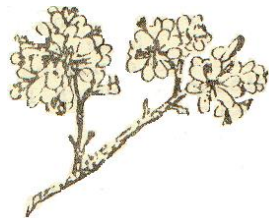


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

The Rev. Mary Sulerud, Interim Rector
The Rev. David Crosby, Assistant Rector
Jennifer Addington, Editor



April 24, 2013

“I sharpened my two-edged sword
Of justice and truth
And took it to the altar
To be blessed by God.
‘Why thank you Ellen,
Another pruning hook.’
I wept,
Knowing that God was not the blind one,
And realizing once more,
That if God has enough mercy to forgive me,
God has enough mercy to forgive my enemies.”

The Reverend E. Ellen Adams, from *Women’s Uncommon Prayers*

Dear Friends,

I have only ever had one sabbatical and I spent much of it in Scotland at the height of the IRA bombings in Great Britain. I never gave much thought to the cause of that rage. I mostly cursed the inconvenience of carrying all that trash around in my pockets and my purse until I could get home and throw it away. There were no trash cans on city streets because they were too easy a container for bombs.

Then late last Monday I turned on the television as an endless tape loop of the explosions at the Boston Marathon played. Dear God, not again came to mind. I panicked about friends and colleagues that I knew were running in the marathon. I whispered a prayer for their safety and that of others. Again I prayed we would not meet rage with rage because we know what a deadly spiral that is. I asked that we would listen to all the pain unleashed by that act of violence not only in the victims, but in the person or persons who felt that such an act was just.

We have had two joyful seasons of our liturgical year marked by terrible acts of violence in this country. It brought to mind how much of our pastoral lives have been defined by events like the Boston Marathon bombing and the extent to which it shaped the lives of so many people. It challenges the core values of Christian life and of all faith traditions. As one pastor noted in an article called **Responding to Terror** we all have anger in these times and the key is responding to this anger “in ways that show the world that we belong to Christ.”

We are people who now share with the world the experience of these awful acts of terror. We are armed to the teeth and our domestic security and surveillance system is unprecedented. We can’t prevent all of these events. Here is what we can do as people who follow Christ Jesus. We can pray for the victims **and** those who mean us harm. We can leave our moral outrage at the foot of the cross and ask to be made instruments of God’s peace. Outrage may help us hate and despise injustice, terror and cruelty. It doesn’t necessarily equip us to be determined and gentle agents of God’s hope and reconciliation. We can continue being the faithful witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus and his hope and love that we were before this happened. We can hear that resurrection means that life conquers death and love conquers all evil, and then we can courageously live that way. Resurrection is not a safety net keeping us from all harm. It is the living proof that God does mean to reconcile all of creation to God’s self. Let’s carry that around not in our pockets, but for all the world to see.

God’s peace, Mary

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Duncan MacDonald, Morgan, Lloyd and Jean Mostrom, Nancy Wise, Janet Siegrist, Catherine, Susan Kernan, Mary, Natalie Doyle-Hennin, Bill Frye, Yvonne Pover, Kerry Kelly, Chris Enstrom, Cathy Hartman, Greg Rainey.

Give thanks for the healing of Barbara Currie, who thanks everyone for their prayers.

Please also remember in your prayers members of our extended Parish family Dean and Charlotte Kellogg, Chris Rarick, Eleanor Boothe Smith, Jim Rarick, Sam Faeth, Anthony Christino, Jr., Jane Burton, Keith Green, Lois, Percy Hays, Alex, Marian, Ray Dovell, Adrian and Bob Love, Tom Hewson, Sr., Danny Christoffersen, Dianna Reeves, Cealia Robertson.

Those serving in the U.S. and overseas: Todd Bates, Paul Bednar, Yolanda Bednar, Ian Phillips, John Patrick Miller, Philip Smucker, Jon Anderson, Nicole DeBien, Noah Barker.



1,000,000 BONES PROJECT: It was a very successful day! The youth made 129 bones and raised \$350 from the congregation "bone sponsorships." The Bezos Foundation will contribute \$1.00 for each bone they made, so all told, the ICOH Clay Class and Youth Group will have raised \$429 in one day for CARE International's efforts to end humanitarian crises in central Africa! They will be participating in the Bone Laying Ceremony on the National Mall on June 8th.



PENTECOST READERS IN MANY LANGUAGES Pentecost is on May 19 this year and as is our custom, we read the Acts 2:1-11 lesson in as many languages as we can, overlapping in a holy buzz of

sound.

Please call or email me or the office if you would like to read. Let me know which service you would like to read for, what language or languages you could read in, and if you need help getting a translation.

We welcome young people and newcomers and also depend on folks who have been doing it for years. Sudie McGahuey (smmcmgahuey@comcast.net)

FORUM HOUR APRIL 28: Martha Huffman of Capital Caring will make a presentation at the forum on April 28th at 10:30. The topic is hospice and palliative care and how we can best serve people at the end of their lives. Martha has worked in hospice for 13 years and is currently the volunteer coordinator for Capital Caring - Alexandria.

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.

YOU ARE INVITED...to a production of the play *Godspell*, presented by the Good Shepherd Players, at Church of the Good Shepherd, 9324 Braddock Road, in Burke. *Godspell* offers a unique reflection on the life of Jesus, with its always timely message of community, kindness, tolerance and love. The musical is based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, and features a sparkling score by award-winning composer Stephen Schwartz (Children of Eden, Wicked), including the modern gospel classic "Day By Day." Dates and times are: May 10, 17, and 18 at 8 p.m., May 11 and 19 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for those under 18. Tickets are available either from Jennifer in the Parish Office or at www.goodshepherdplayers.com.

THE 32ND ANNUAL STEPALIVE! WALKATHON will be held on Sunday, May 5, to raise funds for ALIVE!'s Child Development Center (CDC), a full-day preschool program serving children of low-income working parents, with a sliding fee scale for tuition. This 5k or 5 mile (walker's choice) stroll kicks off at 2:00 p.m. at First Christian Church, 2723 King Street, Alexandria, and ends at the same place. After the Walkathon, a picnic featuring food, music and prizes will be provided by the CDC. Entertainment will be provided by the "Taste of Bluegrass" band .

Register in advance online at www.alive-inc.org or at the event on May 5 or call 703-837-9321 to obtain a registration form. Each registrant receives a specially-designed T-shirt. The fee for walkers aged 19 to 70 is \$20; those 12 to 18 and over 70 pay \$5. Those under 12 are admitted free. If you are unable to participate, there is a special rate of \$25 for "virtual walkers." On-site registration and T-shirt distribution will start at 1:15 p.m. To increase the fun (and raise more money for the CDC), consider forming a team of family and friends or solicit sponsors to pledge support for your walk.



GRACE & GRATITUDE: Thanks to the **dozens of you who helped assemble 17,100 oral rehydration packets** on April 7th at Temple Beth El. **Immanuel's youth group** ferried supplies to the work tables, where parishioners — including many **Goodwin House folks** — labored. We are grateful to **David Ingold** for,

once again, leading this project that will be of critical help to medical teams assisting in disaster relief efforts, here and abroad.

Our gratitude to the **Sunday School artists and their leaders** who decorated place mats for the residents of the Buckingham Correctional Facility. And blessed are **the cookie makers, for turning out 216 dozen treats** — that's 2,592 peanut butter, oatmeal, chocolate chip and molasses cookies — the count as of Sunday, April 21. **Pete Bolton** and the rest of the **Kairos prison ministries crew** will distribute the place mats and cookies this weekend when they head down to Dillwyn, VA for a three-day Bible retreat with the prisoners.

OFFICER PETER LABOY COLLECTION: The April 21 loose plate offering of more than \$700 will be paired with a \$500 Outreach offering and sent to the Alexandria Police Association to help with this brave officer's recovery. If you still wish to donate, make checks to ICOH designating "Laboy" in the memo line, by Sunday, April 28.



SHRINEMONT PARISH RETREAT COMING SOON!

The annual Immanuel Church-on-the Hill (ICOH) parish retreat at Shrine Mont retreat center in Orkney Springs, VA (about 2 hours away) will be *Saturday, May 25 (noon) through Breakfast, Monday, May 27, 2013*. What better way to start your summer than with ICOH friends in a beautiful and relaxing setting?! There will be time for fun, food, swimming, singing, relaxation, spiritual reflection, worship, hiking, yoga, porch entertaining, and spending time with clergy, family, and friends.

Cost: \$160 per adult, \$90 for children 8-12, \$40 for children 4-7, free for children 3 and under. There is also a ceiling on the overall rate for families of 4 or more. For those wanting to come up Friday, the cost is \$50 per person (includes Saturday Breakfast). Please contact our interim rector, Mary Sulerud, to discuss scholarship options – full or partial. We would like to collect money before the weekend so please bring checks, payable to "ICOH", with a notation saying "Shrine Mont" to the church office before the weekend. For more information or **to register**, contact Lisa Frye at wlifrye@comcast.net or Tel. 703-548-8591 (h) 571-214-4735 (c)

This is the sermon that the Rev. Dr. Francis Wade was going to preach here prior to the events in Boston and Texas last week. We include it for your reflection about the majesty of God and our relationship with God in this time of transition.

Majesty
Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Francis H. Wade
Immanuel Church on the Hill, Alexandria, VA
April 21, 2013

Revelation 7:9-17

This sermon is about the love of God for you and for me. I am not going to say that very much in what follows, so I want you to have it clearly in mind.

In just a few weeks the vestry will name our new rector who will, by the authority of the canons or laws of our church, have control over the way we worship. That means that if the new rector wanted to - and had suicidal tendencies - he or she could move the altar back against the wall and celebrate the Eucharist with their back to us as we all faced the cross. While this is possible it is not very likely because modern Episcopalians like worship in the round where the symbolism focuses on the People of God gathered around God's table. We like the implied intimacy of human faces with tangible sacraments, and there is truth about the immanence, the nearness of God, in what we do.

But there are some of a certain age who remember when altars were against the wall and all, including the celebrant, faced the cross. There was truth in that arrangement as well, a truth we are in some danger of forgetting. It is the truth of the transcendence, the far off aloofness of God, and that we gather as fragile vulnerable beings held in the hand of God's majesty. It is the truth the writer of our second lesson knew when he wrote about angels and elders falling on their faces before the majesty of God, reduced to babbling, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever!" Our new rector will probably not change our worship life to emphasize that truth, so take a moment with me to look at it more closely.

Majesty sets God in a certain context. And it does the same to us. It reminds us that we are not needed by God but are rather completely dependent for our very existence. We, who throw off the phrase "Oh my God" so casually that we shorten it to OMG, have removed the words far from the chilling awe behind what the author of Revelation is describing. The enormity and otherness of God shrinks us into a smallness that trembles with vulnerability.

Let me suggest a way of understanding our stature before the majesty of God. In Genesis we are told that God creates with a word: "Let there be light and there was light." The human equivalent is daydreaming where we create new worlds with a suggestion. What would it be like to win the Masters? Or to be in a royal wedding? In reverie we create a world and live in it for an idle moment, but when we are through and open our eyes that world disappears without a trace because we created it with a word and can un-create it just as easily. Tiger Woods and Kate Middleton of that world may be of interest for a moment but we do not need them. They are completely dependent on our concentration to keep them in existence because we created them with a word. We are similarly dependent in the Kingdom of God. We exist like figments of God's imagination, created with a word and as tenuous as the occupants of a daydream. If we forget that perspective we are in danger of taking God and life, love and ourselves for granted.

Without a sense of God's majesty, we are in danger of thinking that we live in an anthropocentric world, a human-centered

enterprise. I saw an illustration of that kind of mistake during a vestry day I led recently for a church in Massachusetts. We met in a lovely home and had a good, hard working day together. We were attended by the homeowner's two dogs who had, naturally enough, a canine-centered view of the proceedings. For the dogs, the purpose of the day was for us to scratch and pat them. The highlight was lunch and at one point, when the group applauded, the dogs figured everyone was calling them and ran about trying to keep up with all of the attention they assumed they were getting. It was amusing as a sidelight to the vestry's work but pretty pathetic as an understanding of what was actually going on.

When we assume that we are what life is really about, when we ignore the ongoing life of the environment, when we seek to bend the resources of earth to our wants, when we assume that shifting coastal sand needs to stay in place so we can have beachfront property, and when we look on fellow creatures as either food, pets or irritants, our view is as pathetically narrow as that of the vestry dogs. Trusting that God in majesty finds our actions amusing seems like a thin reed to hang onto.

Without a sense of God's majesty, we assume that everything important in life will make sense to us, that it will seem utilitarian and practical in light of the understanding in our heads. When we ask, "What's in it for me?" or "What difference will that make?", we are trying to steer by our own light—an unwise undertaking.

Consider a toddler grasping the finger of a parent and taking those early difficult, staggering, mostly unsuccessful first steps. The child stays with task because they trust the one who is asking them to do it not because it makes any practical sense to the child. What would we do if the child folded its arms and demanded to know what there was about walking that was for their benefit? Would we tell them about the Appalachian Trail or show

them You Tube clips of Fred Astaire or the Harlem Shake? Not likely.

The benefits of walking simply would not fit into the toddler's head just as the benefits of prayer, silence, meditation, generosity, Scripture reading and corporate worship do not always fit into ours. Yet if we had the trust of a child, the kind Jesus said we need to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, we would accept the offered hand and take the staggering steps.

If you will recall, I said at the beginning that this sermon is about the love of God for you and me. Since then I have compared us to daydreams, dogs and toddlers. If you are feeling abused I will remind you that Jesus compared us to sheep which is even worse. The point is that any consideration of the majesty of God sets us in a position of smallness that trembles with vulnerability. Before God we are as essential as characters in a daydream, as pathetic in our worldview as dogs at a vestry retreat and as limited in our understanding as toddlers hanging on to a finger. That truth - and it is truth - is the reason wise angels and elders fall on their faces before the majesty of God. They know that blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might belong to our God in ways they will never belong to us.

How is that truth about the love of God? It reminds us of how surprising and literally wonderful - full of wonder - it is that we are loved by God, how stunningly improbable the coming and sacrifice of Jesus Christ is, how amazing grace really is. To take the love of God and our presence in the miracle of life for granted is as absurd a thing we humans can do. It is important to remember that we are fragile, vulnerable beings held in the hand of God's majesty. In case our new rector does not move the altar back against the wall to remind us, we have to remember it on our own. *Amen.*

MAY 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 8:00 AM HE-I, Chapel 9:15 AM HE-II, Chapel 10:15 AM Circle of Quiet, Vestry Room 10:15 AM Education Hour 10:15 AM Forum Hour, Capital Caring 11:15 AM HE-II, Chapel 6:00 PM School for the Spirit	29 11:00 AM Qi gong, Parish Hall	30	1 6:30 AM Early Christians 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist-II	2 7:00 PM Choir, Choir Room	3 TAT deadline 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 12:30 PM Muslim Worship, Parish Hall 8:30 PM AA, Fairchild	4 Crosby event, Fairchild Room 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Dignity, Zabriskie
5 8:00 AM HE-I, Chapel 9:15 AM HE-II, Chapel 10:15 AM Circle of Quiet, Vestry Room 10:15 AM Education Hour 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Youth Group, Fairchild Room 11:15 AM HE, Chapel 4:00 PM Convivium Concert, Chapel 6:00 PM School for the Spirit 6:20 PM - 9:00 PM Prayer Group, Fairchild Room	6 11:00 AM Qi gong, Parish Hall	7 7:30 PM Outreach Committee, Fairchild Room	8 TAT mailing 6:30 AM Early Christians 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist-II 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM Bibles on Tap, Cafe 1823 VTS	9 7:00 PM Choir, Choir Room 7:30 PM Seminary Hill Assoc., Parish Hall	10 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 12:30 PM Muslim Worship, Parish Hall 8:30 PM AA, Fairchild	11 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM Dignity, Zabriskie and Parish Hall
12 8:00 AM HE-I, Chapel 9:15 AM HE-II, Chapel 10:15 AM Circle of Quiet, Vestry Room 10:15 AM Education Hour 11:15 AM HE, Chapel 6:00 PM School for the Spirit	13 11:00 AM Qi gong, Parish Hall	14 12:00 PM Goodwin House luncheon 6:30 PM Vestry Meeting 6:30 PM Vestry Meeting, Upper Room	15 6:30 AM Early Christians 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist-II	16 6:30 PM Mom's Group, Fairchild Room 7:00 PM Choir, Choir Room	17 TAT deadline 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 12:30 PM Muslim Worship, Parish Hall 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM Brownie Troop, Parish Hall 8:30 PM AA, Fairchild	18 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM VTS/SCAN overflow parking 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Dignity, Zabriskie
19 PENTECOST SUNDAY Sunday School and youth recognition 8:00 AM HE-I, Chapel 9:15 AM HE-II, Chapel 10:15 AM Circle of Quiet, Vestry Room 10:15 AM Sunday School end of year party 11:15 AM HE, Chapel 4:00 PM Choir concert 6:00 PM School for the Spirit	20 11:00 AM Qi gong, Parish Hall	21	22 TAT mailing 6:30 AM Early Christians 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist-II 7:00 PM Christmas Families, Upper Room	23 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM VTS overflow parking 7:00 PM Choir, Choir Room	24 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 12:30 PM Muslim Worship, Parish Hall 8:30 PM AA, Fairchild	25 Shrine Mont Parish retreat 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Dignity, Zabriskie
26 Shrine Mont Parish retreat TRINITY SUNDAY 8:00 AM HE-I, Chapel 10:00 AM HE-II, Chapel	27 MEMORIAL DAY, OFFICE CLOSED Shrine Mont Parish retreat 11:00 AM Qi gong, Parish Hall 6:30 PM Knitting Group, 1823 Pub/VTS	28	29 6:30 AM Early Christians 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 6:30 PM Holy Eucharist-II	30 7:00 PM Choir, Choir Room	31 8:20 AM - 11:35 AM Senior Exercise classes 12:30 PM Muslim Worship, Parish Hall 8:30 PM AA, Fairchild	1 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Dignity, Zabriskie

NOTE: WE RETURN TO JUST TWO SERVICES, 8 A.M. AND 10 A.M. ON MAY 26.



May Birthdays

05/01 Gordon Johnson
05/01 Mark Loach
05/01 Jessica Turner
05/01 Sharon Brown
05/01 Alyssa Taylor
05/01 Laura Sullivan
05/01 Laura Good
05/01 Brian Moran
05/02 Thomas Harris
05/03 Elizabeth Eckert
05/03 Jacko Post
05/03 Brodin Boit
05/04 Linda Serabian
05/05 Chandley McDonald
05/05 Dennis Hardy
05/05 Mark Fearer
05/05 Megan Glassco
05/05 Madison Eaton
05/06 Michael Duane
05/06 Andy Biache
05/06 Benjamin Arp
05/07 Michael Konvalinka
05/07 Thomas Wirth
05/07 Phoebe LaMountain
05/08 Sheila Iskra
05/08 Anne Patton
05/10 Margaret Coleman
05/10 Marisa Temoshok
05/11 Zoe Powell-Switaj
05/12 Susanne Wanamaker
05/12 Dick Taliaferro
05/12 Everett Post
05/12 Jenny Reading
05/13 Marian Wright
05/13 Adrienne Goins
05/13 Autella Gasparek
05/13 Zachary Cohn
05/14 Jim Taylor
05/14 Jasmine Tyler
05/14 Will Toman
05/15 Evan Johnson
05/15 Paul Blakeslee
05/16 Caitlin DeMulder
05/17 Max Rotermund
05/18 Mike McGahuey

05/18 Louisa Hurley
05/18 Karen Wirth
05/18 Geoffrey Henderson
05/19 Louisa Trigg
05/19 Rick Rath
05/19 Robin Eckert
05/19 Evan Drennon
05/20 Shirley Dols
05/20 Dylan Paul
05/21 Benjamin Bridges
05/21 Caroline Hobson
05/21 Samuel Wirth
05/22 Agnes Soos
05/22 Susan Hobson
05/22 Leif Siegrist
05/22 Alexandra Kelley
05/22 Charles Kinsella
05/23 Elizabeth Casey
05/23 Roger Gildersleeve
05/23 Anders Eklund
05/24 David John
05/24 Dave Reiner
05/24 Brian Latimer
05/24 Rachel Wilson
05/24 Rayna Johnson
05/25 Donna Paul
05/25 Keane Phillips
05/26 Margaret Powell
05/26 Anna Skubel
05/27 Joan Palmer
05/27 Timothy Kinsella
05/28 Patsy Rogers
05/28 Macon Malone
05/29 Christian Kautz-Scanavy
05/30 David Crosby
05/30 Kristin John
05/31 Deborah Drennon
05/31 Rachel Manson

Watch over thy children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be, keeping them unspotted from the world. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We hope never to miss a birthday – but there are some we don't know about. Forgive us when we do miss your birthday, and let us know so we don't do it again. Happy birthday to all!

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



April 28, Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6; John 13:31-35
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII

May 5, Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22—22:5; John 14:23-29
8 a.m., HEI, 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEI

May 12, Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21; John 17:20--26
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII