



AQUIA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Cross Section

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



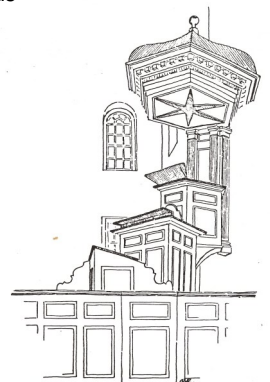
For as the earth
bringeth forth
her bud,
and as the garden
causeth the things
that are sown in
it to spring
forth;

so the Lord GOD
will cause
Righteousness and
praise to
spring forth
before all the
nations.

Isaiah 61:11

INSIDE:

- Congratulations, Stephen Pecot!
- Summer Vacation
- Joy in Service: ECW announces May events
- Join Sts. Mary & Martha Guild for Worship, Service & Fellowship
- Kristen Morgan Reflects on 14 Years of Christian Education Leadership
- Julian of Norwich
- Vestry Highlights
- Church Office News
- Landscaping Our Campus





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

Congratulations, Stephen Pecot!

A student approaching the end of his first year at Virginia Theological Seminary made his first visit to Aquia Church around Easter Day 2021, when we were still having to hold worship services outdoors because of COVID-19 restrictions. He had introduced himself to me out of the blue a few months earlier, and we had talked on the phone some before he arrived that day. In the e-mail in which he offered to come here as part of his training toward ordination, he explained that his path to seminary had been long and complicated, and so he assured me that he was “overjoyed” to submit his application. For longer than a moment I thought: “Oh, no, he’s *that* type of seminarian.” (Meaning: the excited and maybe downright enthusiastic kind.) Perhaps neither Stephen Pecot nor I were quite sure what we would face when we agreed to work together.

Stephen asked whether he could gain some ministerial experience at Aquia, with some opportunities in particular for preaching, teaching, assisting with liturgy, and learning about leadership and governance. Aquia could certainly offer him all that, I promised him. So Stephen has been able to tailor his efforts here in ways that will strengthen his future ministry. He has preached for a variety of Sunday worship services and special occasions, led a memorable series at Morning Call on the complex prophecy of Jeremiah in the Old Testament book that bears his name, served as a lector and intercessor and chalice-bearer, conducted plenty of our online broadcasts of worship services, and attended many meetings of the full vestry and several of its committees. All this exposure—together with his academic and practical studies at seminary and his prior forms of ministry—should serve him well in his ordained life.

Stephen’s time at Aquia has also given him a chance to learn through observation and conversation what cannot always be learned at seminary, including how to engage faithfully and fruitfully with people of “all sorts and conditions,” how to build

and enjoy friendships across time, how to handle ordained life apart from the professional tasks, how to manage a complex network of relationships, and how to be aware of the world around us without succumbing to it. Also valuable in Stephen’s growth has been the helpful criticism (appreciative and constructive alike) from his lay support team, led by parishioner Gene Cole, and from his interactions with the experienced clergy here and elsewhere.

Stephen’s recent ordination as a deacon was a most joyful occasion at which I represented our parish, and that ceremony was soon followed by the good news that the Lord has called him to serve as clergy-in-charge at Trinity Episcopal Church in Apalachicola, Florida, in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast that sent him to seminary. Stephen expects to be ordained as a priest in early October, and soon afterward (with continued discernment) he will have the opportunity to become rector of that parish. They will be blessed by his presence and ministry there, just as we have been here across the past two years.

For some periods in Aquia’s history, there were times when we could not support a full-time priest, and so occasionally our Sunday worship services were led by seminarians. More recently, we have established a track record of receiving new clergy and lovingly helping them at the outset of their ordained lives—so much so, in one case, that I am still here after nearly nineteen years. Stephen Pecot’s success at Aquia speaks well not only for him, but also for our parish. For all of this, I am deeply thankful to God.

Jay Morris



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

Summer Vacation

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 diligently you have attended worship and formation opportunities so far this year. Holy Week and Easter were a wonderful time of worship and joy, most especially because of the gift and blessing of the salvation wrought for us by Jesus Christ, but also because we were able to worship together. We were able to bring in new people. We were able to do things pretty much like we did before the pandemic began. This is exciting. And the Sunday school year has been exciting as well.

The youth group morning meeting has been going through the Colaborate Bible Study curriculum this year. With multimedia presentations prepared for us by the curriculum (and sometimes prepared also by David Morgan!), the youth have been making their way through the Bible this year. We are going to finish up at the end of this month. It has been an exciting year. We have averaged 5-7 youth each week. We have had support for which I am very thankful. It has been a good year. As the year winds down, though, I want to bring a few things to your attention.

First, we always need more teachers. When I first arrived at Aquia seven years ago, the youth group morning and evening meetings were led by parishioners. I happily attended to support them in their leadership. Parishioners in charge of both the morning and evening meetings felt the need to take a step back after the first full academic year that I was here. From that moment on, Fr. Jay and I have been leading the morning and evening meetings. I have been so thankful to have the teaching support this year of David Morgan and Jen Gould. But we can always use more support at all levels of our Christian education program. Our Christian education program is incredibly important to our life together. That brings me to point number two.

Secondly, we want more children. This is food for thought for the fall of this

year. The attendance during this academic year for all levels of Sunday school has been shockingly low. Our Christian education program is there to support families in their faith and life. I cannot encourage and exhort you enough to have your children participate in both Christian education and in church. While parents are naturally the primary Christian educators, that responsibility tends to fall to the church. But then parents don't bring their children to Sunday school or to church, so neither the parents nor the children are being formed well in the Christian faith and life. We are here to support you, but also to remind you of the responsibility you have and of the vows you made when your children were baptized.

Finally, even though summer vacation is beginning, there is no summer vacation from church. Church is not an obligation like work or school as something to be endured. Instead, church is a joy. We get to come to church. We get to receive the benefits of Christ's redeeming work in word and sacrament. We get to join together and worship the God of all creation. Church is not a checklist item. Please make it a priority not just during the school year but during the summer too. We want to worship the Lord together. We want you here with us!

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

Chairman, Finance Committee

Lisa Schwartz

Administration Committee

Penny Stevens

Building & Grounds Committee



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Joy in Service

I hope you are seeing in the weekly bulletins the announcement for the Sunday, May 14, Spring Ingathering of the United Thank Offering (UTO). At the 1889 Triennial Meeting in New York, the Women's Auxiliary of The Episcopal Church (a predecessor organization for the ECW) instituted the United Offering for the support of specific mission projects and individual missionaries. The United Offering eventually became known as the United Thank Offering (UTO) for collecting the prayers and grateful offerings of the women of The Episcopal Church in thanksgiving for the many blessings of this life. Today, your offerings support the missions and missionary work, scholarships, building loans, and overseas development of the ECW of the Diocese of Virginia for the mission of the whole church.

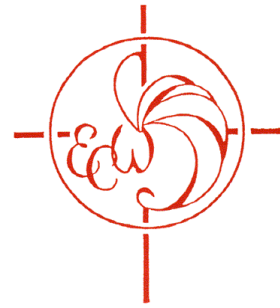
We are excited to announce that we are continuing the tradition of the Aquia ECW's Anne E. Moncure Scholarship. The application process for sen-

iors graduating from high school begins in May, with May 31 as the final day for applications to be received in the church office. Applications can be picked up at the office.

We hope you will plan to join members of our parish on Sunday, May 7, for a breakfast reception to celebrate the Reverend Deacon Stephen Pecot's recent ordination to the diaconate and his upcoming graduation from seminary, and also to honor Kristen Morgan, who is resigning from her position as director of Christian education in June.

While we are blessed that Kristen will remain an active parishioner at Aquia, Stephen will soon leave the area in order to accept a call to his new parish in Apalachicola, Florida. Following the end of the 7:30 a.m. worship service on May 7, the ECW will host this reception until 10:15 a.m. for a time of visitation and fellowship with Stephen and Kristen. We hope you will join us!

Our Heritage Sunday—this year on May 21—serves as an annual event



which brings members of the Peyton family back to Aquia Church to celebrate, to worship, to share Aquia's history, and to enjoy a luncheon in the great hall hosted by the ECW immediately following the end of the 10:30 a.m. service.

It's not about joining the ECW, it is about sharing in our ministries: parish, local, and worldwide. If you are interested in learning more or offering to help, please e-mail me at bkwing_n_things@yahoo.com or contact the church office for my phone number (which is also listed in the parish directory).

Briget Kane

STS. MARY AND MARTHA

Worship, Service, and Fellowship

The Sts. Mary and Martha Guild has just begun a new book study featuring *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanna Weaver. Ms. Weaver talks about finding intimacy with God in the busyness of life. Come and help us explore this book together. All ladies of the parish and their friends are welcome at the Sts. Mary and Martha Guild meetings.

We begin our meetings with Morning Prayer at 9:30, followed by a study and a snack, and we often end by letting our creative spirits flow with a simple craft. If "craftiness" is not in your strength, there is always plenty of direction and help and no pressure. Christian

fellowship is our mainstay, and loving friendships flourish as we pray together, discuss the study, and tackle the crafts. Pictured below is our latest craft: string angel ornaments.

Our meetings in May will fall on the 4th and 18th. Isn't this the month you resolved to give us a try? We look forward to seeing you and sharing our joy of Christian fellowship. Please reach out to us with any questions or prayer requests: Mary Jane Cole (maryjane@cfsw.biz) and Carolyn Hendrickson (cvhendrickson35@gmail.com), co-chairs of Sts. Mary and Martha Guild.

Mary Jane Cole



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it” (*Proverbs 22:6*).

For more than fourteen years, I have had the joy of leading Aquia Church’s most important ministry, our children. While others may disagree, I do believe in many ways it is the most important. It is often said that our children are the future, and we often ponder and worry about what kind of world we will be leaving them. But an equally important question is: what type of future adults and leaders are we shaping?

My own children have frequently heard me say, “what this world really needs is just more Jesus.” I do think in many ways it is as simple as that. I think that raising strong, courageous, and confident young people of faith who know and spread the love of Jesus is exactly what this world needs. While the answer may be easy, achieving it is not always simple in the world we live in.

In conversations about raising today’s children, the African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child” is often quoted. Being a parent isn’t easy. Being a Christian parent raising children in a world that often challenges that is even

harder. I believe the church is at the heart and center of the village. This is one of the reasons I took the position of Christian education director years ago, when I was a new mom of a toddler. I am now the mother of two teenagers.

I will be stepping down as the director of Christian Education after this summer’s Vacation Bible School ends in June. No, I am not leaving, just no longer leading. We are working to secure a replacement soon, and we have a plan in place for someone with fun and creative ideas to step into this role. I know that our youngest members will be in very good hands with our Sunday school teachers and nursery staff. They put so much time and love into what they do. And while I won’t be leading, I will continue to give my support to this program. I hope you will do the same.

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (*Matthew 19:14*).

Kristen Morgan



Courtesy of Kim Bamber

Kristen Morgan energizes Vacation Bible School participants in 2022.



Julian of Norwich

I suspect that most English majors in college today would not know that the first known complete writing in the English language by a woman was by Julian of Norwich. Indeed, only on the basis of her name (or, more accurately, the name by which we know her—more on that later), they may not know that Julian was the name of a woman. Nonetheless, on May 8 the Anglican Communion and The Episcopal Church honor Julian (1342 – c. 1417), whose writings have had a lasting impact on Christian spirituality.

We know her as Julian because she was an anchoress (a female anchorite) at St. Julian's Church in Norwich, in the County of Norfolk, about 100 miles northeast of London. An anchorite, from the medieval Latin word *anchorita* (derived from the Greek for "I withdraw or retire"), was a person who withdraws from secular society in order to lead an intensely prayer-oriented, Eucharist-focused life. Anchorites took a vow of stability of place, choosing a permanent enclosure in cells normally attached to churches. Anchorites underwent a religious rite of consecration resembling the funeral rite, after which they would be considered dead to the world, a type of living saint. Anchorites only answered to episcopal authority. During medieval times in England, females outnumbered males in this practice by more than two to one.

It is possible that her name actually was Julian—in medieval England, that was a name for females—but more likely this woman was called by that name due to her life at St. Julian's Church. Notably, the origin of naming the church for St. Julian is lost to history, as there are at least three possible persons for whom the church was named.

Norwich was likely the second most populous city in England in the late 14th century, and it hosted a number of hermits and anchorites. Julian is the most noteworthy due to her writing in *Revelations of Divine Love*, now



recognized as the first known book by a woman written in English.

In this book, she wrote that she fell gravely ill at the age of 30. She may have been an anchoress when she fell ill, though she may have been a lay person living at home, as she mentions visitors who normally could not visit her due to the rules of limited access for her enclosure. On May 8, 1373, a curate gave her the last rites. As he held a crucifix above the foot of her bed, she began to lose her sight and feel physically numb; but while gazing on the crucifix, she saw the figure of Jesus begin to bleed. Over the next several hours, she had a series of 15 visions of Jesus, and a 16th occurred on the following night.

On May 13, she had completely recovered from her illness. It is understood that she wrote about her "shewings" (the older spelling of "showings," meaning 'visions') shortly after they occurred. Her original manuscript no longer exists, but a copy, now known as "The Short Text," survived. Much later, perhaps in the early 1390s, she began a theological excursion about the meaning of her visions, and she produced writings now known as "The Long Text." This second work seems to have gone through many revisions before it was finished, perhaps in the late 1410s. "The Long Text" has 86 chapters and 63,500 words—about six times longer than "The Short Text." Julian's writings were mostly unknown until

1670 when "The Long Text" was published. "The Short Text" was rediscovered in 1910 and published in English the next year.

Her texts were written in Middle English. This has posed translation challenges, as some words she used have obscure meanings or are used in a particular medieval context. In particular, she wrote about the Passion of Christ, and she notably writes about how Christ appeared with his head bleeding from the crown of thorns. She also writes about the nature of God, sin, prayer, creation, and the Trinity. In the present year—the 650th anniversary of her visions—the prominence of her writing and influence on spirituality has not waned, and she continues to be read, pondered, and admired. As Michael Gerson, a noted Christian columnist, wrote about Christmas a year before he died:

Christmas hope may well fall in the psychological category of wish fulfillment. But that does not disprove the possibility of actually fulfilled wishes. On Christmas, we consider the disorienting, vivid evidence that hope wins. If true, it is a story that can reorient every human story. It means that God is with us, even in suffering. It is the assurance, as from a parent, as from an angel, as from a savior: It is okay. And even at the extreme of death (quoting Julian of Norwich): "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

The traditional Collect for the feast day of Julian of Norwich is: "Lord God, who in thy compassion didst grant to the Lady Julian many revelations of thy nurturing and sustaining love: Move our hearts, like hers, to seek thee above all things, for in giving us thyself thou givest us all; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen" (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts* [2006]).

Chris Arey



VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

March 28, 2023 (via Zoom)

Business Session

Fr. Jay Morris, Rector; Fr. James Rick-
enbaker, Assistant Rector; Deacon Ste-
phen Pecot, Seminarian; Chris Arey,
Treasurer; Bill Hoffman, Senior War-
den; Christine Bowie, Michael Golasz,
Dale Hendon, Carolyn Hendrickson,
Sarah Kirby, Walt Peterson, Anna Rall,
Lisa Schwartz, Penny Stevens.

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Treasurer's Report

- Operating expense generally al-
ways shows negative because we
pay the mortgage from a money
market account and not from the
operating income that comes in
each month
- Pledges/Offerings amount looks
high because we had a few parish-
ioners pay their yearly pledge
amount in full in February
- B&G may need to review their
annual budget given their January/
February expenses

Minutes from Previous Meeting

- Approved by Vestry

New Business

- Brief discussion on why there isn't
an American flag displayed on
church grounds
 - ◊ The church is not tied to
American government; it is a
global church

Ongoing Business

- Vestry Committees and Goals
(including goals for each committee
plus goals for vestry as a whole)
 - ◊ Need to establish concrete steps
in how to reach out to parish-
ioners who have not been at in-
person worship, not due to ill-
ness/inability to attend
 - ◆ Options include phone
calls, e-mails, letters, etc.
 - ◊ Vestry in-person outreach dur-
ing Palm Sunday and Easter

Reports from Committees, Senior Warden, and Rector

- ◆ Finance and B&G Committees will
divide goals in the upcoming
weeks and assign to committee
members to help accomplish the
goals
- Finance Committee
 - ◊ Anna Rall will be chairperson
- B&G Update
 - ◊ Shrubs in front of Fleurries



Vestry Highlights

have been removed in order to
begin planting project

- Easter sunrise service will be held
in cemetery with music
 - ◊ Chairs to be moved from parish
hall to church on 4/8/23
 - ◊ Group of vestry members will
setup the chairs at 5:30 a.m. on
4/9/23
- Matching grant campaign for CFFB
 - ◊ Approved dates for campaign
from January 1, 2023 to Octo-
ber 31, 2023

Upcoming Dates

- 4/7 Good Friday: noon & 7 p.m.
- 4/9 Easter Sunday: 6:30 a.m., 9 a.m.,
11 a.m., and 4 p.m., with children's
Easter egg hunt at 10:15 a.m.
- 4/25 Vestry meeting : 7:p.m. in per-
son, with dinner available starting at
6:15 p.m.)

Good of the Order, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

*Respectfully submitted,
Anna Rall, register*

Upcoming Events



May 4 & 18:

Sts. Mary & Martha Guild meetings, 9:30-11:30, in the Parish Hall

May 7:

Breakfast reception celebrating Reverend Deacon Stephen Pecot's Ordination and
honoring Kristen Morgan for 14 years as Coordinator of Christian Education, 8:30 –10:15 a.m.

May 14:

Spring Ingathering of the United Thank Offering at all Services

May 21:

Heritage Sunday luncheon following the 10:30 Service

June 12-16:

Vacation Bible School, 9 – noon, <https://vbspro.events/p/events/1f56d9>

Recurring events:

- Morning Prayer online: Mon.– Fri., 8 – 9 a.m., <https://www.facebook.com/AquiaEpiscopalChurch/>
- Morning Call: Sundays, 9:30 – 10:15 a.m., in the great hall/CFFB
- Wednesday Bible Studies: 10:30 a.m. in-person (CFFB) & electronically; 7 p.m. electronically on Facebook



Landscaping Our Campus

Since the summer of 2022, a group of six parishioners—the Project to Landscape the Aquia Church Environment (PLACE) task group—has been working on a design and implementation plan to enhance and beautify the grounds of our campus. The PLACE task group comprises Jeanelle Wells (a professional landscape architect), Penny Stevens (a master gardener), Sheryl Colliver (from our flower guild), Christine Hammer, Carol Korth, and Chris Arey.

In February 2023, the Vestry approved a phased plan to renovate the front grounds of the church office building, the Fleurries. This building is the remaining portion of a 19th century farm house that was the residence of Miss Anne E. Moncure, the noted Stafford County educator. The building was moved from its original location (near the present-day Aquia Towne Center) to

Aquia Church and was renovated in the 1990s, when it became the church office. You may have noticed recently that the grounds in front of the Fleurries have been excavated, with the privet hedge removed and the soil replaced. As the weather warms, new plantings will be installed by the PLACE team.

Funds have been raised for this effort, and Phase I of the Fleurries effort is underway. Phase II is planned for later in the fall, and plans will be developed for the other buildings on our campus, except for the historic church. If this project interests you, please let one of the task group members know. The comprehensive plan, with diagrams and pictures of the plants selected for this effort, are on the Aquia Church Website at this URL: <https://aquiachurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Fleurries-Project.pdf>

Chris Arey



Courtesy of Chris Arey

PLACE Task Group planted low maintenance, drought tolerant perennials in front of the Fleurries building to provide continuous blooms in the growing season.

Looking for a Few Good Ushers

One of the essential functions at our main Sunday morning service is to greet and assist arriving worshippers. Ushers (the word is derived from the Latin *ostiar-ius*, meaning ‘doorman’ or ‘porter’) fill this important function, and Aquia Church is looking for parishioners willing to serve in this capacity. Normally, serving is needed once every other month. In addition to greeting worshippers and ensuring the distribution of bulletins, ushers

help take up the offering and enable worshippers to get up to the rail to receive communion. If you are willing to join the small group of members who perform this essential function, please contact Chris Arey (chris.arey@gmail.com).

Chris Arey



Matching Challenge Grant

Aquia Church has received a commitment for a new matching challenge to help us retire the debt on the construction loan for the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building. Every donation received for the CFFB between Jan. 1, 2023, and Oct. 31, 2023—New Year’s Day to Halloween—will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000.00, so that we can continue to pay off the construction loan ahead of schedule, with reduced interest payments and reduced overall expense. So this opportunity includes gifts already made earlier this year, plus gifts that will be received between now and the end of October. Please consider what kind of contribution you can make toward this matching challenge opportunity, and let’s make it a success!





Aquia Episcopal Church
Post Office Box 275
Stafford, VA
22555

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Congratulations, Stephen Pecot!



The Reverend Deacon Stephen Pecot (left) and Reverend Jay Morris at Pecot's ordination as a deacon at Christ Church Cathedral in Mobile, Ala.

The Reverend Jay Morris was one of the people who presented Stephen Pecot for ordination as a deacon at Christ Church Cathedral in Mobile, Alabama, on March 25, 2023. Soon afterward, the Reverend Deacon Stephen Pecot was called to serve as clergy-in-charge at Trinity Episcopal Church in Apalachicola, Florida (on the shore of the Florida panhandle and in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast), effective June 1, 2023. This church was first organized in 1836, when Florida was a territory, and is the sixth-oldest church in Florida. Stephen anticipates being ordained a priest in early October, and will have the opportunity to become rector of this church in due time, pending further discernment by everyone involved.

Those who would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the clergy discretionary fund that will support the unbudgeted needs of Stephen's new ministry there (as a gift honoring his recent ordination as a deacon, his upcoming graduation from seminary in May, and this new call) should mail it directly to Trinity Episcopal Church, PO Box 667, Apalachicola, FL 32320-0667, with "Clergy Discretionary Fund" marked on your check.

May 2023 **READING ROOM** by Jay Morris

This month, as Aquia Church celebrates what is good and honorable about our tradition by observing our Heritage Sunday on May 21, this column recognizes the significance of the classic *Book of Common Prayer*, especially in its 1662 edition. Still the official Book of Common Prayer for the Church of England to this day, this particular version of the prayer book was very new when Stafford County was first organized in 1664 and when the roots of our parish were planted. The 1662 BCP was in use also when construction on our historic church building was begun in 1751 and was completed in 1757, and the same prayer book was still in use nearly twenty years later at the outset of the American Revolution. Among the most cherished possessions of our parish is the large edition of the 1662 BCP—preserving as it did prayers for the British king and royal government, but with those references crossed out while new references to American officials and approaches were inscribed by hand. Many elements of that 1662 BCP continued to exert influences on The Episcopal Church's Books of Common Prayer (1789, 1928, and 1979), as seen even today chiefly in the Rite One worship of our current prayer book. Yet this same 1662 BCP that was so influential for the founding of Aquia Church and the related spread of Anglicanism around the world was once a new thing, even though it certainly was not concocted from scratch out of thin air. No, the famous 1662 BCP built directly upon its predecessor volumes—the original *Book of Common Prayer* of 1549, which was the first BCP for the Church of England, followed by the revisions of 1552, 1559, and 1604. So the development of the Book of Common Prayer can be traced quite readily from 1549 to 1662 in the Church of England, and by extension down to the current (1979) BCP of The Episcopal Church and in the variety of prayer books around the Anglican world. The changes at each stage of development represent a variety of considerations, including theological debates, shifts in liturgical preferences, variations in vocabulary and style, and so forth.

The day after Easter this year, Father Rickenbaker and I began to study the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* in some detail, examining it by comparison with Anglican prayer books before its publication and by comparison with several subsequent prayer books in American Anglicanism. This interest and research has been strengthened by our participation in a graduate-level course that he and I are auditing. The two textbooks for that course might attract your attention as well, and so we recommend them here. The first book is ***The Book of Common Prayer: The Versions of 1549, 1559, and 1662*** (Oxford University Press, 2013), edited by Brian Cummings for the Oxford World's Classics series. The objective of this volume is simple: present the (nearly) complete texts of the Book of Common Prayer from the Church of England in the three most important versions of its history (excluding the slight revisions of subsequent editions that appeared in 1552 and 1604, and excluding some material that remains substantially unaltered from one version to the next), together with some historical introduction and editorial guidance in footnotes and related apparatus, so that one can read for oneself the various changes made along the way of this text's life, and thus one can consider why the changes were likely made, whether they might be regarded as improvements or not, and so forth. Reading these texts as presented here can be a bit challenging at times for obvious reasons, including the fact that Cummings has deliberately preserved spellings and phrasings that are nowadays considered antique, if not altogether obsolete. My academic background in historical philosophy and theology has certainly aided my reading comprehension with these older texts, but that task is not always easy—which fact leads me to the second textbook: ***The 1662 Book of Common Prayer: International Edition*** (IVP Academic, 2021), edited by Samuel L. Bray and Drew Nathaniel Keane. Bray and Keane have taken the official 1662 BCP and have given it a very slight updating in a few places—usually in order to reflect considerable changes in the spellings and connotations of vocabulary words over the past several centuries. (For starters, ponder the meaning of the phrase “the quick and the dead” in the older language of the Apostles' Creed, compared to the more recent “the living and the dead.”) The editors have also dropped that BCP's references to the British monarch, family, and government and have instead substituted words and phrases that can be used in any locale around the world, regardless of jurisdiction (hence the subtitle). All such editorial modifications are carefully noted and explained through supporting materials, including a helpful glossary. A principal concern for Bray and Keane is to keep alive the literary, devotional, and theological significance of the 1662 BCP for a much wider audience that is over three hundred fifty years removed from the publication of the first BCP. Both of these books recommended here are published in attractive formats with a page-marking ribbon attached. A parishioner in the Anglican Church in North America, Prof. Bray teaches at the law school of the University of Notre Dame in Indiana; Dr. Keane teaches writing at Georgia Southern University and for six years was a member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for The Episcopal Church. Bray and Keane have been teaching Father Rickenbaker and me (among other students) in the class I mentioned above, and their insights have been very valuable. While neither Bray nor Keane is a professional liturgist, both are exceedingly astute readers and researchers for their volume, and they are currently completing a companion volume to be published later this year (*How to Use the Prayer Book* [InterVarsity Press, 2023]). In addition, Keane is co-authoring a commentary on the 1662 BCP with Samuel Fornecker, tentatively titled *Lighten Our Darkness* [IVP Academic].