8.





CROSS SECTION

Aquia Episcopal Church

2938 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
P.O. Box 275
Stafford, VA 22555

Contact us:

(540) 659-4007
office@aquiachurch.org
www.aquiachurch.org

Office hours:

8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Monday– Friday,
except Tuesdays (closed)

Rector

The Rev. Jay Morris

Assistant Rector

The Rev. James Rickenbaker

Treasurer

Chris Arey

Assistant Treasurer

Charlie Bingay

Music Director

Trystan Bennett

Dir. Christian Education

Kristen Morgan

Parish Administrator

Dennise LaBarre

Executive Assistant

Sue Selz

Nursery Supervisor

Dawna Spaulding

FROM THE RECTOR

The Surprise of Easter

Imagine how the early Christians must have felt at the end of Good Friday. Their leader was dead from crucifixion as if he were just another convicted criminal. Meanwhile, the earth had shaken Jerusalem with a violent quake, a veil of darkness hovered over the sky, and ordinary folks blithely continued their everyday lives while everything changed for these disciples of Jesus. What would happen to them? What could his movement do in his absence? What would happen to his corpse, that body so beaten and bruised and bloodied?

It seems as though nearly no one was expecting the crucified Christ to be back alive again. After all, dead people always remain so, don't they? And what good could a dead Messiah do? How could he lead his followers? What could anyone accomplish in death? How can a corpse do anything?

Now imagine the shock and surprise that must have hit Mary Magdalene, the apostles, and other followers of Jesus as they began to hear the news—and to see with their own eyes—that the tomb of Jesus was empty and that he had risen from the dead, walking and working wonders and wishing words of peace and good cheer to them, just as he had done only days before. They had seen the Lord hanging on a cross, bleeding and dying; they had taken his corpse for burial; but no grave could confine his remains for long. There he was, alive again, his wounds still visible yet healed.

The only way to explain how the death of this peasant rabbi from Galilee could have prompted the beginning of a worldwide religious movement we now call Christianity—a movement that includes the founding and the continued existence of Aquia Church and our involvement with this beloved place—is that Jesus' crucifixion was transformed by his resurrection on the first Easter Sunday. Mary Magdalene, the apostles, and other followers of Jesus began to spread the truth of this Good News to everyone they met and to anyone who would listen. They told the story of



Early on the
first day of the week ...
Mary Magdalene came to
the tomb and saw that the
stone had been removed
from the tomb.

John 20:1, NRSV

their encounters with the risen Jesus by word of mouth, they spread the report about his being alive again through various writings, and they formed institutions from churches to schools and hospitals in order to bear witness to his saving grace. No other explanation for the powerful explosion of this new movement deeply rooted in an old faith can suffice except for the truth that while Christ had indeed died, he was raised from the dead and remains alive even now.

That stunning and startling recognition of Jesus' return to life has been making heads spin ever since its earliest days, and it is still catching us by surprise. During this Easter season, I want to share with you some perspective about this fact by carefully exploring what Paul, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John regarded as the Good News of Jesus Christ that was worth sharing with the rest of the world in order to transform it, and by carefully exploring the impact of the Gospel upon our view of the world, human nature, and society as a whole. The two new series that I shall lead on Wednesday evenings and Thursday evenings, starting during Easter week, will help you be as surprised as the early Christians were. So tune into our church's Facebook Live page (www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch) on Wednesday, April 7, and Thursday, April 8, as we consider the Good News we celebrate throughout this Easter season and beyond. What you learn just might surprise you—pleasantly so!

Jay Morris

FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

Return in Easter

Dear Family in Christ,
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank our God for you, for how diligent you have been about attending worship during the pandemic. We have been put in a stressful position as a parish by powers beyond our control, but you have continued in your presence in worship. For this, and for many other reasons, I give thanks to God for you. As we move into the Easter season, as we hear yet again the Alleluias in worship, and have our eyes drawn anew to the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, I pray that those of you who have been so diligent in attending our various offerings for worship would continue in that attendance. I pray and hope that those of you who have not been attending would return.

Throughout the pandemic, we have at times been able to offer only online services (at the outset of the pandemic as well as after Christmas). During that time, we saw hits on our Facebook page swell. We also started and continue a weekday Morning Prayer ministry through Facebook Live. We offered about every option possible to keep us all connected in the unbelievably strange year that was 2020. At other times—like now—we have been able to offer online services and in-person services outdoors. Fr. Jay and I have been delighted that so many folks have been coming back to participate with in-person worship, bearing with the cold temperatures and the forceful wind. We have even begun to offer the option of sitting in your car (with the heat on, for those cold mornings!) and listening to the service over the radio through the use of the generous gift of an FM transmitter. That enables folks to be on the property and to participate in the general vicinity, which is surely a step up from having to stare at a screen for more time during the day.

Of course, we continue to offer Morning Prayer through Facebook Live for those who do not feel comfortable being back in-person. Rest assured, we certainly

understand that some do not yet feel comfortable or are higher risk. This virus has been so devastating. Many of us have lost loved ones to it. As such, for the duration of this pandemic, **we foresee offering an online worship service to provide for those who simply can't be with us in person yet.**

With all of that said, and in light of the rise in the number of vaccinations in recent days, I invite you to consider returning in the Easter season. We will have outdoor worship on Easter Sunday as well as the following Sundays of the Easter season, weather permitting. **I invite you to come back and join us with in-person worship outdoors** to receive the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, to hear the Word of God read and proclaimed, and to be physically present with us (maintaining all of the important protective measures such as physical distancing, wearing masks, etc.). Church is essential. It is a priority for the Christian. It is the place where we gather together to hear the Gospel message of Christ crucified and raised and to be transformed into the body of Christ through Word and Sacrament. Since it is an impossibility to receive the sacrament through a screen, online worship services will always remain an ersatz (if occasionally necessary) substitute.

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*



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
Chairperson*

Michael Golasz

Building & Grounds Committee

Bill Hoffman

Senior Warden

Ron Korth

*Junior Warden
Building & Grounds
Committee Chairperson*

Patricia Springer

Administration Committee

Christopher "Kit" Stoltz

*Youth Representative
Administration &
Finance Committees*

Chris Wanner

Buildings & Grounds Committee

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Episcopal Church Women

O God, as our world begins to reopen,
help the women of Aquia to continue to pray fervently,
labor diligently, and give liberally to make known
the power of your love given through your son, Jesus.
May our work in mission and ministry be
guided and blessed by you. *Amen.*

We are so encouraged to see new faces and returning faces after a year of limiting our contacts and after a year with so many restrictions on our worship. Facebook pages, our Zoom gatherings, our e-mails, text-messages, our ministry partners, and outreach continue to serve as we are slowly coming back to a new “normal.”

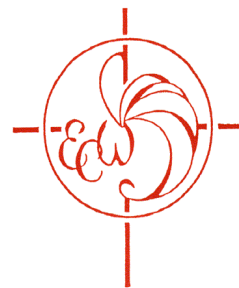
The variety of ways we have for serving our parish, community, and world are slowly reopening. We are cautious in our plans and dates. On May 9 we will hold our UTO Ingathering for spring 2021. Our UTO chairperson, Jennifer Stoltz, is stepping into the well-worn shoes of Becky Monger. Becky and Jennifer have worked together many times on many events for the ECW. We will miss Becky's leadership in this role

but are excited as Jennifer Stoltz will take the reins for this occasion.

Many variations of our annual calendar of events are being worked on; several dates are still in flux. We have plans coming together to celebrate Aquia and its heritage for May. Some options are being considered for Fall Fest, and some activities will look different. We will use traditional ways to announce our activities and any limitations or restrictions to our planned parish events, as we are able, and as quickly as possible.

We invite you to share in the work and joy of all ECW's ministries! I can be reached at bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com.

Briget Kane
ECW President



Our ECW logo and meaning:

The Cross represents Christ and our service to Him in the world.

The Circle stands for our hope for wholeness in our lives.

The out-flowing lines from the center depict the many works of the Episcopal Church Women going out into the world.

The intertwined lines represent our lives centered in Christ.

STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service and Fellowship

Sts. Mary and Martha Guild is eagerly looking forward to resuming our in-person meetings as soon as we are allowed to gather safely. In the meantime, we patiently await this opportunity, and continue to stay close to each other with our virtual Morning Prayer and intercessions on Thursdays.

Some of our members have continued to work on crafts at home. For example, shown to the right are the colorful yoyo Christmas trees that Becky Monger has handcrafted. If you are spending some of your quiet time making a craft, please consider making a few extra to donate to the next Fall Fest craft room. While cleaning, organizing, and decluttering, please consider check-

ing your jewelry box for items to contribute to the next Fall Fest jewelry room.

As mentioned above, Sts. Mary and Martha Guild members are praying together on Thursday mornings for our families, friends, our parish family and the world. Please let us know if you or someone you love is in need of prayer. If you would like to share in our time of prayer, we would be glad to send you our weekly e-mail. Please send a note to Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfsw.biz) or Carolyn Hendrickson (cvhendrickson35@gmail.com).

Mary Jane Cole



AQUIA'S TABLE

Anniversaries can sometimes be celebrated or just recognized as a passage of time. This is an anniversary of a year of service and ministry that has been unlike the previous 11 years. In our newsletter articles, we have spoken about the numbers of meals served weekly, the volunteer members from the parish and from the wider community, and the restrictions prompted by the pandemic. As others were unable for many reasons to continue to meet the growing needs of our community, Aquia's Table has stepped up to serve with knowledge and faith that we can provide. Unable to have our annual golf tournament as our major fundraiser, we reached out and our parish family kept us afloat with donations, additional volunteers, and community support. We are consistently serving 300+ nutritious hot meals each week, including a small group of caregivers and our volunteers. The pandemic is not over, the need is ever present, and we will continue to serve weekly take-out meals.

To all those who have donated time, food, money, and prayers, the members of the Aquia's Table Core Team and the other members of this ministry are grateful. Your continued

support is a blessing to our ministry and community.

We have not weathered this storm and come out the other side just yet. At present it appears that Aquia's Table will be unable to host the annual Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament again this year. Following guidelines and the calendar year upon us, we will look to a second round of fundraising in early to late fall. Financial donations and other donations can be made at any time and are listed below. Some of the items are small; all are needed for our success.

We base week-to-week decisions to prepare and serve a take-out meal on Wednesdays based on the health parameters set down for us. Take-out meals will be available until we feel it is prudent to open the great hall for indoor seating. We partner with Aquia's Pantry and have meals ready to hand out. We will continue with Aquia's Care Teams to deliver meals when we are called upon for those who need delivery. If someone doesn't need the pantry but wants our meal for take-out, we will have curbside delivery available at the church parking lot.

Briget Kane



**A Little Goes a Long Way in
Feeding the Hungry:
Can You Help?**

[https://onrealm.org/
AquiaEpiscopalC/-/give/now](https://onrealm.org/AquiaEpiscopalC/-/give/now)

Here are some food items and their costs for Aquia's Table. Choose what you will give so others might eat.

Applesauce \$18.81/case
Black Beans \$20.35/case
Pears \$22.79/case
Steak Fries, frozen \$24.95/case
Mandarin Oranges \$25.88/case
Corn \$29.02/case
Green Beans \$29.33/case
Mixed Vegetables \$32.81/case
Peaches \$33.12/case
Fruit Cocktail \$33.12/case
Chicken Cutlets \$38.09 (43 pcs)
Bush's Baked Beans \$40.08/case
Beef Patties \$45.15 (40 pcs/4 oz ea)
Ground Beef \$180.80 (80 lbs, avg
\$2.26/lb)

Other Staple Foods and Supplies

Baby Carrots (38 lbs per meal)
Celery (10 bunches per meal)
English Cucumbers (18 per meal)
Fresh Fruit (Apples, Grapes, Oranges)
Fresh Chicken, whole or parts (108
lbs per meal)
Hamburger Buns (300 per meal)
Potato Chips/Taco Chips/Sun Chips
(300 servings/personal-sized bags
per meal)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our Christian Education ministry continues to offer online Sunday school each week using Zoom for students in pre-K through twelfth grade. For more information, please contact Kristen Morgan at christianed@aquiachurch.org.

Save the dates: "Rocky Railway" Vacation Bible School (VBS) will take place the week of June 21-25 for children in pre-K through fifth grade (entering fifth grade in fall 2021). Stay tuned for more details on how to volunteer and register your child or grandchild.

Kristen Morgan



King and Bonhoeffer: Seeking Justice Through Biblical Teachings

An oft-heard comment about Episcopalians is that we are more familiar with the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) than we are with the Bible. At Aquia Church, I would contend, if true, our clergy continue to wage a campaign to reverse that notion. Bible study is lively, illuminating, and nourishing. Though many of us do have well-thumbed BCPs, there are portions of the thousand-page BCP that probably do not attract our attention. Early in the BCP, the Calendar of the Church Year is delineated, and it probably contains some surprises for the careful reader. In addition to listing the Principal Feasts, Sundays, Holy Days, Days of Special Devotion, and Days of Optional Observance, it lists other commemorations, Ember Days, Rogation Days, and various occasions. Among the other commemorations, some saints and martyrs are honored on certain days; in April, two twentieth-century clergymen are so celebrated. Both died violently at the age of 39. The impact of their lives and ministry continue to reverberate in our own times.

On April 4, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., is commemorated on the day of his assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968. Born Michael Luther King Jr., in 1929, his father changed his own name and his son's name to Martin Luther King, after returning from a congregation-sponsored tour of Africa, Europe, and the Holy Land in 1934, when MLK Jr was 5. King graduated from high school when he was 15, and like his father and grandfather graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta.

In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization formed to provide new leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement. In the next eleven years, he led a non-violent struggle for justice and equality

that echoes still today. His home was bombed, and he was threatened, assaulted, arrested, and jailed on numerous occasions. During one of his incarcerations, he wrote the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," in which he responded to an open letter from eight white clergymen criticizing the actions of the SCLC's protest actions in Birmingham. Defending their use of non-violent disobedience, King wrote:

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was seen sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar because a higher moral law was involved. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks before submitting to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire [...]. We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. But I am sure that if I had lived in Germany during that time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal.

On April 9, the life and ministry of the other 39-year-old cleric is commemorated. This life is complex and easy to oversimplify. Like King, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born into a family of note; he had a twin sister, Sabine, and six other siblings. His father was a renowned psychiatrist, and his mother came from a family of distinguished churchmen. Bonhoeffer pursued an academic career as a theologian, obtaining his Doctor of Theology degree at

the age of 21 in 1927. Too young for ordination, he traveled to the United States and participated in the vitality of the African-American church, where he encountered 'Negro

spiritual music' and the segregation that persisted in America. Returning to Germany, he obtained a position as a lecturer in theology until being ordained in 1931. He travelled and helped to pastor expatriate Germans in London and in Spain, and he was well-regarded in ecumenical circles.

Not long afterwards, with Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer began his struggle to save the church in Germany. Under the Kaiser, the Lutheran Church in Germany was the quasi-official state church, and the Nazis worked to bend it into a *Reichskirche*, a church subservient to the Nazis. Bonhoeffer used his skills and faith to fight this development, and eventually he became one of the leaders of the Confessing Church, a movement faithful to the Gospel and opposed to Nazism. Though forbidden to speak in public, he joined the *Abwehr* (the German intelligence service), which provided a cover to assist underground activities, and he avoided conscription. In 1943 he was arrested and imprisoned at Tegel Prison. After the failed assassination of Hitler in July 1944, Bonhoeffer was associated with other *Abwehr* figures accused of complicity, and he was eventually transferred to the Flossenburg concentration camp, where with other prisoners he was tried and executed by hanging on April 9, 1945—just two weeks prior to the liberation of the camp by U.S. forces.

Bonhoeffer was very aware of the dangers he took in serving God. In 1933, when he was confronting the takeover of the church by the Nazis, he

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preached on the prophet Jeremiah, signaling his understanding that he—like Jeremiah—was a prisoner for God, and that his future was foreordained. Bonhoeffer preached:

[Jeremiah] was upbraided as a disturber of the peace, an enemy of the people, just like all those, throughout the ages, until the present day, who have been possessed and seized by God,

for whom God had become too strong [...]. The triumphal procession of truth and justice, the triumphal procession of God and his Scriptures through the world, drags in the wake of the chariot of victory a train of prisoners in chains. May he at the last bind us to his triumphal carriage so that, although in bonds oppressed, we may participate in his victory!

His most influential work, known to us as *The Cost of Discipleship*, high-

lighted the issue of 'cheap grace' arguing that "cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate." This challenge remains alive in the church today. An excellent biography is *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* by Eric Metaxas.

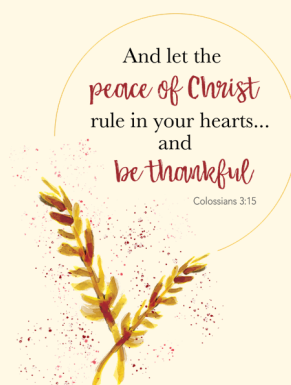
Chris Arey

Two Notes of Thanksgiving

* Sometimes it takes a scare to cause a person to appreciate what she has. From the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic to a personal health issue, this last year rattled my complacency with everyday life. As a result, I have experienced a fuller appreciation for simple things: a conversation with a friend, a walk, dressing up a bit even though I will be staying home all day, using china to eat breakfast cereal. Each day is a little bit of a celebration, and I am grateful to God to be able to experience it!

* While there has been so much uncertainty and so much reason for worry in the past year, we have been certain that we would not have to worry about our vestry leaders continuing to serve the Lord and this parish so well. Our wardens, Bill Hoffman and Ron Korth, and the other members of the

vestry have ensured that things go well around here, even with this awful pandemic mess. Thank you, vestry members, for being such faithful leaders and for taking such good care of Aquia Church!



NOTE: Would you be willing to share some reasons for which you are thankful to God? You may e-mail your note of thanksgiving to Father Jay Morris (morris@aquiachurch.org) or drop it off for him at the church office, or simply let him know about your occasion of thanksgiving when you speak with him, and in the next issue we'll share (anonymously, of course) some reasons for gratitude within our church. Your note of thanksgiving might inspire some gratitude in others at just the right time!



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Feb. 16, 2021

[Information italicized in brackets indicates activity occurring after the February vestry meeting.]

Business Session

In attendance were Rector Fr. Jay Morris, Assistant Rector (and Acting Registrar) Fr. James Rickenbaker, Senior Warden Bill Hoffman, Junior Warden Ron Korth, Treasurer Chris Arey, Charlie Bingay, Dickie Boes, Chris Bowie, Carrol Frederick, Michael Golasz, Patricia Springer, and Chris Wanner.

Fr. Jay opened with prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Chris Arey, gave the treasurer's report. He highlighted the new, streamlined format for the report. He updated the vestry on the new monthly payment for the construction loan after the loan modification. He further updated the vestry with information from the Trustees of the Funds. He reported that online giving is up significantly and is on track to be a sizable portion of giving for 2021.

Minutes from Previous Meeting (draft minutes of 1/19 regular meeting make mention of 2/2 special meeting but acknowledge that formal minutes were not taken on that occasion)

The vestry passed the minutes without amendment.

New Business

R-2021-04: Heat Pump for Parish House Lower Level (B&G and Finance Committees)

Junior Warden Ron Korth proposed purchasing and installing a heat pump for the downstairs of the 1960 parish house (with eventual need for a similar device for the upstairs). It will benefit the church because it will reduce the power bill for the parish house, which

currently has two furnaces. The heat pump will replace the downstairs oil furnace and outdoor A/C unit. The work would be done by Ron and stepson Dan Fols—both Aquia parishioners—through Dan's company, Mann-In, Inc. The work would be completed at a significant discount. (The Mann-In bid was approximately \$2,000 less than the Robert B. Payne bid). The vestry passed the resolution unanimously.

R-2021-05: Additional Principal Payment for CFFB Loan (finance)

The matching challenge last year aimed at reducing the outstanding balance on the construction loan. \$106,000+ was received, as was the \$100,000 match. The resolution would authorize the payment of \$106,000+ on the principal for purpose of reducing interest and overall outlay. The \$100,000 match would remain in the bank for monthly payments. We would have enough for 18 months of payments at the new rate after paying the \$106,000. The vestry passed the resolution unanimously.

R-2021-06: Adjustment to 2020 Balance Sheet (Finance Committee)

The resolution explains that there is a need to adjust the balance sheet in order to write off unfulfilled pledges from 2020, now termed 'accounts receivable' in accrual accounting. The vestry passed the resolution unanimously.

R-2021-07: Receipt of Funds Remaining from Stoltz Eagle Scout Project (Finance Committee)

Kit Stoltz's project generated roughly \$1,000 more than what the project required. The troop would like to grant that money to Aquia Church for the purpose of repair and upkeep for the project. The treasurer would be given discretion for how the money would be managed. The principal would be for the use of upkeep on the project. The vestry passed the resolution unanimously.



Vestry Highlights

Approval of Parochial Report on 2020

The parochial report was not complete at the time of the February meeting and therefore was not available to be considered yet. The treasurer's portion is complete, but the membership and attendance portion isn't ready because of substantial changes on the form to add a narrative portion (questions regarding the effect of the pandemic on the parish, including parish finances, also questions regarding racial reconciliation and other matters). The financial portion of the parochial report will be important going forward with the possibility of mandatory assessments in giving to the diocese on the horizon.

Approval of Committee Goals for 2021

The three vestry committees submitted their 2021 goals for consideration by the full vestry. The vestry determined that a capital campaign committee should be established and that the vestry should add a goal for itself of starting the capital campaign in 2021. The vestry committee goals passed unanimously as amended.

CFFB Matching Challenge for 2021

Fr. Jay asked for creative ways of thinking about the prospect of a matching challenge. The vestry sent the inquiry to the finance committee to consider for the March vestry meeting.

Options for Easter

We are not able to meet in-person for worship for Ash Wednesday. We likely

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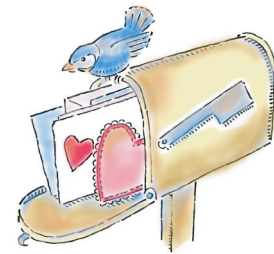
A Prayer Card Ministry?

During the pandemic, many of us have been missing the usual opportunities to see our friends and to encourage each other in our Christian faith. The electronic broadcasts of worship services, Bible studies, and other discussions have been a helpful substitute, but they don't always have the same appeal. We miss being able to shake hands with each other, to see each other face-to-face (without masks!), and to support each other with an uplifting word.

One thing that we at Aquia Church can do to look after each other—even in the midst of the pandemic and beyond—is to send greeting cards and thoughtful notes to those who need cheering up, to those whom we have not seen recently, and to those who might benefit from a tangible reminder that they are warmly loved. A brief note of encouragement can help those who are bereaved or struggling in some way; a personally signed card can brighten someone's day and serve as reassurance of God's love and ours.

Parishioner Cookie Howard has graciously offered to work with some other parishioners who share an interest in launching a prayer card ministry. The idea is simple but powerfully effective: when we become aware of a need in the parish for an individual or a family in our church to receive some greeting cards or notes for encouragement and support, one or more members of this prayer card ministry will receive the name and address and send out a card through the mail. No meetings are required for serving in this ministry, which can be conducted entirely from the comfort of your own home, and your involvement need not require even an hour per month. You could use your own preferred stationery or notecards of whatever sort, but the church is ready to supply some greeting cards and postage to interested participants.

The Christian fellowship and mutual care for each other within Aquia Church is a real strength of our parish, and engaging in this prayer card ministry is a promising way to build up our sense of



Card Ministry

togetherness. The cards would convey our care and concern to the recipients, along with our prayers along the way of life's journey. If you are willing to assist in this new ministry, or if you have questions or suggestions about it, then please contact Cookie Howard (jlheach1@cs.com) or me (morris@aquiachurch.org)—or consult the church directory or the church office at 540-659-4007 for our phone numbers).

Jay Morris

A personally signed card can brighten someone's day and serve as reassurance of God's love and ours.

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won't be able to do so for Easter because of the stringent requirements for the pandemic that have been imposed by the diocese. *[Since the February meeting, the diocese has relaxed some of its requirements. Outdoor worship recommenced according to the new guidelines on Sunday, March 7.]*

Update on Annual Pledge Campaign for 2021: 86 adult pledges (of which at least 9 are new) plus 5 pledges from children/youth for \$424,641.92

Reports from Junior Warden and Senior Warden

The Junior Warden didn't have anything else to add beyond the report from the buildings and grounds committee. The Senior Warden added that the new tractor has now been purchased. It was apparently in better shape than what was expected.

Upcoming Dates and Information

2/17: Ash Wednesday
3/16: Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)
3/28: Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week

4/4: Easter Sunday
4/20: Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)
5/18: Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)
6/15: Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)

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

Draft minutes submitted by:
The Rev. James Rickenbaker
Acting Register for this meeting



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

NEWCOMERS/VISITORS

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

Sarah L. Kirby.

welcome
to our church family

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AT AQUIA CHURCH

New Babies: Thanksgiving for the birth of a child will be offered as part of the service on the second Sunday of the month (youth Sunday). This will be scheduled as needed. Please call the church office the week prior if your family would like to be included. Also, please call the church office after a birth so that a red rose can be placed on the altar in thanksgiving.

Those being deployed: Please call the church office so that we can offer special prayers at a service prior to your departure. Also, we would like to put you on our prayer list for all those who are deployed in the service of our country.

FUTURE BAPTISMS

If you would like to have a baptism scheduled for someone in your family, please contact the church office so that counseling with the clergy can be scheduled.



Aquia Church Prayer List

April 2021

Rhett Blythe and Family, Julie Burgess, Debbie Byers, Donnie Davis, Paula Davis, Brian Driscoll, Kristin Driscoll, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Christopher, Shawna & Oliver Gray, Chris Hundley, John Jackson, Connie King, Lori, Ken Luehrs, Pat Moncure, Rebecca Poole, Terry Pickett, Linda Raisovich-Parsons, 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>



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.



SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 28:

- * 7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (Facebook Live, recorded & stored)
- * 9 a.m. Sunday School for children & youth (Zoom, live only)
- * 10:30 a.m. The Holy Eucharist (outdoors, weather permitting)
- * 11 a.m. Church Music (Facebook, recorded & stored)
- * 4 p.m. The Holy Eucharist (outdoors, weather permitting)

WEEKDAYS IN HOLY WEEK, MARCH 29—APRIL 2:

- * 8 a.m. Morning Prayer (Facebook Live, recorded & stored)
- * 7 p.m. Evening Worship (Facebook Live, recorded & stored)

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 2:

- * Noon Stations of the Cross (Facebook, recorded & stored)

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4:

- * 7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer with Easter music (Facebook, recorded & stored)
 - * 7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service and the Holy Eucharist (outdoors, weather permitting)
 - * 10:30 a.m. The Holy Eucharist (outdoors, weather permitting)
- * If morning rain cancels either of the morning Eucharists on Easter Sunday, then we shall add an afternoon Eucharist at 4 p.m.*

Our outdoor worship services—including this year's sunrise service on Easter morning (April 4)—take place in the cemetery's paved parking lot on the north side of our historic church building. You may also listen to the outdoor worship services from the comfort of your own vehicle (in order to avoid the wind or any exposure to any virus) by tuning into 91.7 FM on your vehicle's radio once you are on our church property.

www.facebook.org/AquiaEpiscopalChurch





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



“I am the
resurrection
and the
life.”

John 11:25

April 2021 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

Last year, immediately after Easter, I led a Thursday evening series on Facebook Live about the book *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (HarperCollins, 2008) by N. T. Wright, the renowned New Testament scholar and now-former bishop of Durham in the Church of England. That book is well worth reading and re-reading at most any time of year, though to me the period around Easter Day and the Easter season is prime time for that adventure. In a similar vein for this year's Eastertide, I thought we might do well to look at some related matters but from a quite different angle, in order to consider some of the obvious and important impact that the resurrection of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago had upon his immediate followers and upon their successors—even upon people like you and me. Much of that different perspective I have suggested in my column ("The Surprise of Easter") for this new issue of our *Cross Section* newsletter. What I want to do here, more specifically, is to discuss two books that will guide our upcoming Thursday series about the surprises that Christianity brought to our view of the world, human nature, and society as a whole and, in turn, about the surprising development constituted by Christianity's formative existence and remarkably rapid spread throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.

One book is *Christianity's Surprise: A Sure and Certain Hope* (Abingdon, 2020) by C. Kevin Rowe. The subtitle's key phrase is taken from the portion of our burial service called The Committal, in which we commit a deceased Christian's bodily remains to the earth in the "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ" (BCP 485/501). While we suppose that Christianity as a religion is familiar to us in twenty-first century America, nothing could be further from the truth for early Christians in Jerusalem and nearby in the Holy Land: exclusively Jewish in faith at first but with growing numbers of non-Jews or Gentiles in their ranks over time, the early Christians had to combat a number of obstacles in their way, not least among them resistance from the Jewish establishment, the variety of factions within the Hebrew traditions of their day, the pervasive dominance of Greco-Roman culture throughout the region, and the social and cultic norms among and around those worlds. Over the subsequent centuries, Christians have likely lost a sense of what made our faith such a startling, powerfully creative movement that sought ultimately to do nothing less than change the world, and historically chose to do so in part by transforming people's assumptions about how to understand the relationships between God and the world, among human beings about each other, and about the kind of institutions that would be needed for reflecting God's grace and will for us. Losing that sense of how we began has entailed losing a sense (at least to some degree) of who truly are or really should be, and Rowe's task involves helping us recognize those roots and reclaim a more original perspective on our identity as Christians in the world. Rowe is the George Washington Ivey Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, having succeeded Richard B. Hays in that chair.

The other book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize: *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (HarperCollins, 1997) by Rodney Stark. Stark is neither a biblical scholar nor a member of the clergy; instead, he trained as a sociologist. In fact, he wrote this book while he was teaching sociology and comparative religion at the University of Washington. Currently he is a sociologist and historian of religious traditions and movements now teaching at Baylor University as Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences and co-director of the Institute for Studies of Religion. Part of what is so practically odd and sociologically shocking about the rapid and expansive spread about Christianity, Stark finds, is that Christianity's early appeal to outsiders who might be welcomed in attracted women, marginalized Jews, and others whose station in life might not have shown its new adherents to be among the 'social influencers' of their day. Something else Stark addresses is how Christian professed faith in a monotheistic God who seemed in some ways to act in a new fashion, beyond the typical assumptions about the God of Hebrew faith, but also in a monotheistic God who was markedly different from the multiple gods of Greco-Roman religion and who became incarnate in the historical figure of Jesus when all the official powers of the Roman Empire claimed that their earthly emperor was already a god here on earth—all of which guaranteed an ultimate conflict between Christian claims and Roman claims about who God is. The fact that Christianity managed to offer people a more reliable chance for a better and happier life (and not merely a holy but pain-filled life) is part of the attraction to Christianity that Stark specifies as contributing to its speedy success.

Our new Thursday evening series dealing with the surprises about early Christianity and the reasons for its uncanny rise from its Hebrew roots and amidst the Roman Empire will begin at 7:00 p.m. on the Thursday of Easter week, 8 April, over Facebook Live at the following usual Website (www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch), and we hope you will be able to join us for this short-term but fascinating study. Your reading of these books in advance of the series or along the way with me and other participants is certainly not required, but you might wish to explore them for yourself.