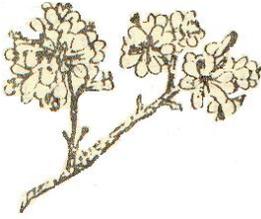


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill



May 8, 2012

The Rev. Mary Sulerud, Interim Rector

Dear Friends in Christ,

Two years ago my only and younger sister died and part of the way we grieved her death was to reconnect as a family of siblings by “exchanging children.” It meant that summer that we had a steady parade of my brothers, their spouses, nephews and nieces with us in Washington, and we were in the bed and breakfast and tourist business in Washington, DC. It meant seeing all those places that as Washingtonians we leave to the tourists for the most part unless our out-of-town family and friends push us toward them.

A highlight of one visit was the day that one of my nieces asked to go visit our daughter at her house in Baltimore County. We pulled into the driveway at the end of which is a magnificent old mimosa tree, and I was startled to see that where I expected blossoms the ends of the branches were blackened. My daughter came out to greet us and I cried out, “What happened to your wonderful tree?” “Wait,” she replied. As soon as she said that, a breeze rustled through the tree and thousands of swallowtail butterflies flew away disclosing the pink blossoms. No sooner had they moved away than a large number of humming birds took their place at the nectar feast. As my niece was busily trying to capture the moment on her cell phone for Facebook, I realized anew how easy it is to see only the surface of things and to come to unhelpful conclusions at the very least.

That’s the story I have to offer about this time of transition. It will be a time of some grief – after all, you have said good-bye to a beloved and great rector. It will be a time to look at all those places in our lives that are wonderful and holy, but could use a fresh examination. It will be a time to wait and watch things that are not at all what we expect and in that waiting the beauty of holiness will be disclosed. It will be a time to try out some new skills, ideas, ministries and see what may become a new ICOH tradition, and what we will laughingly refer to in these words, “remember when we tried...” It will be a time to deepen our relationships with God in Christ, with one another, with the diocese and with our partners in ministry including the many groups that call ICOH home and our founding “mother” VTS. Most importantly, it is not a time to stay away or sit out until you behold the new rector’s appearing.

Two years ago my sad spring gave way to a summer of unexpected hope and joy. It happened because as a family we were faithful to the wonderful and difficult task that Christ gives us all to do, to persevere in relationships when they are the most challenging and would seem least fruitful. It would have been so easy for each of us to have become isolated in our grief and anxiety about this profound change in our lives. I am so thankful that by grace we made another choice. It is my greatest hope to be your companion in choosing to live in this time of transition in the sure and certain hope that Christ is not only with us, but calling us to an extraordinary new place. I will leave you with this verse from a poem by W.H. Auden. *“He is the Truth. Seek him in the Kingdom of Anxiety: you will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.”*

Faithfully, Mary+

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Duncan MacDonald, Morgan, Lloyd Mostrom, Nancy Wise, Bobbie King, Janet Siegrist, Jessi Macleod, Linda Murphy, Mei-Lung DeVight, Bobbi Thomas, Will Williams, Jay Fein, Mary Goeser.

Please also remember in your prayers members of our extended Parish family: Joan Aldretti, Tom Boyd, Dean and Charlotte Kellogg, Temille Littleton, Chris Rarick, Susan Shallbetter, Tom Stasz, Bob Davies, Eleanor Booth Smith, Stephen Miller, Jim Rarick, Irv Schiff, Patricia Smith, Josie Guardipee, Helen Butler, Sam Faeth, Bill Nations, Lawrence Sanchez, Paul, Joan Cummins, Eric Reading, Sr., Cameron, Dylan Rehnke, Sue Rehnke, Margaret Corbett, Laurie, Caitlin Rivers, Patricia Ryan, Chris Stanek, Dana Hengst, Karen Beattie, Lois and Don McCorvie.

Serving our country at home and abroad: Todd Bates, Paul Bednar, Yolanda Bednar, Tom and Anne Duffy, Ian Phillips, Liza Conrad, John Patrick Miller, Stephen Murphy

Pray for all mothers and all who have been motherly to us.

Pray for the search and transition process for Immanuel Church as we seek a new rector.

Pray for the effective stewardship of creation during Rogation Days – days leading up to the feast of the Ascension, May 17.

GOOD NEWS FROM JERUSALEM:

Congratulations to ICOH's former Honorary Associate, the Reverend Canon Hosam Elias Naoum, who has been named the new Dean of the Cathedral Church of Saint George the Martyr in Jerusalem. Hosam and his wife, Rafa, and children Wadi and Laurice worshipped with us while he worked on a graduate degree at VTS (daughter Krista was born shortly after the Naoums returned to Israel). And when Peter Ackerman fell ill, Hosam graciously left the pews for the altar to help Sam Faeth with preaching and celebrating duties. You can read the whole announcement at:

<http://www.vts.edu/podium/default.aspx?t=204&nid=781919&rc=0>

HONORING OUR GRADUATES: Are you or a member of your family graduating from high school or college/university this spring? Please send the details to Jennifer in the parish office so that all our graduates can be recognized in an upcoming edition of *The Almond Tree*.

THE ICOH MOM'S GROUP will be meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday May 17th in the Fairchild Room. Moms, many of you have expressed a strong interest in getting the ICOH Mom's Group up and running again. You are a crucial part of this endeavor and your feedback at this meeting is essential in planning the scheduling and structure of the ICOH Mom's Group meetings. Please join us and bring a snack and/or beverage to share. **Got questions? Contact Ashlei Pujara at rupal99@yahoo.com or 703-379-9296.**

COME HEAR ABOUT JESUS CHANGING LIVES AT THE ARLINGTON COUNTY JAIL:

Please consider buying a \$20 ticket to attend the annual banquet supporting Chaplain Karl at the Arlington Country Jail. It's a moving, powerful experience to hear from inmates whose lives have been transformed. Or if the banquet isn't an option for you, consider just buying a ticket to make a contribution to this ministry. Chaplain Karl is supported entirely by private donations (through checks written to "Good News Jail and Prison Ministry") and by volunteers. The banquet is Friday, June 1 at 7:00 PM at Cherrydale Baptist Church. Please contact David Atwood ([703-933-0184](tel:703-933-0184) or David_Atwood@hotmail.com).

ICOH MEN'S ANNUAL FISHING TRIP: Last chance to sign up for this year's Annual Immanuel Men's Group's rock fishing expedition which will be **Friday, May 18th**. As in the past, our fishing boat(s) will be departing that morning at sunup from Deale, Maryland (about one hour from DC/Alexandria). Also as in the past, we'll be gathering the evening before (Thursday, May 17th) at the Herrington Harbour Inn (located nearby the boat launch site) for our traditional manly meal and a good night's sleep. If interested, please contact Doug John by e-mail, phone or in person at Church. He can provide you more information on cost, schedule, etc. His phone number is 703-751-9238 and his e-mail address is [djohnd@jhenergy.com](mailto:djohn@jhenergy.com).

FIND A TIME TO JOIN MARY FOR CONVERSATION

Our Interim Rector Mary Sulerud arrived at Immanuel Monday, April 30th, eager to learn more about us and where we would like to be headed in the future. To that end, Mary and the Vestry have organized a series of May forum hours, held 9 to 9:50 a.m., between the Sunday services.

Additionally, Mary will offer a new School for the Spirit class to those interested during the final three Wednesday nights of School for the Spirit's spring semester (on May 9, 16 and 23). The class will be an open discussion regarding topics that are close and important to ICOH parishioners during this transitional period, including change, transitions, journeys plus great and small expectations for the years ahead. Her class will build on Sunday forum hour discussions. School for the Spirit dinner starts at 7 p.m. Wednesdays, followed by a brief meditation and then classes starting at 8 p.m. (You don't necessarily need to attend dinner). If you know that you want to participate, please email or call Jennifer Addington in the parish office so we can get a better headcount for dinner. But even if your plans are unclear, feel free to just show up for dinner (at 7 p.m.) or just come for the discussion (at 8 p.m.) on those dates. This is a wonderful opportunity for Mary and ICOH parishioners to get to know each other in a relaxed small group dinner-and-discussion format.

All are welcome! We hope you will mark your calendars for these dates:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9: Small-group session about the difference between Change and Transition.

SUNDAY, MAY 13: Forum hour on Change: When in our lives have we lived through significant change? Our stories of beginnings and endings, and when life was normal again.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16: Small group discussion of Change, continued.

SUNDAY, MAY 20: Forum hour on Thinking about Immanuel in Transition: Our great expectations and our smaller ones, what it means to be in the wilderness as a congregation and letting go of the past in order to make our way forward.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23: Small group discussion of Immanuel in Transition, continued.

SATURDAY OR SUNDAY, MAY 26 & 27: Shine Mont weekend, an informal discussion of change and transition for those attending the parish retreat weekend in Orkney Springs.

We will soon start the process of searching for a new rector, and in just a few years, we will have a glorious new Immanuel chapel, a second space in which to worship. Come join the conversation about our visions for ICOH and our next leader.

Your Wardens & Vestry



SHRINE MONT WEEKEND IS COMING UP FAST – the last weekend in May. See articles in past Almond Trees or bulletins – if you are interesting in attending – please talk to Lisa Frye! Join your fellow parishioners for a lovely weekend in the mountains, full of fun and fellowship.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UPCOMING ALMOND TREE SCHEDULE

May 8, 30 (second and fifth Wednesdays of May (Jennifer will be away the fourth Wednesday))
June 13, 27 (second and fourth Wednesdays in June)
July and August still to be determined – probably only one issue the middle of each month

Lectionary Readings and Schedule of Services



May 13, Easter 6

Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17
8:00 a.m., HE I, 10:00 a.m., HEII

May 20, Easter 7

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26, Psalm 1, 1 John, 5:9-13, John 17:6-19
8:00 a.m., HEI, 10:00 a.m., HEII

May 27, Pentecost, Shrine Mont weekend

Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:25-25, 37; Romans 8:22-27; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15
8:00 a.m., HEI, 10:00 a.m., HEII