

THE ALMOND TREE



NEWSLETTER OF IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

April 2018



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From The Rector

WHAT'S *REALLY* IMPORTANT?

I hear this question a lot and I ask it—a lot. I struggle to answer it in prayer, with my family, in Church, and with my friends. It's a pivotal question, one that brings us up short, kind of taking our breath away. It is one of those questions that becomes more obvious around what the ancient Celts called "thin" moments, like birth, death, marriage, Baptism, and graduations. And yet this question of what is really important is usually crowded out by far more mundane questions, like what to have for dinner, where the kids need to be, paying the bills, pleasing the boss, or getting the car inspected; you know, the stuff we *have* to do.



Church is one of the settings where the question of what is really important gets a bit more traction, more of a hearing, and more of a possibility of real engagement. This engagement need not stop at the Church door, however. We can engage it even as we go through the mundane tasks associated with living each day. We are really defining what is important by the choices we make each day and where we spend our time. Those tasks are the ones that take our time and attention, so those are the things we are saying are important; but are they really that important?

One of my favorite quotes from Jesus is the following: "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Abundance can be defined in many different ways, but most of us could probably agree that an abundant life is one containing a good measure of peace, of centeredness, of care in one's treatment of other people and one's own body. Our culture may have us believe that abundance is defined by possessions, but in our hearts we know that isn't right. The abundance Jesus offers consists of forgiveness, deliverance from fear, a new relationship with God, and a new relationship with our fellow humans beings. It begins now, every day, and it transcends even death itself. THAT is what's important. Jesus boils all of this down in the great Summary of the Law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

The clue to what is really important lies in the way we relate to God and the ways we treat other people. That's all, and at the same time, that's everything, because so much is involved in both of those aspects as to be mind-blowing. Such a simple premise! We should be able to grasp this concept easily and then act upon it. Yet we neglect it, to focus our energy elsewhere, to our great peril and to our own impoverishment.

Join us in engaging the abundant life—through our relationship with God and through the way we treat other people—every day—not just in Church on Sunday. This is the great faith we try to practice together.

See you in Church,

Randy

THE REV. J. RANDOLPH ALEXANDER
Rector

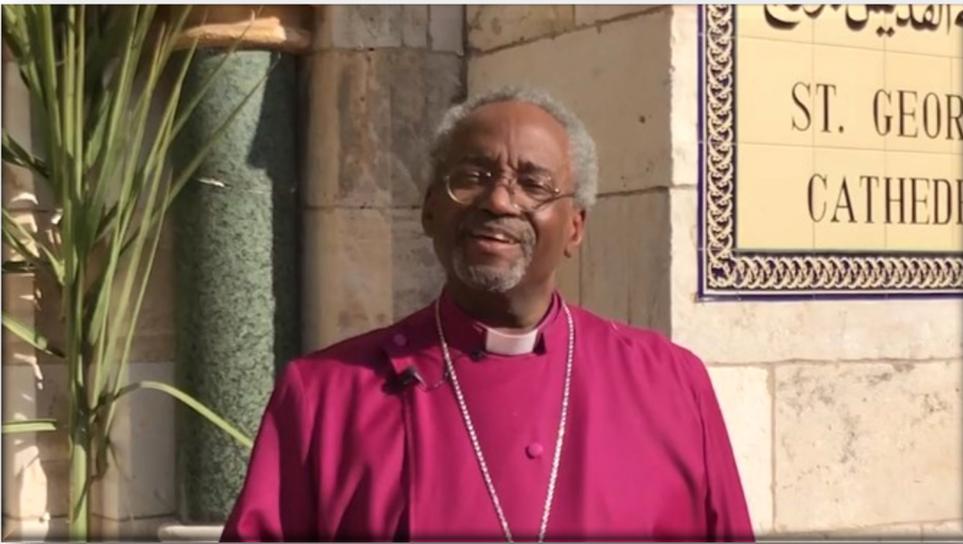
Images of Holy Week and Easter 2018



EASTER







HOLY MASS *from the* **HOLY LAND**

THE MOST REV. MICHAEL B. CURRY, PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE, delivering his EASTER 2018 MESSAGE outside of Saint George's Cathedral in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

The following is the text of the Presiding Bishop's Easter 2018 Message:

Hello on Palm Sunday from St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem.

There is a passage in the 27th Chapter of Matthew's gospel where religious leaders, political leaders come together once again after Jesus has been crucified and executed, after he had been buried in the tomb. Once again they come together to seal the tomb, to make sure not even a rumor of his resurrection will happen. And this is what some of them say:

Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people he has been raised from the dead. And the last deception will be the worse than the first.

It is easy to overlook, and sometimes convenient to forget, that Jesus was executed, Jesus was crucified by an unholy alliance of religion, politics, and economic self-interest.

Politics represented in Pontius Pilate, governor of the Roman Empire, representative of that very empire and all of its power.

King Herod, who heard Jesus at one of the trials, representative of the Herodian and economic self-interest at the time.

The Chief Priest, representative of religious aristocracies who had a vested interest in the status quo.

These three powers came together – economic, religious and political – to crucify the one who taught love the lord your God, love your neighbor, and actually live that way.

The truth is the message of Jesus was unsettling to the world then as it is unsettling to the world now. And yet that very message is the only source of hope in life for the way of the cross, the way of unselfish living, the way of sacrificial living, seeking the good, the welfare of the other before one's own unenlightened self-interest. That way of the cross is the way of love. That is the nature of love. And that way is the only hope for the entire human family.

The reality is the way of Jesus was a threat to the way that the world is, and hope for the way the world can and will be.

But on that third day after the crucifixion, when by the titanic power of God, by the power of the love of God, Jesus was raised from the dead. God sent a message and declared that death does not have the last word. Hatred does not have the last word. Violence does not have the last word. Bigotry does not have the last word. Sin, evil do not have the last word. The last word is God, and God is love.

On our pilgrimage here, we stopped and spent two days in Jordan. In Amman, Jordan, we were able to spend some sacred and blessed and painful time with Iraqi Christians. These are Christians, many of whom are Anglican, who have fled their country in Iraq because of war and violence and hatred and desecration. They have given up everything, refusing to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. And there in Jordan, with the help of the Anglican Church there and many other relief agencies, they are at least safe, hoping to find safe and permanent homes in other countries.

In the course of our conversations, and listening to them, at one point I found myself quoting a hymn, a song that many folk have heard around Easter, certainly in our country. And I didn't expect a response. You probably know how it goes – it says, "because he lives," referring to Jesus and his resurrection, "because he lives, I can face tomorrow." When I quoted that song, those who have lost their homes, people who have lost everything except life itself, those who have lost loved ones, actually responded to the words of that song. When I said, "Because He lives I can face tomorrow." When I said Jesus is alive, He's been raised from the dead, I saw them lift up their heads and respond with the words amen, hallelujah.

My brothers and sisters, evil could not stop him. Death could not stop him. Violence could not stop him. For the love of God, the heart of God, the reality of God is stronger than anything else. And Jesus really rose from the dead on that first resurrection morning.

God love you. God bless you. And, may this Easter season be the first day of the rest of our lives.

Amen.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church



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HILL HAPPENINGS

The Special Event Calendar of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY Immanuel's monthly Breakfast Bible Study will be next Saturday, April 28th. We gather in the Fairchild Room at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast; bible study begins at 8 a.m. — we promise to be done by 9 a.m.! Our theme for this year is *Truth and Integrity*. This month we will read Isaiah 45:18-19, using the African Model of Reflection. Come, be fed in body and spirit with food, fellowship and God's word. For more information, please contact Chrissie Crosby (cmcfaddencrosby@gmail.com)

Let's All Go to **SHRINE MONT!**



Immanuel's annual parish retreat at Shrine Mont, Orkney Springs, Virginia (about 2 hours away) is scheduled for Memorial Day weekend. We'll meet Saturday, May 26, 2018 at noon and leave after breakfast on Monday, May 28th. What better way to start your summer than with your fellow Immanuelites in a beautiful and relaxing setting! We'll make time for food, swimming, singing, relaxation, spiritual reflection, worship, hiking, yoga, entertaining on the porch, and having fun with clergy, family, and friends.

The full weekend rate is \$180 per adult, \$95 for children 8-12, \$40 for children 4-7, and it's free for children 3 and

under. For those wanting to come up Friday, the rate is \$55 per adult and \$30 per child age 4-12 (which includes Saturday breakfast).

Please contact our rector, the Rev. Randy Alexander, to discuss full or partial scholarship opportunities. You can also pay with credit card by going to Immanuel's website <http://www.immanuel-on-the-hill.org/shrine-mont-retreat.html> or simply follow the "Shrine Mont" link from our home page.

If paying by check, we'll need to receive your check in the office **no later than May 21st**, made payable to Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, with the notation "Shrine Mont" on the memo line.

If you cannot attend the retreat but **would like to help pay for someone else to attend**, your contribution would be most welcomed!

For more information, contact Lisa Frye at lsfrye323@gmail.com, at home on (703) 548-8591 or on her cell



TO ALL OF IMMANUEL'S 3RD, 4TH, & 5TH GRADERS & THEIR FAMILIES..

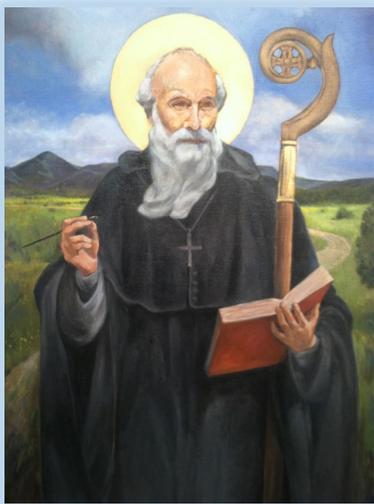
You are all invited to join us on Sunday, May 6th, we're going to a baseball game! We'll see the **Potomac Nationals vs Salem Red Sox (in Woodbridge, VA)**. There will be fun and fellowship as we build some camaraderie prior to the 5th graders moving up to EYC. The game is at 1:05 pm, so we'll plan to leave/ carpool from the church right after Sunday School. **Kids will get to run the bases after the game!** This is for whole families with 3rd, 4th, or 5th graders — alternatively, we'd be happy to take your 3rd, 4th, & 5th graders with us.

If you're interested in going or have questions, please contact Rob Johnson (rajohnson3@gmail.com) or Kameran Onley (dougandkam@verizon.net) preferably as soon as you can (& no later than April 29) so we can determine tickets & transportation.



Join Immanuel's

Benedictine Study Group!



Are you looking for a life in balance? Are you seeking to study with other Christians who are striving to study and share in a small group setting? Immanuel Church-on-the Hill Benedictine Community is a small study group that began to study the scripture based Rule of St Benedict in 2010. Benedictine roots are in the Anglican tradition and in the liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer.

We meet to study the Rule of St Benedict, an ancient rule that still guides communities all over the world. While the Rule was written for monastic communities, it is applicable and guides us in how to live a life in balance, with a focus on five main areas: prayer, work, study, renewal and hospitality. **The Study of the Rule of St Benedict** helps people who live in all kinds of settings and all forms of Christian faith.

This group is an open group made up of members from Immanuel as well as members of other faith traditions, and we welcome all who come. We meet the first and third Tuesdays, from 7-8 PM in the Fairchild Room at the Zabriskie Chapel. We study a portion of the rule and offer reflections around the room. We close our group with Compline/Evening prayer.

On Tuesday, February 6th our group started the study of a new book, *Radical Spirit: 12 Ways to Live a Free and Authentic Life* by Sister Joan Chittister — a book focused on humility.

Please join us as we begin the first of three sessions on the second chapter in *Radical Spirit* — with the remaining sessions on this chapter scheduled **for May 1st** and **May 15th**. All are welcome.

For more information, please contact Barbara Fornoff at cr8vweaver@gmail.com or any member of the group.



ALIVE!

ALexandrians InVolved Ecumenically!

37TH ANNUAL
StepALIVE!
Walkathon
TO BENEFIT THE ALIVE! CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

5K or 5-Mile Walk
through Old Town

Registration, Start & Celebration
First Christian Church
2723 King Street
Alexandria, VA

Sunday, May 6th
2:00pm: Opening Ceremony
and Walkathon Start
3:15pm: Live Music, Catered Picnic
and Raffle

Register as a Walker, Form a Team or Make A Donation!
VIRTUAL WALKERS ARE VERY WELCOME.

Come join in for the 37th annual StepALIVE! Walkathon! This year it will take place on Sunday, May 6 from 2-5pm. This walk benefits the ALIVE! Child Development Center, where, since 1972, high quality early childhood education has been provided to low-income, working families. 100% of the families receive tuition assistance.

How can you help? You can register as a walker (5K or 5 mile stroll through Old Town, followed by a catered picnic, live music and raffle), form a team or make a donation! Virtual walkers and donations are very welcome and appreciated (and are tax-deductible!) Also, our Immanuel Sunday School will be doing a mini-walk on the morning of May 6th and you can make a donation that morning to support their efforts.

For more information, and/or to register as a walker, form a team or make a donation online visit www.alive-inc.org or contact Lisa Clausen, our ALIVE! liaison, at lisa.clausen@verizon.net or 703-684-3936.

Faith in Action

This new feature column of **The Almond Tree** allows our Outreach Committee to shine a spotlight on a specific ministry sponsored in part by Immanuel's Outreach Ministry; allowing you to get an closer look at the initiatives that you financially support.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WEST END. One of the charities that Immanuel supports through our Pumpkin Patch and Outreach Committee is the **West End Lazarus Ministry (WEL)**. Parishioners Julie Bruns and Pierre Shostal volunteer at the WEL once a week at the Church of the Resurrection. Founded in September 2015 as an outgrowth of similar ministries at Christ Church in Old Town and St. Paul's Church, the WEL provides emergency financial assistance to Alexandrians.

In 2017 the WEL assisted 500 people with 590 bills that totaled \$92,468.10 for an average check of \$156.73. The most frequent needs addressed are rent (65 %), utilities (31%) and medical issues (3%). It often happens that the amount that the WEL can provide in assistance exceeds its resources for that day and visitors are encouraged to seek help as well from other congregations of various faith traditions. This approach has a powerful multiplier effect and is an inspiring example of interfaith cooperation. In the course of WEL sessions visitors are also given counseling that is appropriate to their needs and situation. The experience of the WEL indicates that it does not foster dependency: 86% of 2017 visitors came only once, while 12% visited twice.

Immanuel's financial support to the WEL is provided by our Pumpkin Patch funds through our Outreach Committee. Other supporters include Goodwin House Alexandria's Outreach Committee, Episcopal churches of Region IV and congregations of other faith traditions. If you would like to learn more about the WEL please contact Julie Bruns (drbruns@bellatlantic.net) or Pierre Shostal (pshks@aol.com).



NEW AND NEWISH MEMBERS-Mark your calendar for the Ice Cream Social on May 6. 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the *Zabriskie Parish Hall*. If you are planning to attend please RSVP to Janice Corbett at Janice.Corbett77@gmail.com or by phone at 703-300-5682.

THE CIRCLE OF QUIET: Join us **Sundays at 10:30 a.m.** in the Upper Room at Zabriskie, as The Circle of Quiet resumes its Sunday morning meditation.

In our busy and stress-filled lives, it is often hard to listen to the still, small voice of God. Come and learn about using meditation as a means to practice listening for God, and the impact it can have on your life.

By Popular Demand

WAITING LIST **for** **Holy Land Pilgrimage** **August 20-31**



Although this trip is booked, we have created a waiting list (as requested) based on the date of list placement.

To reserve your spot on the waiting list, simply send an email to JamesBSnow@verizon.net with "*Waiting List for Holy Land*" in the subject line.

If you don't have internet access, simply send a postcard or note with your name, address to:

Waiting List for Holy Land Pilgrimage
Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
3606 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304

In the event that we have an opening for the trip, we will contact members of the waiting list immediately.

This pilgrimage will be led by Mr. Iyad Qumri, a seasoned tour guide with over 20 years of experience. Mr. John Lent, Deputy Director, American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem (AFEDJ). The cost based on double occupancy is estimated at \$2,200 per person with a limited number of single rooms at an additional \$520. For planning purposes, a round-trip fare should be around \$1,250.00.

PARISH MILESTONES

January 2017 - March 2018



BAPTISMS

“With Water and the Holy Spirit”

Gideon Dean DeVight
Armstrong Willen Robinson
Makayla Morgan Doe
Peter Kayne Whelpley
James Keller Goodyear
Leilani Allwine
Connor Lease

MARRIAGES

“Knit their wills together”

Michael Andrew Hussey & Bethany A. Fox
Gethin J. Wied & Meredith N. Pilling
Jonathan J. Shand & Erin J. Esposito

ORDINATIONS

“May they exalt you, O Lord, in the midst of your people”

The Rev. William Packard
The Rev. Pilar Padron
The Rev. Halim Shukair

FUNERALS

“In sure and certain hope”

Julien Gantling Randolph, Sr.
Margaret M. Gogarty
Virginia Dunbar Wade Ames
Georgia Louise Shepherd Maas
Lois Payton Kling
Perry Clay Dallastations
Louisa Hagner Trigg
Joan Forrest (Dooling) Palmer
David Kirk Williams
Raymond F. Glover
Murray Lee Hewman, Jr.
Daniel Morris Kelly
William Fenner Frye, IV
James William “Bill” Kilpatrick
Mary Ellen Bush McCormack
Philip William Burge, Sr.

CONFIRMATIONS/RECEPTIONS

“Strengthen, O Lord, your servants”

Kathleen Mary Norton
Tiffany Lee McCaslin
Brent Justin McCaslin
Peter Roberts Alexander
Lily Margaret Bertles
Marjorie Alden Burke
Cadence Jarelle Claypoole
Sumerson Louise Houck
Jennifer Jordan Lansing
Owen Charles Larson
Rachel Catheryn Wilson

The Amen Corner

Words From Our Wardens



If you have listened to Father Randy preach, chances are you have heard the phrase “the church, when it is working...” I appreciate this expression, because it acknowledges we are a work in progress as we attempt to live into our relationship with God through Christ. However, over the past two months, we may have caught a glimpse of what the church looks like when it works, and it is humbling.

January and February shook our parish: our new assistant rector, Rachel, took seriously ill and fought to recover over a few critical weeks. Several dearly beloved parishioners passed away. Bill Frye was our bicycle benefactor, Shrine Mont co-leader and a pastoral counselor. Mary McCormick was our “camellia lady” who shared her blooms with parishioners every year. Bill Kilpatrick, our Junior Warden and Vestry Steward for Adult Education & Formation, was completing another tour on the Vestry and was about to become Senior Warden when he fell and died unexpectedly at home.

Such a series of tragic events could easily overwhelm any organization and lead staff and members to retreat into themselves. Church, however, is different: we come together to mourn, support each other, and find a path through adversity with Jesus as our guide. We reaffirm that this is not the end of the journey, for us or for our friends who have gone before us. I have faith the church works when I see: the rector deliver a touching memorial homily, followed by a lovely reception completely arranged by parishioners, who also sing in the choir and tenderly prepare the garden for the committal of ashes; the office staff and volunteers who work countless hours to keep up with added services; parishioners who constantly write letters, bring food and offer solace when family members are ill or have recently died; and listening to children, teens and adults comfort one another by sharing personal stories and memories.

Essentially, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill welcomes everyone with open arms, even when we are at our most fragile and forlorn. People give their time, talents, food, organizational abilities, and listening ears. It is a place of hope, caring, refuge and witness. What an honor it is to now serve as the Senior Warden on the Vestry in this place I call my spiritual home.

Jeannie Cummins-Eisenhour, Senior Warden

Immanuel's tradition of welcoming and building bridges reflects our mission to "go into the world and preach the Gospel."

As the Vestry sets its priorities for the year ahead, I believe these traditions will permeate our work, whether we are reaching out to newcomers, re-connecting with parishioners whom we have not recently seen, seeking ways to intersect with our International Anglican Congregation through worship and other facets of parish life, or more purposefully engaging groups that use our facilities in our broader Immanuel church community.

I welcome your ideas about how we might strengthen our efforts to welcome individuals and families or to build bridges with community groups, please share your suggestions with the Vestry and me.

The unusual circumstances that gave us a glimpse of "the church when it is working" will pass and soon we will return to business (or church) as usual. Yet the experience of the past few months has imprinted on our church consciousness and will equip us to face future challenges. With God's help, Immanuel will be "the church, when it is working" so we may see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jeannie Cummins-Eisenhour, Senior Warden

PANCAKE SUPPER REPORT

Thanks to *all* who made Immanuel's Pancake Supper a success! More than 140 attendees enjoyed the traditional Shrove Tuesday of endless pancakes and bacon prepared and served by 30 gracious helpers!

– Tom Kerns



In Our May Issue: A Look at Immanuel's Old Chapel!

www.icoh.net

Immanuel Church - on-the-Hill
 3606 Seminary Road
 Alexandria, VA 22304-5200



JOIN US THIS SPRING & SUMMER !

MAY 13	Last Sunday with Fall/Winter Schedule of 4 Separate Services Last Sunday of Godly Play and Sunday School before Summer Recess	8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel 9:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Zabriskie Chapel 11:00 a.m., International Congregation Holy Eucharist Rite II, Zabriskie Chapel 11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel
MAY 20	Day of Pentecost <i>(Summer Schedule of 3svs. begins)</i>	8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel
	The Rt. Rev. Robert Ihloff Bishop Associate Visits	10:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel
		11:00 a.m. International Congregation Holy Eucharist, Rite II Zabriskie Chapel
MAY 25-28	Parish Retreat at Shrine Mont Memorial Day Weekend	Orkney Springs, VA
JUNE 10	Mass on the Grass	10:30 a.m., Memorial Chapel Garden