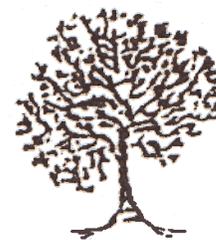
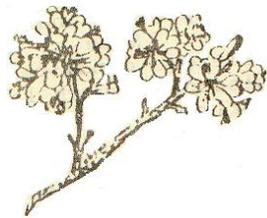


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

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



October 22, 2015

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

STIMULUS OVERLOAD

I was watching CNN some time ago, finding myself caught up in an interview. I realized I was getting more and more frustrated as I tried to watch the interview. The ticker with headlines was rolling at the bottom of the page. The time was displayed in another box, a shining CNN logo kept appearing, the current report on the market was displayed and then, infuriatingly, the interview I was watching became one of several boxes displayed at the same time. I cannot now remember even the subject of the interview! I sat there, stunned, as the stimuli bombarded me all at once. It seemed impossible to just focus on one story at a time, and it occurred to me that the stimulus overload is symbolic of our post-modern life.

We all are regularly bombarded by more stimuli than that to which we can possibly attend. A motto we have used with our boys is, "Be where you are," meaning be in the moment, not always wanting to do the next thing. It seems harder and harder to hear the same voices, the centering voices. Where do we go for clarity, for truth? Thank God for the local church, where we hear central messages of truth, such as "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, to the end that those who believe in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Or, also from John, "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b). Or, "Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15).

I realize it is not only through the church that people can experience God, or even have a relationship with God, but there is power when we come together in the Name of Jesus. There is power and support when we worship together, when we engage in Christian formation and education together, and when we confront some of the hurts of the world, locally and globally, together.

A priest I very much respect, the Rev. Carol Anderson, often says that the local church is the hope of the world. The church is where we gather with all sorts of people to share our common journey as human beings loved by God. Now, in the time of our Stewardship Campaign, is a fitting time to give thanks for the vision and foresight of our ancestors who worked so hard to provide for our spiritual home, for a place where we can hear the clear, age-old, yet compelling message of the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no way to avoid overwhelming stimuli in this life and, indeed, most of us are not called to be solitary contemplatives. But we need a place for quiet, for centering, for being reminded of our true identity and calling, as beloved children of God made for eternity. That happens at Immanuel; let's each take our part to cultivate a rich community life as together we become better disciples of Jesus.

See you in Church
Randy+

THE ASSOCIATE'S CORNER

Immanuel Chapel Dedicatory Year

Earlier this month, Immanuel Chapel at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) was officially consecrated and dedicated. The VTS community has been using the chapel for their weekday worship life and our parish church of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill has 'consecrated through use' that special space last Easter and since mid-September. The October 13th Consecration and Evensong was an opportunity to bring the whole Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion around the globe into that special act of setting space aside for the holy work of worship. The Consecration of Immanuel Chapel marks the end of one chapter in the history of VTS and begins another.

Now, to celebrate this wonderful structure and its myriad ways of being used, a Dedicatory Year of events is underway. Individual organ recitals will feature the Taylor and Booty organ; other concerts, community sings and a Messiah Sing-a-Long conducted by Dr. Mark Whitmire (Dec 13, 2015) will make the space ring out with music; and Fridays at the Seminary lecture events and seminars, Biblical Storytelling symposiums, and a special conversation (May 12, 2016) with then-former Presiding Bishops Katharine Jefferts Schori and Frank Griswold, will emphasize the chapel as a teaching laboratory for seminarians, lay students and the community at large. Robert A. M. Stern, the architect of Immanuel Chapel, said in an address following the Evensong, "As the architect for the Immanuel Chapel, I feel blessed by the opportunity to celebrate and contribute to the physical expression of the mission of this great institution ... The design of a sacred space is one of the great privileges an architect could wish for, perhaps the greatest ... I hope our intent to build for the ages will be rewarded ... Immanuel Chapel reflects new and traditional forms of worship, and new ways of expressing community."

Commemorating this time will be a yearlong series of diverse and exciting opportunities. This Dedicatory Year's events will include music, lectures, classes, and special services to highlight the year while featuring the building's versatility. You won't want to miss it! A complete calendar of events culminating with Convocation in October 2016 can be found at <http://www.vts.edu/chapel>.

I hope to see you there!

David+

2ND ANNUAL SENIOR MINISTRY SEMINAR "CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE ART OF DYING A DAY OF REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION" SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2015, PARISH HALL

About the day, Tim Sedgwick wrote the following:
My hope for this day is to offer reflections from those who have given these questions much thought in order to enable our own conversation about what is most important in our lives and what this means in our living and dying as we age. From questions on "What makes life human?" and "What does the body tell the spirit?", I want to turn to hard questions about faithful choices at the end of life. Practically this requires addressing questions of things done and left undone.

9:00 a.m.	Gathering
9:30 a.m.	Christian Reflections on Aging
10:45 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	Moral Decisions at the End of Life
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Things Done and Left Undone

Timothy F. Sedgwick is the Clinton S. Quin Professor of Christian Ethics at Virginia Theological Seminary where he has taught since 1997 and where he served as academic dean from 2008 to 2013.

Please let the office know you are coming. Call Jennifer at 703-370-6555. All parishioners and caregivers are welcome to attend. Box lunches will be provided. Just indicate your sandwich preference when you call the office.



GARDEN WORK

DAY: Saturday,
November 7th from
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Please come out and
help prepare our
lovely gardens for

their winter sleep. Bring your favorite tools and gardening gloves. A chain saw will be available for tree work. A hearty lunch will be served. All hands are most welcome and appreciated!

A LETTER FROM FORMER PARISHIONER JACKIE BEDNARZ

“Dear Immanuel community, in 1988 I came to Alexandria to advance my government career and in June of this year I retired from the State Dept. All along, Immanuel was my parish family and my rock. While mostly an “8 o’clocker,” I certainly enjoyed the joys of the wider parish through the Pumpkin Patch, joint 10 o’clock summer services when I needed music, the Homecoming Musical Reviews, and the excellent Lenten Series. These past months I’ve been “auditioning” at churches in my new hometown of Staunton, VA. I’ve decided to transfer my membership from Immanuel-on-the-Hill to Emmanuel, Staunton, where the rector happens to be a VTS grad. This is more than a vowel change from “I” to “E,” as my fondness and affections run deep at Immanuel. As such, I’d like to remain on the *Almond Tree* distribution list so I can keep up with the Immanuel happenings. Thanks to all of you for your part in enriching my life in Northern Virginia and accompanying me on my earthly journey. God’s blessings to you, *Jackie Bednarz*”

ADVENT RETREAT: LISTENING TO YOUR LIFE, DECEMBER 4-6, LED BY THE REV. DR. SAM FAETH

There still are spaces left for this year’s Advent Retreat to be held at the Holy Cross Abbey near Berryville, Virginia. Using selected passages from Frederick Buechner’s book *Listening to your Life*, retreat participants will explore the spiritual practices of paying attention – finding God in the midst of our own day-to-day experiences. In the season of waiting and hoping, we will explore a variety of ways to look for, identify, and share the grace that shapes our days. Purchase of Buechner’s book is not necessary for the retreat, but is available in bookstores and online for any who may wish to use it for daily reflection.

The \$350 registration fee includes all materials, comfortable accommodations, and all meals.

Registration forms are available on line, or from the parish office (jaddington@icoh.net or 703-370-6555).

ORGAN DEDICATION: Immanuel Chapel’s tracker-action organ, built by Taylor and Boody Organbuilders, will be dedicated on November 6, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. The dedicatory organ recital will be presented by Scott Dettra, organist at the Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, TX. The community is cordially invited to attend the recital and reception following. Admission is free and no registration or tickets are required.

ONE IS A WHOLE NUMBER What does it mean to be single in a society that tells us we are incomplete until we meet “the one”? Come spend the day with fellow single adult Christians of all ages and types- always single, divorced, separated, widowed- to discuss this and more. We will learn, talk, listen, participate and celebrate with fellow single members of the church, exploring questions such as: What does it mean to be single in the Episcopal Church? Is being single a calling? What does the Bible say about being single? Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb, the Meade Professor in Biblical Interpretation at the Virginia Theological Seminary. While the day is designed especially for single adult Episcopalians, all are welcome. Continental breakfast and boxed lunch will be provided, and we will end the day with the Holy Eucharist. The “One is a Whole Number” single-day conference, sponsored by St. Michael’s and St. George’s, will be held on Saturday, November 7, 2015, from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at St. George’s Church, 915 N. Oakland St. in Arlington. There is street parking as well as Metro accessibility. Please register by sending your name, contact information and number of guests who plan to attend to Katherine Spinney at katherine_spinney@yahoo.com by Monday, November 2. Any questions can be directed to the same.

REMINDERS:

IMMANUEL IN THE CITY: Do you work in Washington? Do you step out for lunch on occasion? If so, why don’t you consider joining other Immanuelites for lunch and fellowship on Tuesday, October 27th, at 12 Noon? We will gather at Bertuccis Italian Restaurant, 2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. The cost will be around \$8 per person.

ALL SAINTS’ SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1. Please email or call Jennifer in the Parish Office (703-370-6555, jaddington@icoh.net) with the names of those whom you would like to have remembered in the All Saints’ Requiem prayers.

RESERVATION FORMS FOR THE HARVEST DINNER, to be held on November 7, are available from the parish office, 703-370-6555, or you can register on line at www.icoh.net.

Immanuel Church -on-the-Hill
3606 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304
703-370-6555
office@icoh.net
http://www.icoh.net

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



October 25, The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 31:7-9; Psalm 34:1-8; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI

November 1, All Saints' Day

Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEII

November 8, Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 17:8-16; Psalm 127; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI