



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

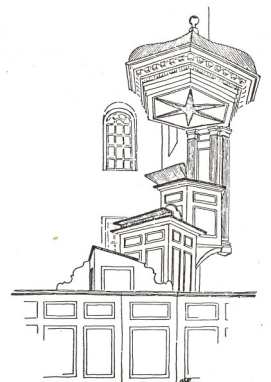
All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27



**AND THE SHEPHERDS RETURNED,
GLORIFYING AND
PRAISING
GOD**
FOR ALL THEY
HAD HEARD AND
SEEN, AS IT HAD
BEEN TOLD THEM.
LUKE 2:20, ESV

INSIDE . . .

- "Love Came Down at Christmas"
- The Gifts of Christmas
- Advent Opportunities: Quiet Day, Worship, Carols & Gifts
- Christian Parent Group Offered
- Annual ECW Meeting to Name "Gift of Life" Honorees
- Vestry Report
- Sts. Mary & Martha Fellowship





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.
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

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

Executive Assistant

Sue Selz

Nursery Supervisor

Dawna Spaulding

FROM THE RECTOR

Love Came Down at Christmas

At this time of year, there are plenty of things that can distract us from the simple but profound meaning of Christmas. Some distractions might be pleasant and enjoyable, from holiday food to seasonal music, while other distractions are more challenging and frustrating (such as the hustle and bustle of shopping for Christmas presents with millions of other impatient people, all clamoring for the same items while wondering how they can afford to purchase such gifts). Throw in the disappointment about folks you might miss seeing this Christmas, or throw in the panic about all the remaining tasks—not to mention the risk of exhaustion, whether physical or emotional—and the real meaning of Christmas might become obscured, if not completely lost.

The food we eat, the music we sing and play and hear, the presents we give or receive, and the events we attend at Christmas could distract us, if we let them—or they could actually enhance our celebrating the heart of Christmas, if we are careful and attentive.

From before the foundation of the world, the Lord God Almighty desired to have created order praise and serve him. In turn he created human beings who could have a relationship with him, even at the risk of forming us creatures who would corrupt and distort what that relationship should be. Our need thus became clear: we needed a Savior with the power of God (who alone can save us) while yet in human form to be the perfect sacrificial offering who could restore the broken relationship. So God, understanding our need and accommodating himself to that need, loved us enough to become one of us in order to save us. Or in the words of a traditional carol: “Love came down at Christmas.” Sometimes we forget that meaning of Christmas amidst the distractions surrounding us or amidst the disappointments affecting us. But if we lose that, then what remains of any worth?

How can we keep our focus on why Christmas matters? We must pause to think through the biblical basis for this season.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would become the mother of our Lord Jesus, Mary responded by praising God, by rejoicing in the coming of our salvation, and by trusting that God fills the hungry with good things. That’s part of why we eat at our Christmas festivities. When our Lord Jesus was born, the angels praised God and sang from on high about this wonderfully good news. That’s part of why we sing especially at Christmas. When the wise men arrived with gifts for our Lord Jesus, they honored the newborn King by kneeling in homage to him. That’s part of why we offer gifts to others, whether to relatives and friends or (in the form of Christmas outreach) to total strangers who are as unfamiliar to us as the baby Jesus was at first to those magi.

Mary and Joseph probably needed seven to ten days for traveling from Nazareth in the northern part of the Holy Land to Bethlehem in the south in order for our Lord Jesus to be delivered—and Mary did so while she was nine months pregnant! She knew something about being exhausted from preparing for big events, and yet she pondered in her heart the joyful news that God’s salvation was coming. We too can be tired and weary from everything going on in December—especially during the pandemic—and yet we have more than ample reason to be comforted and to rejoice about what God has done for us in coming down at Christmas.

Jay Morris

Love came down at Christmas,
love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus,
but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token;
love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and others,
love for plea and gift and sign.



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

The Twelve Days of Christmas

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 intentional you are about celebrating the seasons of the church. The rhythm of the church year helps us focus on the witness of Scripture and the salvation given us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

That rhythm is particularly noticeable as we move from the penitential season of Advent to the festal season of Christmas. Advent (Latin *adventus*, “coming”) is a time to “repent and believe the Good News!” (Mark 1:15). It is also a time to look forward with hope and expectation to the Second Advent: the return of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Advent is a time to focus our hearts on Jesus’ return on that great day. It follows, then, that the season of Christmas is about far more than presents and egg-nog.

In our society, Christmas is a season that begins on November 1 and ends at 11:59 p.m. on December 25. The commercials stop. The movies go away. Many families have their stuff boxed up in the evening or perhaps as late as the 26th. The important things have been done by then: the gifts have been bought and given, the good feelings have been felt, the family has been visited. Now on to Valentine’s Day. It is no wonder that our society becomes so depressive in midwinter. It does not know why we celebrate Christmas, nor does it know how to do so.

Christmas is twelve days long. The season is intended to be paired with Advent: we fast before we feast. Advent looks forward, in penitence and with hope, to the return of our Savior Jesus Christ. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ, to be sure, but also of his joyous

return. Christmas is a celebration because it focuses our eyes on that day when Christ returns. It keeps our hearts anchored in our hope that Jesus Christ is coming. And he is coming soon! Gifts at Christmas are only helpful if they remind us of the gift of Christ. They do no good if they only fuel a selfish heart. We celebrate Christmas as

the goal of this life. When he returns, he ushers in the new creation wherein those who are in Christ dwell with God forever.

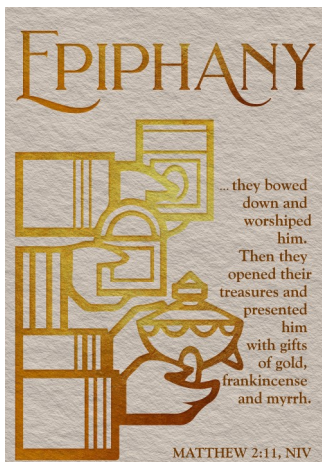
So what can we do to stay grounded in the real reason for celebration? I offer a few pastoral suggestions that can help this year.

First, a wonderful thing to do for couples and families alike is to have the first present you open be the baby Jesus. You can take the baby out of a Nativity

set that you have and wrap him in a small box. This teaches us all that the greatest gift is Jesus. Second, you can open a gift on each of the twelve days. By no means am I encouraging you to buy waterfowl and jewelry like the song suggests. But I do encourage you to hold back a present each day. Even small presents can help keep the focus on the full celebration of our Savior’s imminent return. Thirdly, you can sing! We have beautiful, Christmas hymns in our hymnal, as you will hear at our Christmas Lessons and Carols service on December 26.

Celebrate the full seasons of both Advent and Christmas. Look forward to and rejoice in the return of our Savior. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*In Christ+,
Fr. James*



AQUIA CHURCH VESTRY

Chris Arey

Finance Committee

Charlie Bingay

Finance Committee

Dickie Boes

*Finance Committee Chairperson;
Building & Grounds Committee*

Chris Bowie

Administration Committee

Bob Brandon

Building & Grounds Committee

Carrol Frederick

Administration Committee

Michael Golasz

Building & Grounds Committee

Bill Hoffman

*Senior Warden
Acting Chairperson of
Administration Committee*

Ron Korth

*Junior Warden;
Building & Grounds
Committee Chairperson*

Lisa Schwartz

Administration Committee

Penny Stevens

Buildings & Grounds Committee

Chris Wanner

Buildings & Grounds Committee

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

The Aquia Church ECW (Episcopal Church Women) invite our parish families to join us on Sunday, Dec. 19, for our Annual Meeting, when we will honor our “Gift of Life” honorees. We will have a brunch/lunch reception (COVID-compliant) immediately following the end of the 10:30 a.m. service. Following a short business meeting of the ECW, we will honor and introduce the 2021 “Gift of Life” honorees: Carolina Dearing, Andrea Harlow, Judy Morris, and Rachel Rickenbaker. Their deeds do not go unnoticed, and we joyously celebrate their faith and service in our parish and to our Lord. A contribution will be made to the ECW Diocese of Virginia in their honor, and their names will be recorded permanently and kept on record at the diocesan headquarters at Mayo House in Richmond. We hope you will join us in celebration of these ladies being honored, a time of communion and celebration.

To summarize our 2021 year, the ministry of the ECW continued to support our community through donations

and partnering with other parish ministries to serve. An important part of the ECW ministry is to bring together our parish family and friends together in fellowship. Complying with COVID restrictions, we successfully held Fall Fest. The hard work shared by many others supporting the ECW will support our yearly ministry work locally, in our diocese, and around the world.

We invite all women to share in the ministry and mission and to enjoy the fellowship of ECW. I can be contacted via e-mail (bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com) with any question, or you can get my phone number from the church office or the parish directory.

In sharing your time and talents, we are all enriched. The Sts. Mary and Martha Guild meets on the first and third Thursdays monthly for study and reflection. This guild’s time is also divided between service to our parish and community. On the fifth Thursday of a month, our service projects encompass the needs of our campus. There is al-

ways much to share and do as we unite in the service of our Lord.

As we work in service with joy, it is important that we ask the Lord’s blessing and give thanks to him:

Almighty 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
President

*All women of Aquia are invited to share in the ministry of the ECW.
The ECW of Aquia Church is a chapter of the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia.*



Aquia Church ornaments are offered at the Advent Gift Shop along with other gift items.

E.C.W. Advent Gift Shop

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? If so, please check out our ECW Advent Gift Shop starting Sunday, Nov. 21, in the great hall. There you will find a lovely assortment of handmade Christmas ornaments, wreaths, and pillowcases, along with gold Aquia Church ornaments, note cards and cookbooks. We have sets of Advent wreath tapers, plus wax angels and star candles made from Aquia Church Altar candle

stubs, and the cutest sock monkeys you ever saw. The shop will be open after the morning services on Sundays until Christmas. In fact, you are welcome to browse and shop any time you find the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building open. For further information, feel free to contact Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfsw.biz) or Briget Kane (bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com).

Briget Kane



STS. MARY AND MARTHA GUILD

Worship, Service and Fellowship

If you haven't had a chance yet, please be sure to check out the ECW Advent Gift Shop in the great hall. There you will find a lovely assortment of handmade Christmas ornaments, wreaths, and pillowcases, 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. The shop will be officially open Sunday mornings until Christmas, but you are welcome to browse and shop anytime you find the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building open.

During the months of December and January, Sts. Mary and Martha Guild will continue with its traditions of service, worship, and Christ-centered fellowship. On Thursday, Dec. 16, we

will enjoy Morning Prayer together but forgo a craft to spend a bit more time on an Advent study as we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ's second coming.

In January our meetings fall on the 6th and 20th. We shall continue with our study of the book *Unshakable Hope* by Max Lucado. Our guild has enjoyed the writings of this Christian author before, and this book has not disappointed with its uplifting review of God's promises. We will also get started on the crafts for Fall Fest 2022, which will then be only nine months away!

If you can join us for any of the above occasions, please do! We treasure the friendships with our sisters-in-Christ that they we have found in our parish and our guild, and we welcome



CHRIST-CENTERED FELLOWSHIP

any who seek a morning of women's fellowship. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfsw.biz) or Carolyn Hendrickson (cvhendrickson35@gmail.com).

Mary Jane Cole
maryjane@cfsw.biz
Carolyn Hendrickson
cvhendrickson35@gmail.com

OUTREACH

The Christmas Adopt-A-Family campaign began on Nov. 14. Four seniors and six families were on the list of recipients given to us by the Stafford County Department of Social Services (DSS). We put together three trees with gift tags, a sign noting the return date, a sign-up sheet, and a basket of girl tags. We had so many girls (not many boys) on our list that not all of their tags would fit on the girls' tree. The toys, games, puzzles, books, etc., for the girls are on their tree. The requests for girls' clothes and diapers are in a basket. We need to be sure that the basket is in front of the girls' tree so that it can be seen.

The deadline for the return of gifts is Dec. 5. We then check to see what tags have not been selected from the trees and shop for those gifts. Next

comes the job of putting together each recipient's gifts and placing those gifts in large black bags by family name. We have to make sure that the gifts for a total of 20 children and four seniors are in the correct family bags. Gifts and food will be delivered to DSS at Register Chapel on Dec 14.

We noted this year that most gift requests were very simple and there were no requests for bicycles or skateboards. The most expensive items were a Barbie Camper, video games, and an electric cooker. Many requests were for clothes and shoes, and one mother asked for diapers and wipes.

For Thanksgiving we purchased \$500 in grocery store gift cards to put in food baskets for families registered with DSS. The gift cards were delivered to the drop-off location on Nov. 18.



The Operation Christmas Child shoebox online campaign ended on Nov. 22. As of this writing 20 shoeboxes were purchased online. These shoeboxes can be tracked to see where they travel.

We will soon be planning for 2022. We hope to be able to hold fundraisers and will be working on ideas for new projects.

Johanna Jones

The Outreach Ministry is in need of helping hands to continue our mission. Our mission is: "With prayerful requests for God's guidance, the members of the Outreach Ministry hope to do His work so that others may know Our Lord Jesus Christ and His love through our work." Please consider joining this ministry.



Advent Opportunities

WORSHIP DURING ADVENT: The four Sundays of Advent 2021 are **Nov. 2, and Dec. 5, 12, and 19**. On those Sundays, our worship services will convey something a bit different, even unusual, as we use the time of Advent to prepare for celebrating Christmas, we shall not be rushed or hurried in our worship. More broadly, our worship services during this season will be a place of refreshment, rather than business-as-usual.

To that end, during this Advent there will be deliberate pauses and silence around the readings and around the prayers, so that we can concentrate more fully on them, and some other deliberate pauses and silence between different phases of the worship services. At our 10:30 a.m. worship services and at our service of Advent Lessons and Carols (Sunday, Dec. 5 at 4 p.m.), there will be music generally reserved for this season. Finally, the order of worship with the Holy Eucharist will deliberately allow for reflection and repentance that will culminate in rejoicing. Please be attuned to what marks the Advent season as different from Christmas.



ADVENT QUIET DAY: On **Sunday, Dec. 5 (1-4 p.m.)**, we will have an Advent Quiet Day. It will be offered as a hybrid with the talks being offered both in-person and over Facebook Live. Our series of talks will cover “the Comfortable Words” that are read right before the exchange of peace and the Holy Communion (Rite One). Those words of strength are important for us to remember in the midst of all that is going on in our lives today. Due to continuing concerns about COVID, lunch will NOT be served at this year’s Advent Quiet Day; but it will be held just before the service of Advent Lessons and Carols begins at 4 p.m., in the hopes that those attending the quiet day in person will be able to stay for the worship service. Come join us on Dec. 5 for some rest and refreshment during the oft-busy Advent season.



ADVENT LESSONS AND

CAROLS: Please join us for our annual service of Advent Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 5 at 4 p.m. This musical service will be a wonderful occasion for inviting friends to join us!

ECW ADVENT GIFT SHOP:

See page 4 for more information about holiday gifts, many hand-crafted.





CHRISTMAS FLOWER ORDER FORM 2021

Enclosed is my donation for Christmas and Epiphany altar flowers, wreaths, and garland. I understand that I am giving my donation toward the overall preparation of the church for Christmas.

I would like my gift to the Christmas Altar to be:

In Thanksgiving for _____

In Memory of _____

I would like to take a poinsettia home after Dec. 25.

(Circle One) YES NO

Otherwise, I understand that the poinsettias will be taken to shut-ins or other people in pastoral need during the Christmas season.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Please enclose a check for \$20 made out to:

Aquia Episcopal Church

and on the memo line: "Christmas Flowers"

DEADLINE IS DEC. 10



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

October 19, 2021

In Attendance: Rector, the Rev. Jay Morris; Assistant Rector, the Rev. James Rickenbaker; Seminarian, Mr. Stephen Pecot; Senior Warden, Bill Hoffman; Junior Warden, Ron Korth; Treasurer, Chris Arey; Dickie Boes, Chris Bowie, Bob Brandon, Carrol Frederick, Michael Golasz, Lisa Schwartz, Penny Stevens, Chris Warner

Business Session

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer:
The Rev. Jay Morris.

Treasurer's Report:

- Matching Grant Challenge monies appropriated to the proper accounts.
- Operating Expenses increased minimally due to Fall Fest preparations.
- Aquia's Table expenses consistent with past figures.
- Expenses reported for repair to the water heater at the rectory.
- Some maintenance expenses reported for enhancements to the three crosses and area at the start of the entrance driveway, which were deducted from signage account.
- Suggested specific method of processing contracts, warranties, and receipts as possibility for the future.
- **Minutes from Previous Meeting** (Sept. 21, 2021): Approved by the vestry.

Old Business:

- **R-2021-24: Sale of Burial Rights to Michael Golasz** (approved 9/21)
- **R-2021-25: Appointment of Sarah Kirby as Delegate to Diocesan Annual Convention** (approved 9/21).

New Business:

Administration Committee:

- Emergency preparedness plan: assistance from fire marshal and safety consultant is being explored.
- Proposed training for emergency response: AED defibrillator will be purchased, and parishioners will receive training for administering it.
- From the diocese: Online programs for training parishioners in the prevention of sexual misconduct are available from the diocese, but who should receive the training? Suggested that vestry take the training. Where it is impossible for an adult and a child to be alone (so that no misconduct could occur), training is not mandatory. Administration Committee will organize a method for preparing individuals to complete misconduct prevention training.

Finance Committee:

- 6% increase regarding health insurance costs for 2022.
- Nut/candy sales at Fall Fest were reviewed.
- Request for committees to make budget requests for 2022 budget. Will be helpful for Building and Grounds Committee to make budget requests due to growing repair/maintenance needs.

Building and Grounds:

- Painting of windows in parish hall to include upper windows.



Vestry Highlights

- Next Tuesday, rental of a parking lot striping machine.
- Nov. 20 for fall clean-up date.
- Replacement of parish hall roof imperative to avoid possible damage and additional repair cost. Replacement of windows is next priority after the roof replacement.
- Regarding Clifton Chapel: we need to budget money for the removal of two trees and budget money for the repair for the HVAC systems in both buildings.

Reports from Junior Warden and Senior Warden:

- Junior Warden gave kudos to Fall Fest volunteers and reported that the overall experience was delightful.
- Senior Warden reported that the post-Fall Fest meeting generated some new ideas and affirmed some traditional organizing methods.

Report from Rector:

- **Nuts and candy sale at Fall Fest** was successful, but some product remains unsold. Using parish weekly announcements and Sunday bulletin inserts, an order form for parishioners to order, pay for, and pick up the available product will be available. Vestry volunteers would be able to sell the product on hand after service on upcoming Sundays.
- **Annual Pledge Campaign for 2022:** A letter from clergy inviting parishioners to pledge, as well as brief statements of support from vestry members, plus other supportive campaign literature will be available. The vestry reached consensus that Nov. 14 will be Pledge



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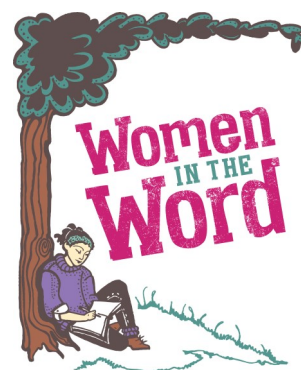
DAUGHTERS OF THE KING (D.O.K.)

Attention, Ladies! Coming in January, 2022, the Aquia Chapter of the Daughters of the King will offer an opportunity to come together to learn about how the women of the Bible speak, using a book with that very title: *The Women of the Bible Speak: The Wisdom of 16 Women and Their Lessons for Today*, written by Shannon Bream. We will meet on the first and third Saturdays of each month starting on Jan. 8 and running through May 28. Each week we meet we will look at two women, how their lives played out in the Bible, the differences among them, and how faith comes into their stories. We will meet from 10:30 a.m.–

noon, in the Wirman Room in the 1960 parish house (not the CFFB).

The chapter is most excited about sharing this well-written, biblically referenced book, and having some girl time! Please contact Chris Bowie or Patricia Springer via e-mail, text-message, or phone by Dec. 18, 2021 (our contact information is in the church directory). This will help us to know how many books to order (free for you).

Also, The Daughters of the King are collecting old newspapers (not magazines) to be taken to the animal shelter in Stafford. There is a black plastic cube in the back left pew (as you come



into church) for collection. Your contribution is much appreciated.

*For His Sake (FHS),
Chris Bowie and Patricia Springer*

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Sunday. Vestry members volunteered to give statements of support at worship services on Sundays leading up to and including that date.

- **Follow-up: Proposed memorial plaque honoring John Peyton** (Peyton Society of Virginia): basic design is a rectangle with a rounded top mimicking the rounded sections of the iron fence of the cemetery's wrought iron fence. Peyton Society has provided wording on the plaque that clarifies some historic facts regarding John Peyton. Said plaque would not be welded to the iron fence, in case of any need to repair the plaque. Also, any repairs to the fence would not involve the plaque. The Peyton Society has offered to place the plaque on the existing fence. Should the fence not bear the weight of the plaque, they will take the plaque down. Consequently, some Peyton Society members may become disgruntled should the plaque not be displayed successfully. Vestry concerns center around the size of the

plaque for the considerable amount of wording desired, and around the possibility that the section of the fence might not bear the weight of the plaque. The Vestry proposed installation of support rods to support the weight of the plaque, with the Peyton Society bearing the cost of the supports and their installation (possibly as simple as two steel rods). The Vestry's consideration of a policy for erecting any plaques in the future could be warranted.

- **Follow-up: Proposed installation of Little Free Library** by Cub Scout Pack 840, Den 10: dimensions of the Little Free Library discussed. The library would be accessible to parishioners and community members and is a free lending library. Cub Scout Pack 840 would be responsible for upkeep until 2025, at which time other community members and Aquia Episcopal Church would assume maintenance and upkeep of the library. Proposed places sug-



gested to erect the library were in the new flower beds by the sidewalk leading to and from the parish hall or to and from the CFFB, and near the existing mailboxes near the Fleurries. Follow-up with a more precise rendering of the small library is requested by the vestry to determine its exact placement.

- **Vestry's meeting on Sept. 26 with Bishop Brooke-Davidson:** Fr. Morris welcomes any vestry feedback regarding discussion with Bishop Brooke-Davidson.

Upcoming Dates and Information:

- 11/16: Vestry Meeting
- 11/20: Fall Clean-up
- 12/21: Vestry Meeting
- 1/9/2022: Parish's Annual Meeting (starting at 9 a.m.?)
- 1/16/2022: Vestry Retreat (9 a.m.–3 p.m.) (tentative date and time)

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

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



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms: "... sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever" (BCP 308)
Inaaya Griffin

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 Jan. 16, 2022. 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

Ian and Anna (Osborn) Burns

Sue Selz

Aquia Church Prayer List



**December, 2021-
January, 2022**

Kevin Beezhold, Nicole Bingay, Rhett Blythe and family, Debbie Byers, the Colliver family, Donny Davis, Paula Davis, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Rachael Hofford, Kelly Family, Ken Luehrs, Lori, Mary Karcher, Pat Moncure, Rebecca Poole, Arnie Schwartz, Scott Smith, Marc Stanford, 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.**



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian Parent Group: Have you ever wrestled with how to raise children in a Christian way in this world? It can sometimes seem so difficult to balance the Christian life with what the world teaches. Now there's a way for us to share in this journey together. Join the Christian Parenting Group meeting Sunday mornings during the Sunday School hour (9:30–10:15 a.m.) for a time of fellowship and topic discussions geared for parents and caregivers of children. Bring your coffee, or grab some from the fellowship hall, and join us in the downstairs conference room in the new building. Let Kristen Morgan or Rachel Rickenbaker know if you are interested or want to learn more.



Sunday School: Sunday school is available for children in pre-K through twelfth grades on Sunday (9:30–10:15 a.m.). Registration is available throughout the school year for students in pre-K through twelfth grade on the church website (www.aquiachurch.org). Scroll down to the Sunday school icon, then click on "Sunday School Registration."

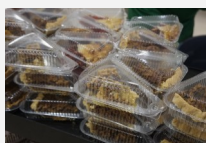
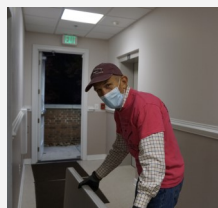
Kristen Morgan

Prayer Card Ministry

Aquia Church has a prayer card ministry group that is getting off the ground, for sending uplifting notes and cards of encouragement to parishioners as needs arise. The church provides stationery, postage, mailing information, and return-address labels; or you may use your own. Members of this group express their concerns for others quietly yet lovingly. If you are interested in participating with this group or if you need more information about it, please contact Father Morris (morris@aquiachurch.org or 540-659-4007 at the church office).



Aquia's Table & Aquia's Pantry Roll Out A Thanksgiving Feast





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



O Come
Let Us Adore Him

WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS AND BEYOND

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 (Christmas Eve)

Holy Eucharist at 4:30 p.m., 7 p.m., and 10 p.m. (NEW TIMES!)
with Christmas music beginning 30 minutes before each service

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25 (Christmas Day)

Holy Eucharist at 10 a.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

Holy Eucharist at 7:30 a.m.

Christmas Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m.
NO afternoon/evening worship service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

Holy Eucharist at 7:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
NO afternoon/evening worship service

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2022

Parish-Wide Annual Meeting and Holy Eucharist at 9 a.m. in the great hall
(in case of snow or ice, the annual meeting will be postponed one week to Jan. 16)
Sunday school activities throughout the morning for students in pre-K through 12th grade
Holy Eucharist at 4 p.m. in the historic church

No church today has completely escaped consequences from the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, virtually every aspect of virtually everything that virtually every church typically does—from worship to faith-formation, from fellowship to service, from nuts-and-bolts operations to office procedures, from income to expenses—has been affected somehow. Certainly Aquia Church is no exception to those facts: everything we do has experienced some impact from this global public health crisis, as you know all too well. We have rapidly gone from life in the ordinary in early March 2020 to being prohibited by commonwealth and diocese alike from gathering in person, to limited gatherings outdoors with severe restrictions on receiving communion and making pastoral visits, to the easing of restrictions and the eventual return of indoor worship, meetings, and other activities. Everything considered, Aquia Church has weathered the storm of COVID-19 remarkably well through creative adaptation—certainly better than a number of churches—and in some cases we have even seen some improvements and innovations. Through the use of electronic technology, for instance, we have brought worship on Sundays and special occasions, musical offerings, and weekday Morning Prayer into homes on smartphones, tablets, and computers and into car radios in our parking lot and nearby. Many parishioners have volunteered to accept new roles as lectors, intercessors, choir members, workers with Aquia’s Pantry and Aquia’s Table, and so forth. Vestry members made our outdoor worship possible, and Sunday school classes and youth group meetings adjusted to changed circumstances. Some modifications that were made initially on a temporary basis are becoming incorporated into our ‘new normal,’ at least in cases where the adjustments have provided for progress. In other cases, of course, there is still room for improvement. Overall attendance for our worship services has been reduced considerably as some folks need to be extra cautious about their health and must curtail their public interactions, alongside those folks who have most unfortunately allowed themselves to get out of the virtuous custom of going to church week after week, month after month. Other folks who used to make it to church once a month or so are now arriving once a quarter or even less frequently than that. All these folks are missed dearly, and some of them might not realize adequately enough what they are missing from the regular life of worship, formation, fellowship, and service that constitutes the practice of our Christian faith. Some ministry groups have maintained more or less their usual routines and rhythms, while others are waiting for a more suitable time to recover their strength and find fresh opportunity for renewed commitment. As we have endured first the outbreak of coronavirus, then its delta variant, and now the omicron variant—only to fear whatever might come next and after that and so on—many of us are beginning to wonder in deeply puzzled and perplexed fashion: *where exactly do we go from here?*

The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges + Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation (Tyndale/Church Answers, 2020) by Thom S. Rainer is one interesting attempt to discern possible answers to this big question and to formulate initial steps in the right direction. This book is around 110 pages long, with a lively and pithy style that makes for quick reading and that cuts to the chase. Rainer’s first task is to specify several key areas of challenge for churches facing life during and after the pandemic, including the following: how church members and visitors gather on campus or elsewhere for worship, fellowship, and other occasions; how churches might embrace digital technology in order to reach out to a wider audience and in order to keep members connected with each other; how local communities and neighborhoods can matter for a church’s future growth; and how important prayer is for any meaningful Christian response to the pandemic. Rainer also suggests particular strategies for how congregations can assess what operations and routines need to be preserved or modified or even dropped altogether, in order to position themselves for success as COVID continues to spread. Especially timely and helpful, I believe, are the nine concluding suggestions he makes in the final chapter regarding simplicity and selectivity in determining the ministry activities a church will carry out, the need to be focused outward more than inward, the increased significance of technology for the work of the church, and new attempts to engage fruitfully with those who attend in-person worship less and less often or are only marginally involved in parish life. As it turns out, Aquia was already taking some cues from the same kind of thinking that this author recommends, even before I began exploring his often sage advice here; but we still have more work to undertake and more perspectives to consider besides Rainer’s. In my view, fellowship is the area of ministry that probably suffers more than any other during this present situation, and I wish that Rainer had more tools and tips to offer in this matter; but he does not place as much direct emphasis on fellowship as some might wish, and (given Rainer’s background) perhaps that is simply to be expected, for various reasons. Rainer is a Southern Baptist pastor, academic, consultant, and speaker who was the founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky (from which he had previously earned a Ph.D.) and the former president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention’s LifeWay Christian Resources, a major publisher and distributor of books, church supplies, and other materials.