



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

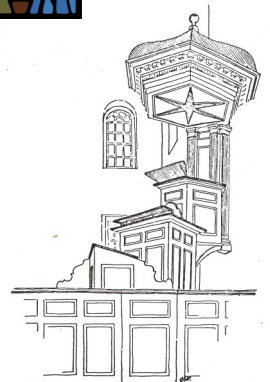
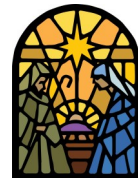
All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27

Glory
to God
in the
highest, and
on earth
peace, good
will toward
men.

Luke 2:14, KJV

INSIDE:

- The Core of Christmas
- Has Christmas Become a Checklist Item?
- Handel's *Messiah*: a sublime holiday tradition
- Thankful for Aquia's Table's Success
- ECW Advent Gift Shop
- Celebrate ECW's "Gift of Life" Honorees
- News from the Church Office
- Christmas Flower Order Form
- Worship Schedule





CROSS SECTION

Aquia Episcopal Church

2938 Richmond Hwy.
Stafford, Va.

Mailing address:
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Stafford, VA 22555

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

Office hours:
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Tuesday – Friday

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
Sue Selz

Bookkeeper
Gloria Reyes

Nursery Supervisor
Dawna Spaulding

FROM THE RECTOR

The Core of Christmas

We are very familiar with all the stresses that Christmas seems to impose. We are expected to have all the decorations up yesterday, all the presents wrapped beautifully and delivered quickly, all the parties attended, all the festivities planned. That's already a lot of pressure before you add traveling out of town to see relatives and friends, or hosting guests for good meals and gatherings. Amidst all this activity, of course we must be on our best behavior (because Santa Claus is watching, or because Granny and Grandpa are with us, or because we all want to be in a good mood for a change, or whatever)—even when our plans get wrecked and our lives get frazzled. No wonder the Grinch hated Christmas.

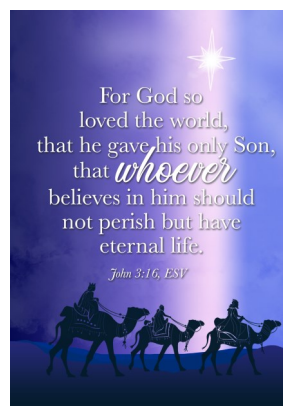
We should also note that it's hard for lots of folks to have a holly-jolly Christmas or a cup of cheer at Christmas. Some of us have lost close relatives and dear friends in recent years; others are isolated from family, experiencing winter doldrums, or facing uncertain futures. Plenty of people might be panicking about paying everyday bills throughout the year before addressing the extra expenses of holidays. Still others have bad memories of unfortunate episodes from Christmases past; it's not simply a matter of not getting the pony or the toys we fancied, but more serious disappointments can come to mind. Elvis Presley wasn't the first person ever to ponder having a blue Christmas. All this can be acknowledged forthrightly.

At least part of the solution to these situations is to recognize our mistaken judgment in readily putting the emphasis on the wrong things. Certainly Christmas can involve getting together for parties and reunions and so forth, but those events can happen anytime of the year. We can admit quite honestly that not every moment of Christmastime will be spent unwrapping

the most expensive presents or kissing someone under the mistletoe; but neither is this season supposed to be first and foremost a time for impressing other people or putting on a show for them. So this Christmas let's lay aside the superficial and social pressures to which we frequently succumb, and recognize (as did the Grinch) that Christmas doesn't come from a store and that Christmas truly means so much more.

At its core, Christmas is an opportunity to experience God's love for us in a new way. No one compelled God to become human in Jesus Christ—to be born as we

are born, to face temptations and adversities like we do, and eventually to die for our sins—but he did so simply because he desired to do so. He chose that life and death for himself. What we celebrate at Christmas is God's incarnation in the Babe of Bethlehem who later became the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. To borrow from a hymn from Holy Week:



Christmas is all about “love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be” (“My song is love unknown,” #458 in *The Hymnal 1982*).

Even when we do not feel loved by others and even when we do not deserve to be loved, God loves us anyway. Even when we do not feel ready or able to give of ourselves to others, God gives himself to us. God's self-giving love for us in the Nativity of Jesus Christ can change our perspective on everything about Christmas, cutting through the hassle and hustle and bustle that all too often passes for Christmas. Recognizing this divine love for us could be our focus this Christmas, rather than all the things the Grinch rightly resisted.

Jay Morris



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

Checklists

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 committed you are to observing the Advent and Christmas seasons. The liturgical calendar is a gift for the life of the church, as it helps us to stay grounded in the life of Christ throughout the year. The fasts and feasts add an ebb and flow to the year, for sure, yet these always compete with the secular feasts. And that can cause some problems.

As Rachel, Eleanor, Abigail, and I were walking through Spotsylvania Towne Centre the week before Halloween, we saw that workers were already starting to put up the Christmas decorations. While this isn't necessarily a problem, it's early to worry about such things before Thanksgiving, not to mention before Halloween! We hear on the news that Christmas sales have already started online. "Get your shopping done now!" they tell us. Christmas seems to have turned into a giant checklist for us to complete. This is perfectly fine out in the world. The secular society is all about getting things done, marking things off the list, and making sure that everything is just perfect for the family Christmas cards. I love Christmas, but much of what comes with Christmas is tiresome. That's why I think it's important for us to go against the grain and view Christmas not as the culmination of our checklists, but a time for rejoicing. Surely, we celebrate and enjoy time and good cheer with family and friends. But the real reason for our celebration is that Christ has been born into the world for us—that he has lived and died as one of us, to reconcile us to the Father. This is wonderful news. It is the true purpose of our celebration.

We shouldn't give Advent short shrift either! Christmas is wonderful. It's fun and enjoyable. But we need Advent too. We need the reminder that we are sinners in need of God's saving grace. We need the reminder that Jesus is coming back to judge the living and the dead. We need the

reminder that we are brought into the new creation by grace alone through faith alone and not through any righteousness of our own (since we don't have any!). We need that dedicated season of repentance to re-focus our eyes on the second coming of Christ. The second coming of Christ is a thing to which we can look forward with joy. That joy is another layer of what is symbolized in the celebration of Christmas. We celebrate the incarnation AND we celebrate the second coming of Christ.

Don't let Christmas become a checklist item this year. Let me encourage you to live fully into the Advent season this year. During that time, we all will be reminded of our sinfulness, brokenness, and inability to earn our peace with God. We will also be reminded that our Savior has come into the world for us in his first coming and that he is coming back for us in his second coming. Let me encourage you to live into the Christmas season as well, where we celebrate the incarnation of God in our Savior Jesus, as well as the time of his return to usher in the new creation in its fullness. Both of these seasons are terribly important for Christians, no matter what else society tries to pile on top.

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

Charlie Bingay

*Senior Warden
Assistant Treasurer*

Dickie Boes

*Finance Committee Chairperson
Building & Grounds Committee*

Chris Bowie

Administration Committee

Bob Brandon

*Junior Warden
Building & Grounds Committee
Chairperson*

Michael Golasz

Building & Grounds Committee

Carolyn Hendrickson

Administration Committee

Sarah Kirby

Administration Committee

Anna Rall

*Register
Finance Committee*

Lisa Schwartz

Administration Committee

Penny Stevens

Building & Grounds Committee



Handel's *Messiah*

Try as we might, it is hard to ignore the blitz of inflatable Santas, legions of artificial trees, and the siege of Christmas catalogues that seem to appear spontaneously even before Halloween subsides. Despite this surfeit of commercialism, there are some holiday traditions that are sublime and dignified and that continue to amaze us. During Christmas, one of these latter holiday traditions is the production and performance of *Messiah*, an oratorio composed by George Frideric Handel, the noted 18th century German-born composer. Even those not musically inclined are probably aware of its “Hallelujah Chorus.” Lifting the covers, however, reveals a story about this composition that only adds to its dignity and luster.

Handel was born in 1685; he was a contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach. A native of Halle in the Duchy of Magdeburg (present-day Germany), he was educated at the University of Halle and embarked on a musical career that took him through Germany and Italy. This work and travel influenced his style, which we now recognize as ‘High Baroque.’ The impact of Italian opera was particularly significant; after Handel arrived in England in 1711, he would eventually stage over 40 operas. However, by the 1730s the appeal of operas was fading, and thus Handel began to work on oratorios (which is a concert piece, not the sort of musical theater that opera is). The subjects of these works were biblical, were sung in English (unlike opera), and had broader appeal. In 1741, after working on the oratorio *Saul*, Handel was approached by Charles Jennens, a wealthy English landowner with literary and musical inclinations, with a new libretto to be used as the text for an oratorio. The subject was *Messiah*.

Jennens was a devout Anglican and believer in scriptural authority. He intended to challenge the assertions of Deism, a theory that rejected the idea of



divine intervention in mankind's affairs. Scholars view that in his libretto, Jennens's intention was not to dramatize the life and teachings of Jesus, but to acclaim the “Mystery of Godliness,” using a compilation of extracts from the King James Bible and from the Psalms included in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. The structure of *Messiah* corresponds with the liturgical year: Part I corresponds with Advent, Christmas, and the life of Jesus; Part II with Lent, Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost; and Part III with the end of the church year—dealing with the end times. The words of the prophet Isaiah are the dominant source for much of the libretto, while Luke's gospel provides the words for Jesus' birth.

After receiving the libretto, Handel needed only 24 days to compose *Messiah*. The inaugural presentation was in Dublin, Ireland. Handel had been invited there by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and had prepared a concert series for the winter of 1741-1742, which included *Messiah*. On April 13, with the choirs from St. Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedral, and a local orchestra,

Messiah was performed to benefit three charities: two hospitals and a fund for debtor's relief. Seven hundred people attended, and the performance was universally acclaimed.

When Handel returned to London, the response to *Messiah* was muted, as some objected that a sacred subject should be addressed in such a secular manner. Even so, eventually *Messiah* became a staple of London's concert halls. The origin of the tradition of standing for the “Hallelujah Chorus” (Act II, Scene 7), is murky. According to some, King George II, in attendance at one performance, mistook the start of this choral piece for the national anthem, and therefore stood up. Other sources cite that there is no proof that George II ever attended a performance. Nonetheless, the tradition of standing persists. By 1750, it was performed annually to benefit London's Foundling Hospital. The final performance of the work at which Handel was present was at Covent Garden on April 6, 1759 (the Friday prior to Palm Sunday), eight days before his death.

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AQUIA'S TABLE

“One door closes, another opens”: you can almost substitute any word for ‘door’ and then understand the meaning of this blessing. When Aquia’s Table doors first opened 13 years ago, we served approximately 35 patrons weekly. Many hands were involved so that “no one would go hungry.” These days, however, we serve approximately ten times that number of patrons weekly (around 350 or so). Throughout 2022 we will have served almost 1450 meals. Our space for preparing and serving meals has moved into the great hall, and in turn the number of hands involved has grown to include volunteers who bake, prep, pre-

pare, box, or bag meals and distribute them for takeout each week. We have gone from a sit-down meal to carry-out each week.

Aquia’s Table has grown from our first budget supported by donations from friends of this ministry, a golf tournament, and Vestry start-up support. Today we are blessed to receive donations of funding and supplies from several parish members, SERVE, food grants, our annual Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament, and other parish and community partners each week.

Aquia’s Table gives thanks for all our volunteers, all our partners, and all our patrons for what is proving to be an

amazing 2022, and we look forward to serving our first meal for 2023 on Wednesday, Jan. 4. Meanwhile, our ministry will be closed on Dec. 21 and Dec. 28, so that our team members may take time to be with family and friends.



Briget Kane
AT Core Team

ECW Advent Gift Shop

The ECW Advent gift shop is open for your shopping convenience after every Sunday morning service until Christmas! Do you need a new set of purple and pink tapers for your Ad-



vent wreath? Would you like a beautiful gold ornament of Aquia Church made by the same company as the White House ornament? If

so, please visit our gift shop, found at the far end of the great hall. There, you can also find a lovely assortment of handmade Christmas ornaments, wreaths, and comfy hand-crocheted booties, along with the Aquia Church ornaments, note cards and cookbooks. We have wax angels, votive candles, and star candles all repurposed from Aquia Church altar candle stubs, plus the cutest sock monkeys you have ever seen. The shop is officially open Sun-

day mornings, but you are more than 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 (bkwingstn_things@yahoo.com).

Mary Jane Cole

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From time to time, Handel edited and altered *Messiah* for a variety of reasons, including the singers available, the venue, or the composition of his orchestra or choir. In succeeding decades, the work changed; larger orchestras, bigger choirs, and additional instruments were used. Nowadays, some performances are smaller in scale, more in proportion to what Handel typically performed. Though initially performed at Easter (which has a longer holiday period than Christmas), with the story of the Nativity this oratorio fit Christmas quite well, and so in the 1960s *Messiah* evolved into a Christmas tradi-

tion. In our area it is most specially performed by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center (I can attest that such performances there are spectacular).

Of Handel’s many other compositions, his *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* remain favorites from the Baroque era. One composition not widely known in America is *Zadok the Priest*, which was composed for the coronation of King George II in 1727, and sung just prior to his being anointed. Based on 1 Kings 1:34-45, it has been sung at the coronation of every British monarch since 1727 and, no doubt, will be sung at the coronation of

Charles III on May 6, 2023, at Westminster Abbey (where Handel is buried).

There is one final morsel of serendipity. In London, Handel resided in Mayfair at 25 Brook Street, from 1723 until his death in 1759. Over 200 years later (from 1968 to 1969), the person who would have been his next-door neighbor at 23 Brook Street was the fabulous and famous American guitarist, Jimi Hendrix. Today, the Handel-Hendrix Museum features the musical legacy of these two very influential musicians.

Chris Arey



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 25, 2022 (in person)

Dinner and Fellowship

Business Session

Attendance: Fr. Jay Morris, Rector; Fr. James Rickenbaker, Assistant Rector; Stephen Pecot, Seminarian; Chris Arey, Treasurer; Charlie Bingay, Senior Warden; Bob Brandon, Junior Warden; Dickie Boes, Christine Bowie, Michael Golasz, Carolyn Hendrickson, Sarah Kirby, Anna Rall, Lisa Schwartz, Penny Stevens

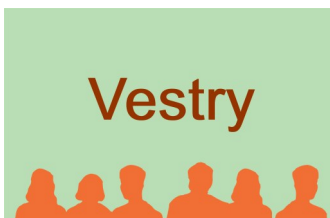
Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Treasurer's Report

- September report includes some expenses for Fall Fest
- Actual pledge amount received in September was 50% lower than some previous months of the year
 - ◊ We believe that September was an anomaly, and that the remainder of year will be on track
- Reviewed overall income and expenses YTD
- Reviewed Trustees of the Funds report – Fund is down through the end of September due to S&P fluctuations
 - ◊ These are long-term investments, so no immediate concern

Minutes from Previous Meeting

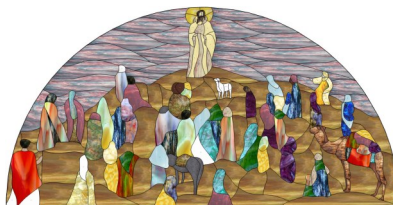
- **R-2022-18: Transfer of Ownership of Burial Rights** (approved 9/27)



- **Most Recently Proposed Revision of Bylaws** (approved as amended 9/27)
- **R-2022-14: Delegates and Alternate to Diocesan Annual Convention** (approved 9/27)

New Business

- **R-2022-19: Agreement with St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church** (Rector)
 - ◊ Discussion regarding ownership and coverage of the easement used to access Clifton Chapel property
 - ◊ Approved by Vestry with amendments
- **Report of Internal Financial Review (a.k.a. "The Audit") on 2021 Financials** (Audit Committee chaired by Anette Evans)
 - ◊ Small differences being researched and will be reported on in December
 - ◊ Approved by Vestry



- **Discussion about Options for Window Project in Great Hall** (Fall Fest)
 - ◊ Will be suspended/secured in the interior of the window, not on the outside of the window
 - ◊ Asked whether there is availability to include an inscription or statement to show that it depicts the Sermon on the Mount
 - ◊ Agreed to start with the upper semi-circle only, leaving potential to expand to entire window in the future



Vestry Highlights

Ongoing Business

- **Annual Pledge Campaign**
 - ◊ Vestry members will give pledge speech at the following dates and services:
 - ⇒ Oct. 30: 7:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 4 p.m.
 - ⇒ Nov. 6: 7:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 4 p.m.
- **Vestry Elections**
 - ◊ Upcoming nominations and elections
 - ◊ No nominations submitted yet at the time of the October meeting

Reports from Committees

- **Administration Committee**
 - ◊ Defibrillator has arrived and can now be installed
- **Finance Committee**
 - ◊ Reviewed draft of 2023 budget
 - ◊ Will publish when complete
 - ◊ TOTF 4.5% distribution will be reinvested and can be used at a later date if needed
- **B&G Committee**
 - ◊ Shoutout to Ron Korth for handling HVAC needs on campus and to Bill Hoffman leading the gutter replacement on the 1960 parish hall
 - ◊ Leaf removal has already started around campus

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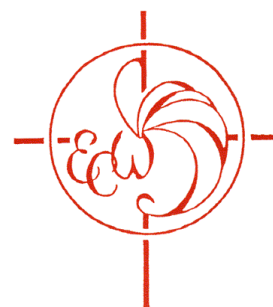
EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

The Aquia ECW, which is a part of the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia, invites our parish families to join us on Sunday, Dec. 18 for our annual meeting and annual Christmas reception at which we will recognize our “Gift of Life” honorees. We will host a breakfast/brunch reception immediately following the end of the 7:30 a.m. service. Following a short business meeting of our local ECW, we will introduce our 2022 “Gift of Life” honorees: Jennifer Gould, Gabrielle Hebert, Sarah Kirby, and Pat Quinn. We joyously celebrate their faith and service in our parish and to our Lord. A contribution in their honor will be made to the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia, and their names will be recorded permanently and kept on record at Mayo House, which is our diocesan headquarters. We hope you will join us in celebrating these ladies who are being honored with a time of fellowship. Their deeds do not go unnoticed as they share their time, talents, and good works.

In summary of our 2022 year, the ministry of the ECW continues to support our community through donations and partnerships with other parish min-

istries in service to others. An important part of the ECW ministry is to bring our parish family and friends together in fellowship, prayer, and good works in Christ’s name. For our second year of Fall Fest during the COVID pandemic, this year’s event was successful and we transitioned to some long-term solutions for continued safe gatherings. The hard work shared by many others supporting the ECW will strengthen our ministry in our local area, in our diocese, and around the world.

We invite all women to share in the ministry and mission and enjoy the fellowship of ECW. If you have any question about our ECW, you may e-mail me (bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com), or you may contact the church office for my phone number. In sharing your time and talents, we are all enriched. The Sts. Mary and Martha guild meets on the first, third, and fifth Thursday mornings each month for study and reflection. This guild’s time is divided between service to our parish and service to our community. On the fifth Thursday of a month, our service projects encompass the needs of our



campus. There is always much to do and share as we unite in the service of our Lord.

As we serve with joy, it is important that we ask for God’s blessing and give thanks to him:

Almighty God, we pray that you will bless our work in mission and ministry in the world. 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. Bless us that our lives may shine forth the joy and wonder we share in your name. Amen.

—from *Prayers for Episcopal Women*

Briget Kane
ECW President

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Reports from Wardens

- Junior Warden – No additional comments outside of B&G committee report
- Senior Warden – No additional comments



Report from Rector

- Asked Vestry members to consider giving speech during upcoming services explaining why they joined the vestry and encouraging others to nominate themselves
- November and December Vestry meetings will be via Zoom

Upcoming Dates

- 11/22 Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)
- 11/13 Requested date for submitting pledge cards
- 11/23 Thanksgiving (Eve) Worship Service (7 p.m.)
- 12/20 Vestry meeting (7 p.m. via Zoom)—THIRD Tuesday of the month)

Good of the Order, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Rall
Register



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

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. 8, 2023. 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.

Sue Selz

Aquia Church Prayer List

December 2022—January 2023

Rhett Blythe and Family, Robert Boes, Debbie Byers, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, Lori Hendon, Rachael Hofford, Ken Luehrs, Lori, Pat Moncure, Rebecca Poole, Arnie Schwartz, Scott Smith, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Gayle Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, Jen Wassmer, 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.**



Christmas Flowers

In England and in Virginia, Christmas decorations were a common sight inside churches. The approach of the holiday was an excuse to sweep the church clean, clear out the dust and cobwebs, and carry in boughs of greenery, garlands of holly, ivy, mountain laurel, and mistletoe to be dangled from the church walls, encircled around pillars, and clung to second-story gallery railings, freshening the sanctuary with their clean, woodsy scent. Peter Kalm, a Swedish botanist who visited Philadelphia at Christmastime in 1749, wrote that "Pews and altar were decorated with branches of mountain laurel, whose leaves are green in winter time" (*Williamsburg Christmas*, 1999, page 28).



Please help the flower guild decorate Aquia Church with flowers, wreaths, and garland for Christmas and Epiphany, by making a check for \$20 payable to Aquia Episcopal Church with "Christmas Flowers" in the memo portion of your check. Those submitted prior to the deadline of December 12 will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Please fill out the form below and submit it to the church office along with your check.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

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 December 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 _____





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Worship Schedule for Christmas and Beyond

Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

Holy Eucharist at 4:30 p.m., 7 p.m., and 10 p.m.,
with Christmas beginning 30 minutes before each service



Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist at 10 a.m.,
the only worship service that day

Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, Feast of the Holy Name

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, Jan. 8, 2023

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