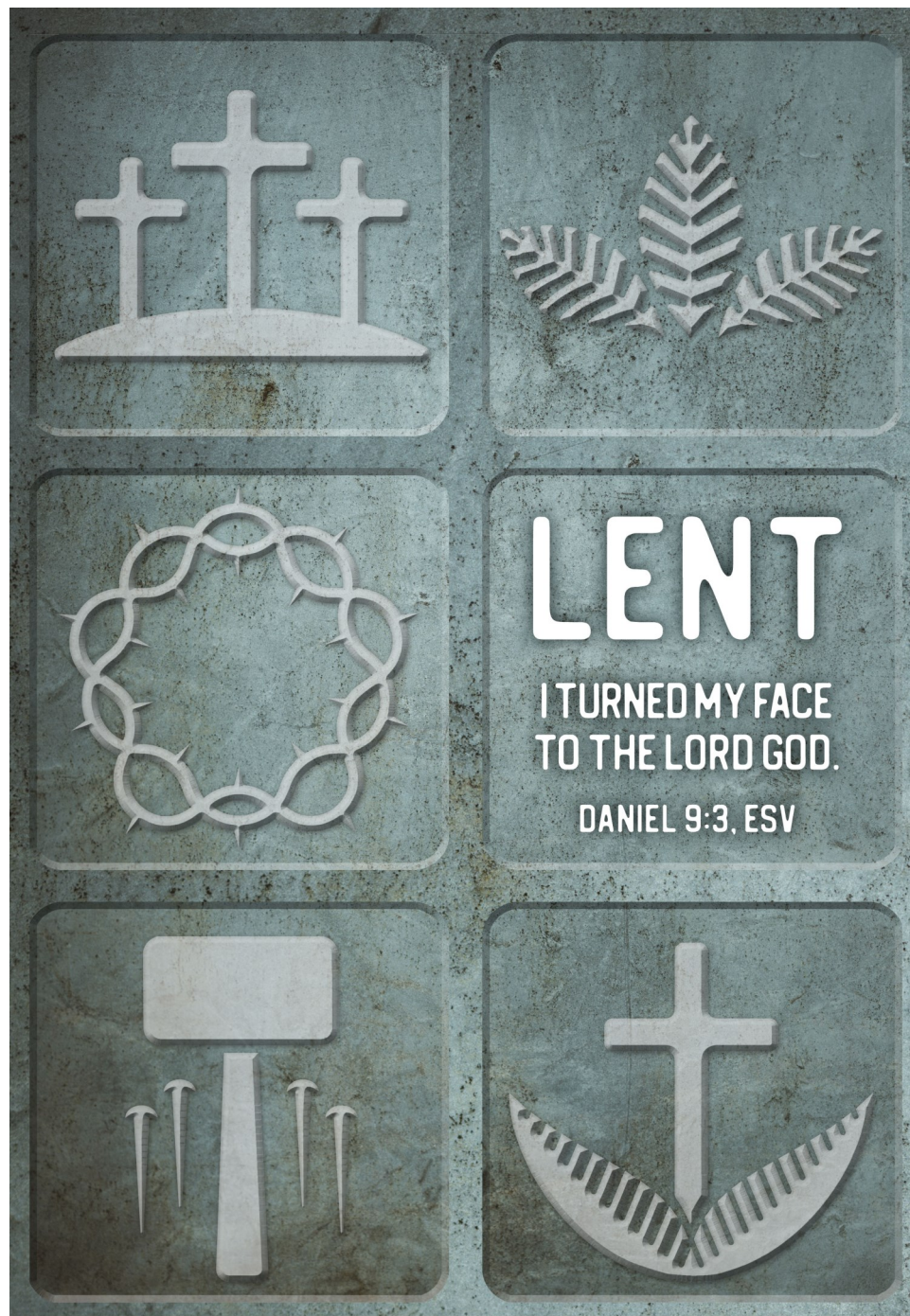




AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

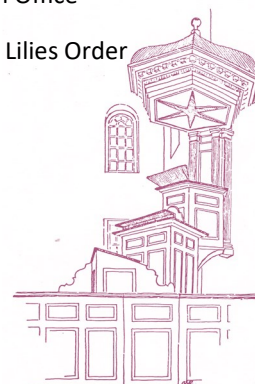
Cross Section

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



INSIDE:

- Some Ironies About Lent
- Fellowship
- ECW: Joy in Service
- Guild Invites Women to Share Worship, Fellowship & Service
- Children's Ministry: Easter Egg Hunt, VBS Dates
- Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament Supports Aquia's Table
- The Legend of St. Patrick
- Vestry Highlights
- Notes From the Church Office
- Easter Lilies Order Forms





CROSS SECTION

Aquia Episcopal Church

2938 Richmond Hwy.
Stafford, Va.

Mailing address:
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.
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

Some Ironies about Lent

How are you handling your Lenten disciplines this year? What vices did you give up? What virtuous practices did you take on? Have you been more successful with these efforts than with your new year's resolutions from this or any other year?

Some Christians commit themselves each Lent to abstaining from one favorite food or another, such as meats, desserts, or chocolate. Part of the reason why they do so is a desire to imitate something of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights at the start of his public ministry, right around the time Satan was tempting him. This devotion is consistent with Lenten patterns of self-denial and fasting. Yet given the weight loss that usually follows, I sometimes wonder whether this dietary practice has more to do with pleasing

one's cardiologist or one's lover than with pleasing God, who actually might not be very much impressed with our temporarily skipping over this or that comfort food. Still, the sense of accomplishment in this small matter might be valuable encouragement toward progress in other spiritual matters. Perhaps there are areas of life where other kinds of self-denial might be even more meaningful, including resisting the temptation to let anger overwhelm us, the temptation to commit adultery in our hearts, and the temptation to treat well only those people with whom we already agree (see other needs for self-denial mentioned in Matthew 5).

Other Christians commit themselves each Lent to undertaking some extension of a spiritual practice, such as praying more frequently or reading the Bible more often. At Aquia, the Lenten cross at the back of our historic church building offers parishioners an array of opportunities for almsgiving—contributing charitably with gifts of time, talent, or treasure—that help us open our hearts to others around us. While it's wonderful to watch the cards

disappear from the Lenten cross and to hear friends discuss their Lenten experiences with prayer and Scripture, I sometimes wonder whether these attempts really cultivate a greater sense of generosity and devotion that lasts long after Lent, or whether they generate a feel-good moment that is all too temporary. Yet even if some seeds once planted require much time before they spring into full blossom and achieve deep roots, that length of time need not deter us from planting the important seeds in the first place.

The Prayer Book's invitation to a holy Lent calls us to be refreshed "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (BCP 265). The forty days of Lent (running from Ash Wednesday through Holy



Saturday, excluding Sundays) provide a framework in which this striving might succeed. Not all Christians need to give up the same flaws (as we probably suffer from different vices), and not every Christian needs to take on the same forms of virtue (as there is a diversity of spiritual gifts). So Lent requires some customized tailoring. But all of us are invited, called, and indeed expected to become transformed somehow during this holy season, with the self-examination and the self-denial leading ultimately to self-sacrifice: that we might become holy, as God himself is holy. Yet we cannot make that happen on our own, by ourselves.

Ironically, what we need during Lent is precisely less attention focused on ourselves and more attention focused on what God has done through Jesus Christ and what God is still doing through his Holy Spirit. Whatever you are giving up or undertaking this Lent, please let your clergy know how we can support you during the Lenten journey on which we ourselves are fellow travelers.

Jay Morris



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

Fellowship

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, as the pandemic enters our rear-view mirror, you have been interested in returning to some of our pre-pandemic forms of in-person gathering. Fr. Jay and I have loved seeing folks coming back to church, coming back to Morning Call and Sunday school, and helping with the booming ministries of Aquia's Table and Aquia's Pantry. All of those are wonderfully important parts of our life together in Christ. Another important part is fellowship. We have fellowship at the above events, but sometimes it is good to be together simply for the purpose of being together. With that in mind, we are beginning the process of restarting the fellowship committee.

The purpose of the fellowship committee should be obvious: fellowship. Over the years, the committee has been responsible for some of our yearly major fellowship events: the St. Patrick's Day party and the all-you-can-eat seafood feast come to mind. It also coordinates smaller events for the parish, like our summer movie nights outdoors in the cemetery. Every event serves the important purpose of getting people together, in part to enjoy good food and fellowship, and in part to help the church to grow together and become more tightly knit as we grow into the full stature of Christ.

It has been three long years since we have had any real sense of normalcy. We need some of that again. So we want to get back to some of our pre-pandemic ways. During this calendar year, Aquia will be doing just that. We have resumed our in-person Wednesday morning Bible study. We have continued during this Lenten season with our Thursday evening Lenten meal and book study. We are also going to have our Lenten quiet day again this year. (We had a truncated offering last year, but this year's will be like normal.) On top of all of that, we want to be able to have some of those fun get-togethers for fellowship

that we enjoyed before the pandemic. We are looking to start up our summer movie nights again. We are also looking to have our all-you-can-eat seafood feast again this year. There is so much more that we could do, to be sure. But that is our starting point.

All of that sounds well and good, but we need some help. Since the last time we met, some members of the committee have died and others have moved away. We are in need of new people with new ideas and new energy. We want to put together a solid committee that can get us back to our normal level of fellowship, which I imagine we all remember quite fondly.

Are you someone who likes fellowship? Are you someone who has a creative mind? Are you breathing? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may just be right for the fellowship committee. We want to reconstitute that committee as quickly as possible so that we can have our fellowship events restart soon. Please get in touch with Fr. Jay or me if you are interested in participating. This inreach ministry is vitally important to the folks of Aquia Church. I ask you to consider strongly whether you might be a good fit for this committee. If not, then please mark your calendars to join us when dates are released.

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 Bowie

Administration Committee

Michael Golasz

Building & Grounds Committee

Dale Hendon

Finance Committee

Carolyn Hendrickson

Administration Committee

Bill Hoffman

Senior Warden

Sarah Kirby

Administration Committee

Walt Peterson

Administration Committee

Anna Rall

*Register
Finance Committee*

Lisa Schwartz

Administration Committee

Penny Stevens

Building & Grounds Committee



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Our yearly calendar celebrates each month with national holidays, local days of celebration, and holy days. March celebrates the history of women. The month is dedicated to remembering the contributions women have made in American history. Our Christian history teaches us that women were not always valued or celebrated adequately or appropriately. We learn numerous times throughout the Bible of the value that Jesus put in women. Many of his followers were women. Jesus' interactions with women and his treatment of women—including Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Martha—teaches us their value in his ministry. While not counted among his twelve apostles, these women served Jesus, as did many other women. Women continue to serve him today.

Sallie Stuart ('Miss Sallie') was an active Christian leader in the Episcopal Church in the mid- to late 1800s. Miss Sallie found in 1888 that Virginia was one of seven dioceses that did not have a Women's Auxiliary (precursor to the Episcopal Church Women, or ECW). She forged forward, organizing branches in parishes and missions and seeing her work come to fruition. Miss Sallie

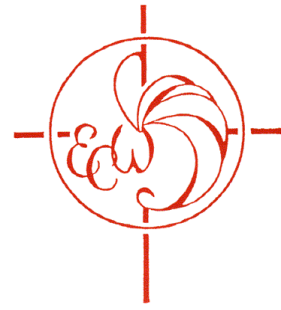
was a genteel, forceful, dynamic woman. Her lifelong motto was "Joy in Service!"

Episcopal Church Women continue to do daily service and labor in our church, our community, and our world with "Joy in Service." Through service, labor, and mission the women of the ECW work diligently to make known the power of Christ's love as given through his son Jesus.



During this time of Lent, it is especially important for me to remember God's love and the sacrifice of his son that was made for everyone. I can become so immersed in day-to-day tasks and responsibilities that I leave little time or energy for the real meaning of Lent.

I have lots of work to do personally this Lenten season, and it shouldn't take a newsletter article or the season



of Lent to remind me of this fact. I am thankful that I know God's love and that he will forgive me and help me when I slip back in old habits.

Just to list a few of our partner ministries: Aquia's Care Team, Take Them a Meal, Fall Fest, and Aquia's Table. If one of these piques your interest and you would like to hear more, please contact me by e-mail (bkwings_n_things@yahoo.com) or contact the church office for my phone number.

*Yours in Christ,
Briget Kane
President, Aquia ECW*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place between the end of the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services on **Easter Sunday, April 9**, in the cemetery surrounding the historic church. We are collecting plastic Easter eggs filled with treats for this event. *Please make sure candy is wrapped.* Some empty eggs will be available in the entry of the CFFB. Please drop off filled eggs in front of the Christian Education office by Good Friday, April 7.

Save the dates of **June 12-16 (9 a.m.– noon)** for an exciting week at



Vacation Bible School. Children in preschool through fifth grades are invited to join us on a cosmic quest with "Stellar VBS." We will have a blast shining Jesus' light into the world. Registration will be available on the church website soon. Stay tuned for more details.

Kristen Morgan



STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service, and Fellowship

What is a guild, you may ask? By definition, a guild is an organization of persons with related interests, goals, etc., especially one formed for mutual aid (see Dictionary.com).

What then, is the Sts. Mary and Martha Guild? The Sts. Mary and Martha Guild of Aquia Church's Episcopal Church Women was formed about thirty-five years ago, and it was carefully named for two dear friends of Our Lord. These sisters had very different approaches for offering hospitality to Our Lord, but their love for Him was equally evident. Our guild is both contemplative and prayerful (following St. Mary's example) as well as filled with action and service (following St. Martha's example).

What are our interests? Learning more about Our Lord and worshiping and serving Him.

What are our goals? Supporting each other through fellowship, friendship, and prayer, along with supporting our parish family through service.

How do we strive to reach our goals? Through worship: each meeting begins with Morning Prayer led by a member of the clergy. Through study: together, we read a simple religious



Women's Fellowship

book and discuss it. Through service: hands-on projects, making crafts for and staffing the Fall Fest craft and jewelry rooms, assisting with funeral and parish receptions, and our annual pancake

meal at the start of Lent. Through fellowship: sharing our prayers, our thoughts, and our hearts with each other.

The Sts. Mary and Martha Guild will be meeting March 2, 16, and 30 in the parish hall downstairs in the 1960 parish house, starting at 9:30 with Morning Prayer. It is a large room. We have extra books, lots of chairs, great snacks, happy goals, heartfelt discussions, and plenty of room for all the ladies of the parish. Please join us! For more information, please contact Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfsw.biz) or Carolyn Hendrickson (cvhendrickson35@gmail.com).

Mary Jane Cole

AQUIA'S TABLE

Aquia's Table, our hot meals ministry, continues to serve hot meals weekly to an average of over 350 patrons. Our goal to serve healthy, balanced, and nutritional meals has not changed in our 13 years of service. We can sustain this ministry because of the commitment of volunteers, community partners, our annual golf tournament, food drives, and donations from our parish family.

Aquia's Table is planning our next annual Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament for 2023. The tournament is the main annual fundraiser for Aquia's Table, and this event supports our

ministry's mission. Even if you don't play golf, there are many ways you can contribute to the success of our event.

Our silent auction will be available for donations, and early bird bidding through lunch on the day of the tournament: Friday, May 5. It's not too early to get involved! We will be accepting hole sponsors, team registrations, and silver, gold, and platinum sponsorships. Mark your calendars! More information to follow.



Briget Kane

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35)

Aquia's Table is an outreach ministry of Aquia Episcopal Church.

Bob Jones Memorial Golf Tournament

Tee off with us:
Friday, May 5



Format: 4-Man Scramble

When: Friday, May 5

Check-in begins @ 7:30 a.m.

Shotgun Start @ 9 a.m.

Where: Augustine Golf Club

76 Monument Drive
Stafford, Virginia

Cost: \$125.00 per player or
\$500.00 per foursome



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

January 24, 2023 (via Zoom)

Business Session

Attendance: Fr. Jay Morris, Rector; Fr. James Rickenbaker, Assistant Rector; Stephen Pecot, Seminarian; Chris Arey, Treasurer, Bill Hoffman, Senior Warden; Christine Bowie, Michael Golasz, Dale Hendon, Sarah Kirby, Walt Peterson, Anna Rall, Lisa Schwartz, Penny Stevens

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Treasurer's Report

- Reviewed 2022 financial statements
- Final adjustments to 2022 report will be made in the upcoming weeks
- Compared 2021 and 2022 payments made through Realm

Minutes from Previous Meeting

- **R-2022-24: Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Rector** (approved 12/20/2022)
- **R-2022-25: Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Assistant Rector** (approved 12/20/2022)
- **R-2022-26: Policy on Designation of Memorial Contributions** (approved 12/20/2022)
- **R-2022-27: Additional Payment on Principal of CFFB Construction Loan** (approved 12/20/2022)
- **R-2022-28: Authorization for Treasurer to Transfer Reserve Funds** (approved 12/20/2022)
- **R-2022-29: Adoption of 2023 Budget** (approved 12/20/2022)

The draft minutes were approved unanimously.

New Business

- **Election of Vestry Officers** (including senior warden, junior warden, register, treasurer,

and assistant treasurer)

- ◇ Bill Hoffman was elected Senior Warden
- ◇ Junior Warden still needed
- ◇ Chris Arey continues as Treasurer
- ◇ Charlie Bingay continues as Assistant Treasurer
- ◇ Anna Rall continues as Register

- **Vestry Housekeeping Matters**

- (including schedule for meetings, meeting in person and meeting electronically, meals with meetings, and voting by e-mail)
- ◇ Will remain fourth Tuesday of each month
 - ◆ Exception: December 2023 meeting to be held on third Tuesday (Dec. 18, 2023)
- ◇ Will meet in person every other month, at least through June, when we shall reassess
 - ◆ February meeting will be in person
- ◇ Reviewed electronic voting policy

- **Vestry Committees and Goals**

- (including goals for each committee plus goals for vestry as a whole)
- ◇ Administration committee is asking vestry to consider additional members to help with unlocking and locking CFFB and other buildings for special events
 - ◆ Bill Hoffman volunteered to be added to the list
- ◇ Vestry goal for 2023 – Additional support/coordinator needed from the vestry for the nut and candy sale
- ◇ Vestry goal for 2023 – Create strategy to increase attendance at in-person worship services
- ◇ All vestry and clergy members to complete diocese required



Vestry Highlights

sexual misconduct training by end of 1Q23

Ongoing Business

- **Annual Pledge Campaign for 2023:** \$371,223.00 from 76 adult pledges, plus \$173.00 from 3 youth pledges, plus \$64,630.00 from 13 pledges for Heritage Endowment Fund

Reports from Committees and Rector

Report from Father Jay

- The Peyton Society of Virginia will be adding a bronze plaque on a new granite marker at the gravesite of John Peyton.

Report from Administration Committee

- Instituted increase to rental fee for CFFB:
 - ◇ \$250 for non-church members
 - ◇ \$125 for church members

Upcoming Dates

- 2/22 Ash Wednesday services (noon & 7 p.m.)
- 2/23 Lenten Thursday dinner & book discussion series begins (6:30—8:30 p.m.)
- 2/28 Vestry meeting (in person)
- 3/25 Stephen Pecot's ordination to the diaconate (Christ Church Cathedral, Mobile, Alabama)
- 3/28 Vestry meeting (via Zoom)

Good of the Order, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

*Respectfully submitted,
Anna Rall
Register*



St. Patrick

Lent has begun, and as we journey toward Eastertide, we are smacked in the face in the middle of March by a commercial onslaught of leprechauns, shamrocks, and all things green and Irish. I'm not one to begrudge a pilgrim a glass of Guinness, but the appropriation of the legacy of St. Patrick is an annual exercise in Hibernian sentimentality. The genuine legacy of St. Patrick is much more sobering and edifying, and it deserves our attention.

"My name is Patrick, and I am a sinner..." So begins the *Declaration (Confession) of St. Patrick*, an autobiographical account from the late fifth century by the aged bishop of Ireland. The earliest manuscript of this writing is dated to the year 807, over 300 years after St. Patrick is believed to have died. Though much of his life is shrouded in uncertainty, many scholars accept that he lived from 426 to 493. Neither his *Confession* nor one other extant text he wrote—a letter to Coroticus—mentions the shamrock or driving snakes out of Ireland. As a 16-year-old English teenager, he was abducted from his home in northern England by Irish pirates and enslaved for six years. Serving as a herdsman, he wrestled with his faith before he escaped his captors, found a ship, and returned to England. Landing ashore he returned home, continued to deepen his faith, and after a few years, had a vision to return to Ireland to preach the Gospel and convert the pagans. He proceeded to study in Europe, was tonsured, and then ordained as a priest. He returned to Ireland and undertook missionary work to convert, baptize, and ordain. Over the span of his ministry, he asserts that he baptized thousands, converted wealthy women who became nuns, and evangelized among the powerful noble and regal elites. Eventually, he retired to the monastery in Saul, in County Down, where he died. There is also a claim that eventually he was buried at Glastonbury Abbey, accounting for its popularity with Irish pilgrims. Much of St. Pat-

St. Patrick



rick's life and ministry lacks clarity, and there is some dispute about the spread of Christianity in Ireland. Nonetheless, most scholars and historians largely credit him with changing the religious landscape of Ireland and firmly establishing Christianity in his adopted homeland. Tradition makes him the first Bishop of Armagh, the Primate of Ireland. However, there are a couple of legends associated with St. Patrick that merit some explanation.

St. Patrick did not claim to have used the shamrock as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity, but it not impossible that he did so. There were numerous triple-deities in pagan Ireland; and while one scholar asserts that the shamrock was not sacred in Ireland, it could have been a useful way to explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The earliest written explanation of this is found in a 1726 botany text, though there are coins showing St. Patrick and a shamrock dating to the 1680s.

St. Patrick's driving the snakes out of Ireland was reported in the 13th century, though actually it had been attributed to another Irish saint, St. Columba, in the late 7th or early 8th century. The story may be associated with Mo-

ses, who with Aaron in Exodus 7:8-13 overcame Pharaoh's sorcerers and turned their staffs into snakes, eventually consuming them. However, science informs us that during the last ice age—some 10,000 years ago, when the frigid climate did not allow for reptiles to survive—no snakes were extant there. There is one common lizard native to Ireland, but no snakes.

Our hymnody includes "St. Patrick's Breastplate" (#370 in the blue *Hymnal* 1982), which is based on a prayer attributed to St. Patrick, as he and companions evaded an ambush set against them when Patrick journeyed to preach the Gospel at Tara, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland. There is an 11th century manuscript in Dublin which records the prayer, referred to as a 'lorica' (Latin for 'breastplate'—perhaps an allusion to St. Paul's use of the term in Ephesians 6:14). The hymn we sing was composed in 1889 by an Anglo-Irish hymnist and poet Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), who also wrote "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "Once in Royal David's City." She based her hymn on reworked translations of a 17th century text which gave us the opening line, "I bind unto myself today." The music, which due to the length and meter of the verses often befuddles worshippers, was composed in 1902 by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924). It combines two Irish melodies, and is often sung on Trinity Sunday, at the ordination of clergy, and on Sundays near March 17. Sláinte!

Chris Arey



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

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

Felicia Waller Bonelli Parlier, 1930-2023.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AT AQUIA CHURCH

New Babies: Please call the church office after a birth of a child so that a red rose can be placed on the altar in thanksgiving.

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

FUTURE BAPTISMS

The next scheduled date for a baptism is April 16, 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

March 2023

Jim Baird, Rhett Blythe and Family, Debbie Byers, Robert & JoAnn Feldman, the Hawkins family, Lori, Lori Hendon, Ken Luehrs, Buzzy Moncure, Pat Moncure, Rebecca Poole, Ray Parsons, Arnie Schwartz, Scott Smith, O.D. Taylor, John & Pam Tompkins, Gayle Tompkins, Kenneth Tompkins, Tom Tremper, the Van Metre Family, Jen Wassmer, Patrick Weber, Walt & Elizabeth Yager.



How to reach us:

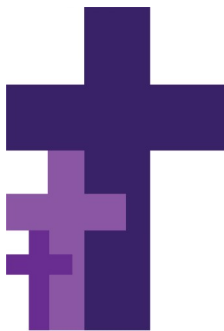


www.aquiachurch.org

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.



Easter Lily Order Form

Enclosed is my donation of \$20 for Easter lilies to adorn
the church on Easter Day.



I would like my donation to the flower guild to be:

In Thanksgiving for:

In Memory of:

I would like to take my Easter lily home after Easter Sunday, April 9.

(Circle One) YES NO

Please enclose a check for \$20.00 made out to Aquia Episcopal Church
with "Easter Lily" on the memo line.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

DEADLINE IS APRIL 5





AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



THURSDAY EVENING LENTEN SERIES

Lenten Dinner and Discussion

Thursdays in March

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Soup & Salad Meal

Followed by

Discussion based on the book

I Told Me So: Self-Deception and the Christian Life

by Gregg A. Ten Elshof

March 12



The apostle Paul often gets a bad rap (or bad reputation) among post-modern readers, and for a variety of reasons. Some who read Paul's letter to Philemon about an escaped slave bemoan the fact that Paul does not explicitly condemn the practice and institution of slavery. Some who read multiple epistles associated with Paul assume that he is a male chauvinist, if not a complete misogynist. Some readers of Paul believe that he too readily accepts the social *status quo* (especially in matters of the household, economics, and politics), that his personality was too cantankerous and argumentative for him to be accepted as a sterling example of the Christian life, that his writing was too long-winded and dense and difficult to understand, that Paul actually celebrates and glorifies suffering ... and so forth and so on. Some readers have even supposed that what Jesus taught and what Paul taught are so different from one another, that we today must choose sides between the two. Of course any fair-minded reader might acknowledge that there are indeed several passages in the New Testament that understandably give some occasion for the development of these perspectives—even if there is also much content throughout Paul's letters that could be said against all of these narrow views. But such an objective observer must also admit that in order to grasp the New Testament in its fullness and its impact upon so much of subsequent history, one simply *must* grapple with what Paul wrote and perhaps even try to appreciate it sympathetically. We also need to remember that Paul was a witness to the risen Lord and very well might have heard Jesus preach and teach around the Temple in Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion. All these facts help explain why my first Wednesday evening Bible study of this year was devoted to First and Second Thessalonians, why the third biblical book we are discussing in a Wednesday evening series this year (starting this very month) is Romans, and why I shall devote considerable time this summer immersed in graduate-level study about Galatians: all of these are connected with Paul.

Commentaries about Paul's epistles, volumes about his life and work, and tomes about his times and his worlds occupy huge amounts of space in theological libraries. Sifting through them in order to find which ones might be particularly valuable for parishioners and for clergy alike is a daunting challenge. Yet I have recently found such a book that would have been helpful to me years ago, even as it is helpful now: Douglas J. Moo's multiple-award-winning *A Theology of Paul and His Letters: The Gift of the New Realm in Christ* (Zondervan Academic, 2021), in the series "Biblical Theology of the New Testament." The book is big, to be sure: it is fulsome with 780 pages in length (some 650 of them with actual text) and with oversized pages that lend themselves to fonts that are sized easy to read. Moo's book is almost a one-stop-shopping center for so much about Paul's thought and writings, in general and in detail, though admittedly it does not pretend to include much of a biography (for which turn elsewhere, including works by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, N. T. Wright, and Douglas A. Campbell). After two general introductory chapters (around 40 pages) about how to begin understanding the apostle's work, Moo gently leads us through a thoughtful, insightful 300-page survey of all the writings associated with Paul—not only the letters about which there is scholarly consensus that Paul actually wrote them himself (Galatians, I Thessalonians, I-II Corinthians, Romans, Philemon, and Philippians), but also others where genuine Pauline authorship is disputed or widely doubted (II Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, I-II Timothy, and Titus)—and Moo examines them in what he reasonably believes to be the chronological order in which they were composed. (Moo's theory that Galatians was written prior to I Thessalonians may surprise some readers, given the broadly held assumption that I Thessalonians is likely the oldest document that became part of the New Testament, but Moo is quite persuasive on this point as on so many others.) After that careful analysis, Moo then treats us to the other half of his discussion: how to put the various pieces of the Pauline puzzle together for a 300-page synthesis of the apostle's work. These eight chapters address what serves as the center for the Christian life, how that life begins, how it draws upon the Old Testament as its historical context while ushering in the blessings proclaimed in the New Testament, where our life in Christ is aiming and heading, what those living the Christian life will do and who they will be, and how their lives will go until reaching their end. Moo's prose is clear, engaging, and lively—with real pastoral mindfulness that is often lacking in academic writing—and he is one of my favorite New Testament interpreters.

I first encountered Moo's work around twenty years ago, when I read his massive and brilliant commentary on Romans (*The Epistle to the Romans* [Eerdmans, 1996]), which now appears in a second, expanded, and retitled edition (*The Letter to the Romans* [Eerdmans, 2018]), which in turn I am consulting in my new Wednesday evening series on Romans. At Aquia, I have benefitted from other works by Moo, including his excellent work on the Epistle of James. (It is no small accomplishment that Moo writes so eagerly and so fruitfully about *both* Paul and James, two apostles whose views are supposedly miles apart from one another!) A highly respected scholar, Moo teaches at Wheaton College and Graduate School and currently serves as the chairperson of the Committee on Bible Translation, which produces and updates the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. I heartily commend his *Theology of Paul and His Letters* to you.