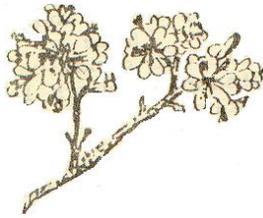


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr., Rector
The Rev. David M. Crosby, Associate Rector
Jennifer Addington, Editor



March 14, 2014

"I said to the almond tree, 'Sister, speak to me of God.' And the almond tree blossomed." Nikos Kazantzakis

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

A new column looking at some of the things we do when we gather for worship

Praying with hands raised

You may have noticed that the priest who is celebrant at the Eucharist usually leads the Eucharistic prayer with hands open and palms exposed. Why is that?

This is an ancient Christian posture of prayer, called the *Orans* position. The author of Timothy speaks of praying with holy hands raised (1 Timothy 2:8) and this was the standard posture for prayer in the early Church. It is by no means limited to the priest at the Altar.

Try this sometime: cross your arms and hold them tightly to yourself. You will probably feel safe, protected, and defended. Now, open your hands and lift your palms upwards. You will probably feel more open, vulnerable, and unguarded. Many of the saints and mystics say that our relationship with God, and our further growth in that relationship, requires just this sort of openness and vulnerability. Finally, as Anglicans we offer options for prayer with our bodies, not only with our intellect and reason.

Try it sometime! Even in Church. See how it feels.

ALL PATHS EQUAL?? THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST

One of the thorniest questions post-modern believers face is the relationship between Christianity and other world religions. Indeed, some Christians believe all paths are essentially equal, leading to God, while other Christians believe there is nothing worthwhile in any other tradition. People ask this question in many ways, and I have already heard it in various shades at Immanuel. I would like to offer how I approach this question. In fact, our answering of this question puts us in the same shoes of St. Peter, when our Lord asked him, "Who do people say that I am?" (Luke 9:18).

I believe, as a Christian, that Jesus Christ was and is the fullest expression of God that this world has ever received, or ever will receive. That is why I am a Christian; otherwise I might be something else, or nothing. God became one of us, "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

That being said, I also believe there is truth and beauty in other world religions, truth from which we can learn. Even if we believe Christ's coming to be the fullest expression of God among us, there is no place for arrogance or disrespect. Indeed, we are called to greet others humbly, to listen and learn from them as they share their stories, even as we share ours. Instead of reducing our faith and belief to the lowest common denominator, when others share fully of what they believe we can do the same, and greet one another with respect.

The Anglican tradition equips us very well for this sort of posture. We are heirs of the ancient catholic, apostolic, orthodox faith, while also stressing and being open to the ongoing role of the Holy Spirit. We also stress how God speaks to us through our own reason. This continuing revelation occurs even within our fellowship at Immanuel, especially as we share our stories, opinions, and perspectives, and as we are open to God's leading. I look forward to continuing that journey with you.

See you in Church,
Randy

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Jean Schnedl, Morgan, Catherine, Mary, Duncan MacDonald, Yvonne Pover, Natalie Doyle-Hennin, Bill Frye, Barbara Fornoff, Dana Hengst, Warren Phillips, Sharon Waiss, Norma and Dick Taliaferro, John and Louisa Smucker, Mary-Jo Cooney, David Lindsey, Martha Sedgwick, Dick Hobson.

Please also remember in your prayers members of our extended Parish family: Dean and Charlotte Kellogg, Chris Rarick, Eleanor Boothe Smith, Sam Faeth, Anthony Christino, Jr., Jane Burton, Keith Green, Lois, Alex, Marian, and Bob Love, Tom Hewson, Sr., Danny Christoffersen, Ross Dickerson, Jim Clear, Lindsey Rose, Cathy and Stewart Hoskins, Laura Hudson, Ann and Larry Kaplan, Aubree Bowling, Marjorie Glassco, Paul, Kathryn, Carol Brown, Scott, Bob Weeks, Sharon Laboditz, D. Elizabeth Peters, Patricia, Howard Sutherland, Mary Jean Anderson, Mildred, Dan Wells, .Erin and Rob Schiesel, Marianne and Gerard Ennis, Bill Ennis, Jack Lewis, Linda Monzi, Elesa McFadden, Thomas Arminio, Boyd Noorda, Jewel.

Those serving in the U.S. and overseas: Todd Bates, Ian Phillips, John Patrick Miller; Jon and Nicole Anderson, Noah Barker, Ryan, Will Murtha, Allen Kellogg, Keith June.

SUNDAY LENTEN SERIES FOCUSES ON TYPES OF PRAYER: Sundays during Lent feature a series of forums on different types of prayer, their origins in Scripture and tradition, their use in our liturgy, and how we use them in our own private devotions. We will explore together: Thanksgiving, Intercession, Confession, Petition, and Adoration. We will hear from a variety of voices, and each forum will end with a time of actually praying in the way we have just discussed. The forums begin at 10:30 on Sunday mornings.

WHAT'S NEW ON IMMANUEL'S WEBSITE: You can find resources for your Lenten journey with a single click! Just go to the main page at www.icoh.net and press on the new purple button marked "+LENT+".

WE WELCOME THE REV. DR. KEITH WARD, FORMER REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AT OXFORD, AS OUR PREACHER AND FORUM LEADER THIS SUNDAY. Dr. Ward is an Anglican priest, theologian, and philosopher. Among Dr. Ward's many interests are the dialogue between religions and the relationship between science and religion. The author of over 20 books on theology and philosophy, Dr. Ward's most recent publications include *Why There Almost Certainly Is a God* (2008) and *The Big Questions in Science and Religion* (2008.) He comes to Immanuel while he is in the area as a guest of Virginia Seminary. **The topic for his forum today will be: "Are the new atheists already extinct?" drawing upon his writing and rebuttal of Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and the like.**

CALLING ALL ARTISTS! - We will walk the Way of the Cross as part of our Good Friday noonday and 7:30 p.m. liturgies on April 18. Each of the fourteen Stations of the Cross, we hope, will be illustrated by an artist of Immanuel. We seek depictions of particular moments from the Passion of Jesus Christ, and we welcome diversity in media, whether it be painting, sketch or print, a sculpture, or textiles (quilts, needlework, etc.) for our stations. Younger members of Immanuel are particularly welcome to contribute. The Stations will adorn the Chapel and Narthex space as we 'walk the Way of the Cross.' If you are interested in participating, please contact the Rev. David (dcrosby@icoh.net) for guidance on individual stations, size specifications and their placement. Thank you.

SCHOOL FOR THE SPIRIT Wednesday nights from April 30 and May 7, 14, and 21: School for the Spirit is coming back to Immanuel for the four weeks after Easter, with an informal friendly dinner in the Parish Hall beginning at 7:00 p.m., and then dividing into three or four classes until about 9:15. Classes are likely to include a class by The Rev. Randy Alexander; possibly a literature and faith reading group; and African Bible study. If you have ideas for classes that you would like considered, please get in touch with David Atwood (david_atwood@hotmail.com), Nancy Reuschel (nancyreuschel@hotmail.com), or Caroline Bergmark (cbergmark@yahoo.com) before March 25.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RICK GLASSCO! Richard Glassco has been selected as an Alexandria Living Legend of 2014. The mission of Living Legends of Alexandria is to identify, honor, and chronicle individuals who have made significant contributions to the quality of life in Alexandria. Rick has been the Treasurer of ALIVE! (a faith-based community service group that provides food, furniture, emergency shelter, pre-school, and rental and medical assistance) for 23 years, as well as a middle school math mentor for Higher Achievement in Alexandria for 4 years and an active member of Immanuel choir and outreach projects for over 30 years.

The Board of Directors of Living Legends of Alexandria (LLA) invites you to attend the “Meet the Legends” Reception, Thursday, March 20, 2014, 6 p.m., Patent & Trademark Office, 600 Dulany St., Alexandria, Madison Building Lower Atrium. LLA identifies, honors and chronicles individuals who have made significant contributions to the quality of life in Alexandria. LLA also offers programs to encourage children and youth to document the histories of family members and others in the community by means of stories, still and video photography and art. The reception will honor the twelve 2014 Living Legends of Alexandria, including Rick Glassco.

ORAL RE-HYDRATION THERAPY—7th ANNUAL OUTREACH PROJECT WITH TEMPLE BETH EI AND IMMANUEL CHURCH ON THE HILL

When? March 20th, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. we need about 30 volunteers to insert directions in the ORT packets. **If interested, please contact parishioner David Ingold:** 703-751-8635 or davidgold@comcast.net.

March 30th, any time between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., we need all hands on deck! This is the BIG EVENT! **No need to sign up; just show up.**

Where? All events take place at Temple Beth EI, 3830 Seminary Rd. Enter building through the rear parking lot.

What? We assemble packets of dry ingredients (sugars & salts) that are shipped under the auspices of the United Nations & other relief agencies to scenes of natural or man-made disasters (war, famine, floods, & earthquakes). Packets prepared in past years were used in Haiti after the 2009 earthquake, and in the Philippines after two typhoons killed more than 6,000 people, washed out entire villages and disrupted clean water supplies.

Our goal is 20,000 packets.

OUTREACH NEWS

Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) and Alexandria’s Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities are co-sponsoring the March Senior Speaker Series event: *Recreation & Cultural Activities for Alexandria’s Seniors*. Attendees will learn about the City’s Power Plus 55+ activities programs including “robust walking”, aquatics classes, weekly clubs, and classes offered at our Rec Centers and Libraries. There will also be exercise and activity demonstrations at this **free** event, which will be held at Chinquapin Recreation Center at 3210 King Street on Wednesday, March 12 from 9:30am-noon. Register for this event by calling SSA at (703) 836 4414, ext. 10, or at www.seniorservicesalex.org

Help Wanted: Volunteers to support our Meals on Wheels ministry. Requires two hours a month, on the first Thursday of each month. We need drivers and runners who will take the meals to the door. Our veterans remain strong in spirit but time and fate are taking a toll. A larger group of volunteers will help us fulfill this important mission. Please reply to Ollie Patton at 703-683-2898 or obpatton@comcast.net, or Harvey Palmer at 703-971-0949, or email him at hrpalmer13@gmail.com.

Capital Caring, Northern Virginia’s hometown, nonprofit hospice for 37 years, needs volunteers to visit our patients. The average visit is 2 hours. It is enormously rewarding work. Training and ongoing support are provided and mileage reimbursement is available. For more information, please contact Martha Huffman at 703-333-6962 or mhuffman@capitalcaring.org.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



March 16, The Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEI

March 23, The Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII

March 30, The Fourth Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
8 a.m., HEI, 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI