



**AQUIA**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Cross Section

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

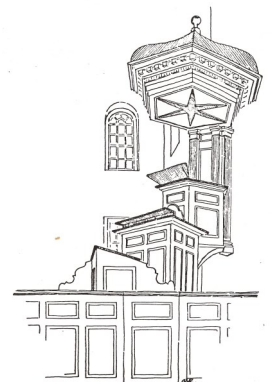
## 'O come, all ye faithful'



Parishioners gather at Aquia Church before the Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist on Dec. 24, 2024. Christmas music began 30 minutes before the service courtesy of Music Director Trystan Bennett. Christmas Eve services were held at 4:30, 7 and 10 p.m.

### INSIDE:

- Rector: How Learning Christianity is Like Learning a Foreign Language
- Assistant Rector: The Season After the Epiphany
- Vestry Minutes
- Aquia's Pantry
- Christian Education: Children's pageant
- ECW
- The Thirteenth Apostle
- Sts. Mary and Martha Guild
- February Prayer List





## CROSS SECTION

### Aquia Episcopal Church

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Stafford, Va.

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Stafford, VA 22555

**Contact us:**

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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*

**Kimberly Bamber**

*Parish Administrator*

**Sue Selz**

*Bookkeeper*

**Gloria Reyes**

*Nursery Supervisor*

**Dawna Spaulding**

## FROM THE RECTOR

### How Learning Christianity is Like Learning a Foreign Language

We usually take studying a foreign language for granted because it seems like such a bothersome chore or just another requirement for graduation, if we even attempt to undertake the endeavor in the first place. The same is true with learning Christianity—which likewise involves acquiring skills and perspective that are not innate—so that we can have a way of thinking and acting and engaging with the rest of the world beyond what we would do if left to our own desires. Yet the new realm that opens up for us as we learn that new language (like when we learn Christianity) can yield profound changes for good. And *how* we learn Christianity, like how we expand our linguistic ability, matters a great deal too.

Studying a foreign language requires grasping new letters, symbols, vocabulary words, and so forth. These elements are necessary in order for us to understand anything about a different language. For even better insight, one should also learn about the culture from which that foreign language arose, such as its history and influence, its art and music, even its food. With such a fulsome set of tools, one's comprehension of that language and ability to interact through it can flourish.

But in order for that complete understanding to sink in, more effort is required than spending a few haphazard hours on memory work with flash cards. Vocabulary words must be mastered, familiarity with the syntax and grammar must be experienced in reading and in writing, and time must be devoted to hearing and speaking the language. Talking with native speakers can help; so can hearing recordings of foreigners conversing, reading and writing in various contexts, watching foreign films and listening to foreign music, eating food from other countries, even traveling to neighborhoods and nations where that language is spoken widely. You learn a foreign language best by becoming

completely surrounded by that language, totally immersed in its unique culture, people, and practices.

With Christianity, you can learn the foundational stories and major characters of the Bible through a sermon or Sunday school, youth group or Bible study. But that's just the bare-bones beginning if you intend to learn Christianity for real (instead of hurriedly passing a quiz then forgetting everything). You should engage with others who speak with Christian vocabulary and style—including grace, sin, repentance, and salvation—and who live in ways that take those terms seriously. You should spend time in the live lab of Christianity, imitating the good lives of faithful saints and discerning why you enjoy living that way. You should sing the hymns of praise and the psalms of lament while also understanding the importance of silence. You should taste the Body and Blood of Christ alongside the food of fellowship breakfasts, wedding feasts, and funeral receptions. All of that begins best by total immersion into the waters of baptism that sustain you across a lifetime of growing closer to God, so that Christianity becomes a second language in which you are increasingly fluent.

You won't learn another language by skipping class, refusing to prepare for tests, ignoring the homework, or avoiding the teachers and students. Nor will you learn a language by only occasional osmosis. No, learning a language requires commitment and dedication. Similarly, you won't learn Christianity by missing church, avoiding worship with fellow Christians, ignoring the Bible, or failing to follow its guidance for our lives. You certainly won't learn Christianity well by simply mimicking whatever actions and attitudes happen to pass by you. You learn Christianity through the commitment and dedication that begin best by total immersion.

*Jay Morris*



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## FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

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### The Season After the Epiphany

*This month of February will feature plenty more epiphanic moments from the life of Jesus.*

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 you desire to keep the fullest sense of the liturgical calendar. The ebb and flow of the church year is an important pattern in our lives. Whether it be the fasting of Advent and Lent or the feasting of Christmas and Easter or those quieter moments in between, when we live into the liturgical calendar, we are remembering (and perhaps living into) the life of Jesus. That includes the season we are in now: the season after the Epiphany.

On January 6, the church celebrates the Epiphany: the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. This feast is a partial fulfillment of Isaiah 49:6, where God tells his servant, the Messiah, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." The feast of the Epiphany is the first of many moments where the true nature and purpose of Jesus' life and ministry are made known. The season after the Epiphany picks up the story there.

As January moves on, we hear of several other revelatory moments in the life of Jesus. First, there was his baptism in the Jordan River, where the Father spoke to him in the hearing of others, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:22). Then, we hear about the first miracle that Jesus performed: turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. On the last Sunday in January, we hear about Jesus' first sermon in his home synagogue in Nazareth. All three of these stories reveal something important about Jesus: he is the

Messiah (baptism), God (miracle), and the fulfillment of prophecy (first sermon).

This month of February will feature plenty more epiphanic moments from the life of Jesus. The first Sunday in February is the day when we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. Both Simeon and Anna sing of God's marvelous work in bringing about the salvation of Israel through this child. Following this, we hear how Jesus called his first disciples, and how Peter understood from the outset that Jesus was no ordinary man (because Jesus miraculously filled Peter's net with fish). The following Sunday gives us Luke's version of Jesus' Beatitudes, showing Jesus to be the teacher of Israel and the world. He is shown again to be the true teacher of the world the following week as his Sermon on the Plain continues with Jesus revealing the radically different values of the kingdom of God. Finally, the season ends with that great disclosure of Jesus' true identity in the Transfiguration.

There are many things that we learn from this season after the Epiphany: Jesus is the Messiah, the world's true teacher, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and promise, and, ultimately, God-in-the-flesh come for you. This is no "ordinary time," as it is sometimes colloquially known. It is a season during which we see the majesty of Jesus. My prayers are with you during this time. May the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus Christ be revealed to you anew.

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

**Rick Bryant**

*Finance Committee*

**Chris Dearing**

*Finance Committee*

**Michael Ferrantino**

*Administration Committee*

**Brad Hammer**

*Junior Warden*

*Chairperson, Buildings &  
Grounds Committee*

**Dale Hendon**

*Chairperson,  
Finance Committee*

**Bill Hoffman**

*Senior Warden*

**Joe Howard**

*Register  
Finance Committee*

**Carol Korth**

*Buildings & Grounds  
Committee*

**Walt Peterson**

*Chairperson,  
Administration Committee*

**Pat Quinn**

*Administration Committee*



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## VESTRY

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### VESTRY MEETING (via Zoom) AGENDA

**17 December 2024**

**Business Session** (starting at 7:00 p.m.)

#### Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

**Attendees:** Fr. Jay Morris, Fr. James Rickenbaker; Bill Hoffman, Senior Warden; Chris Arey, Treasurer; Michael Ferrantino, Dale Hendon, Carolyn Hendrickson, Sarah Kirby, Walt Peterson, Anna Rall, Penny Stevens.

#### Treasurer's Report

- Reviewed monthly incomes and expenses
- Reviewed balance sheet and TOTF summary of account

#### Minutes from Previous Meeting

- **R-2024-19:** Additional Appointments to Audit Committee to Review 2023 Financials (approved 11/26)
- **R-2024-20:** Transfer Money from the General Fund Reserve to the General Fund (approved 11/26)
- Minutes approved unanimously

#### New Business

- **R-2024-21:** Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Rector (Finance Committee)
  - Approved unanimously
- **R-2024-22:** Designation of Parsonage Allowance for the Assistant Rector (Finance Committee)
  - Approved unanimously
- **R-2024-23:** Adoption of 2025 Budget (Finance Committee)
  - Approved unanimously

#### Continuing Business

- **Annual Pledge Campaign**
  - 61 pledge cards received for General Fund with a total of \$314,332
  - 29 pledge cards for Heritage Endowment Fund with a total of \$115,660

#### 2025 Aquia Church Vestry Members



Rick Bryant	
Chris Dearing	
Michael Ferrantino	Joe Howard
Brad Hammer	Carol Korth
Dale Hendon	Walt Peterson
Bill Hoffman	Pat Quinn

- **Vestry Election at 2025 Annual Meeting**
  - 4 for 3-year term: Rick Bryant, Michael Ferrantino, Joe Howard, Patricia Quinn
  - 2 for 1-year term: Chris Dearing, Carol Korth
  - All these nominees approved unanimously
- **Looking Ahead to 2025**
  - Capital campaign fundraising
  - Annual meeting will be held 1/5/25
    - Breakfast hosted by 2024 vestry
  - Bricks being sold by historic church
    - Offer by Dennise LaBarre to purchase remaining bricks at a lump sum

#### Reports from Committees, Wardens, and Clergy

Senior Warden Update: Will send out breakfast item options for annual meeting

#### Upcoming Dates

- **1/5/2025:** 2025 Annual Meeting (9:00 a.m.) (or first Sunday in 2025, 9:00 a.m.)
- **1/11/2025:** Vestry Retreat (tentatively 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.) (or first Saturday after 2025 annual meeting)
- **1/28/2025:** January Meeting (meal available starting at 6:00 p.m., with business session starting at 7:00 p.m.)

#### Good of the Order, Closing Prayer, and Adjournment

*Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Rall, register*





## AQUIA'S PANTRY

*"The Pantry gave out 6,282 sets of groceries in 2024, requiring well over 5,000 volunteer hours and 18,846 brown-paper grocery bags."*

In reviewing Aquia's Pantry's activities in 2024, we found some interesting statistics. The Pantry gave out 6,282 sets of groceries in 2024, requiring well over 5,000 volunteer hours and 18,846 brown-paper grocery bags (3 bags for each set). We were open for service 50 Wednesdays in 2024, closing once for inclement weather in January 2024 (just like we did earlier this year) and once for the recent Christmas Day.

We deeply appreciate every gift, both large and small, that we received from our fellow parishioners over the year. One family consistently gave 50+ boxes of cereal each month. One family gave 280 cans of vegetables just as we were about to run out. Several families provided 100 cans of tomato sauce, and our fellow parishioners purchased over 100 turkeys and hams for our guests at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

In 2024, we were also supported by a \$12,000 humanitarian grant from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, which we invested to provide rice once a month, and peanut butter and black beans twice a month for our families from their Bishop's Storehouse. Another grant that we shared with Aquia's Table came from SERVE; this grant supplied farm-fresh vegetables and eggs weekly through the summer and fall. Thanks to local food drives, we were able to pick up several hundred pounds of canned vegetables and beans from the food bank in December. And just as we were no longer



Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Cole

More than 50 boxes of cereal were donated to Aquia's Pantry by one family each month.

getting enough candy for the kids' baggies, we received 827 pounds of Christmas candy and cookies from Target. So many blessings have added up together to provide nutritious food for the families who seek help from the Pantry. Thank you, Aquia Church, for all your support in 2024.

As last year's grants run out and the new calendar year begins, we have a continuing need for cans of tomato

sauce, jars of peanut butter, boxes of cereal, and both egg cartons and brown-paper grocery bags.

To learn more about Aquia's Pantry in person, stop by the great hall any Wednesday between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. If you have questions or suggestions, please reach out to Barb Bingay, Ron Korth, or Mary Jane Cole ([maryjane@cfsw.biz](mailto:maryjane@cfsw.biz)).

Mary Jane Cole





## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



### *'Angels We Have Heard on High'*

*This is the story of the first Christmas—the night Jesus Christ was born. We celebrate this to remember the hope and joy that this tiny baby brought to the World on that extraordinary night in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago.*

Sunday School students presented the annual Christmas pageant on Dec. 15, 2024. Narrators, Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, animals, kings, and, of course, baby Jesus, shared the story of the first Christmas with Aquia Church. Thank you to all the parents, volunteers and children for participating in this special service.



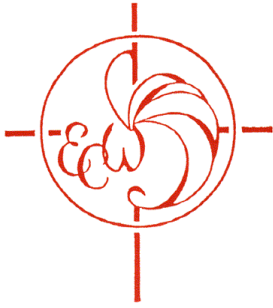
Photos courtesy of Kimberly Bamber and Rachel Rickenbaker



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## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

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### Mission Statement:

**The Episcopal Church Women of Aquia Church, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, wish to know Christ and make him known through prayer, education, concern for others and joyful service.**

**D**ear Parishioners of Aquia Episcopal Church,

It is with faith that I am writing my first newsletter article as president of the Episcopal Church Women of Aquia Church. As the saying goes, I have huge shoes to fill in the person of Briget Kane, who remains a source of continual inspiration for me. I can only hope to be half as effective as Briget has been, and I pray that I will facilitate the mission of ECW with God as my guide. I also am very privileged to work with women (and men) who are outstanding in faith and love, and I am thankful for their support. If you have ever attended a reception or parish

event hosted by ECW, you know what I mean. What an amazing group of women we have!

Looking ahead in 2025, we are offering two parish events hosted by ECW. On 2 March, the ECW will host a Shrove Tuesday breakfast between the two morning worship services on that Sunday. Pancakes, bacon, fruit, juice and other fixings will be offered. I hope to see everyone at 9:00 a.m. in the Christian Formation and Fellowship Building (CFFB) that day for breakfast, as we start the Lenten season in fellowship. This will take the place of a celebration on Shrove Tuesday itself, which falls this year on 4 March.

Additionally, the ECW is supporting a Quiet Day for Lent on 29 March. Led by the clergy, the ECW will offer parishioners the opportunity to take some quiet time to reflect upon meditations in Lent. More details are forthcoming, but mark this date as something to look forward to in our very busy days.

As I write, we are experiencing our first significant snowfall in some years. I think of Job 37:5-7, and I realize our Father is letting us know he is among us. I hope the snow was not too difficult to navigate.

*Blessing to you and yours,  
Carol Korth*

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## The Thirteenth Apostle by Chris Arey

**D**isciples and apostles are some of the most familiar personages in the Bible. Though the two terms are not interchangeable, they often overlap and there is a nuance to the use of these terms. We members of Aquia Church aim to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We may not be capital 'D' disciples, as those of the Bible might be described, but—like the use of the term 'saints'—the term 'disciple' is not reserved exclusively for those who followed Jesus during his earthly ministry. All of that is probably not new.

We recognize the names of the prominent biblical disciples (including Peter, Andrew, John and his brother James), and the names of some others (such as Philip, Matthew, Thomas, and notoriously Judas Iscariot) are familiar to us. The remaining names among the twelve apostles whom Jesus chose are perhaps less obvious. Does the mnemonic PBJ STAMP help out? It's a little tricky as there are more than one apostle whose name begins with 'J.' So it is: (Simon) Peter, Bartholomew, John, James, James the Lesser, Judas

Iscariot, Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus (also known as Judas son of James), Andrew, Matthew, Philip. They are listed in Matthew 10:2-4 and in Mark 3:14, and they are identified as apostles.

After the death of Judas Iscariot was followed by Jesus' resurrection and ascension, there was a need to replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle, and Peter had the responsibility of leading the disciples to choose another. As related

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## STS. MARY AND MARTHA GUILD

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**W**e Christians have an extra reason to smile in the new year.

Everyone looks forward to a new, bright, and promising beginning of each new year. We make resolutions, such as: eat healthier, exercise more, be more productive at work. Most of our resolutions last only a month or two, so some experts say. Some of us don't even make resolutions anymore. What's the point of making resolutions that won't be kept?

Yet we Christians are gloriously fortunate to have a Father in heaven who forgives our errant thoughts and deeds if we repent. He does so over and over. We receive blessings from God even though we cannot earn them and don't deserve them. What a perfect example of unconditional love. We receive this love, and we share it by pass-

ing it on to others, in actions, feelings, and attitudes.

If you would like to pass on God's love and Christ's love and your thankfulness for them, Aquia Church has a number of ministries. Among them are ECW (if you're a woman of the parish, you already belong!), the Vestry, the altar guild, the flower guild, and others. You might become an active member of one or more ministries.

Kathie League and I are co-chairs of the Sts. Mary and Martha Guild, so I will try to explain this ministry. We work to incorporate worship, service, and fellowship into all of our meetings. We begin each meeting with Morning Prayer with clergy. Our time is then divided between reading and discussing our current book. Then we enjoy fellowship, snack, and crafting. We have a

discussion about the upcoming activities of the church that are pending each month. Most importantly, we address where and how we can contribute our time and talents around our church.

We meet on the first and third Thursdays of the month. If there's a fifth Thursday that month, we have a service day on that occasion. You'll get the details at the prior meeting. I hope you will join us at 9:30 in the parish hall downstairs or e-mail Carolyn Hendrickson ([docnpch@gmail.com](mailto:docnpch@gmail.com)) or Kathie League ([kleague6412@gmail.com](mailto:kleague6412@gmail.com)) for questions or other details. It's an easy and pleasant way to demonstrate your love and appreciation to our Lord.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Carolyn Hendrickson (co-chairperson)*

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in the first chapter in the Book of Acts: "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; thus he was added to the remaining eleven apostles in order to return the group to their full number.

So Matthias, who was selected at random, joined the Twelve, even though he was not called personally by

Jesus but had followed him for the duration of his ministry. Matthias was chosen even before the Holy Spirit descended on the early church at Pentecost. There is no other reference in the New Testament to Matthias.

All subsequent information about the apostolic ministry and death of Matthias is uncertain and confusing. One tradition says that Matthias spread Christianity around Cappadocia and on the coasts of the Caspian Sea. According to Nicephorus, a Greek ecclesiastical historian in the late Byzantine era, Matthias first preached the Gospel in Judaea, then in an area known as Aethiopia (in the nation of Georgia), and finally was crucified. An extant Coptic book called *The Acts of Andrew and Matthias* places Matthias's activity similarly in "the city of the cannibals" in Aethiopia. A marker placed in the ruins of the Roman fortress at Gonio in the modern Georgian region of Adjara claims that Matthias is buried at that

site. A different tradition claims that Matthias was stoned at Jerusalem by the local populace, after which he was beheaded. According to Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 170—ca. 235), Matthias died of old age in Jerusalem.

There are some ways of remembering the apostle Matthias in our own era. For instance, there is a St. Matthias Episcopal Church as close as Midlothian, Virginia. St. Matthias is recognized in the Episcopal Church on February 24. The contemporary collect for that day is:

Almighty God, who in the place of Judas chose your faithful servant Matthias to be numbered among the Twelve: Grant that your Church, being delivered from false apostles, may always be guided and governed by faithful and true pastors; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2006*, page 177)









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