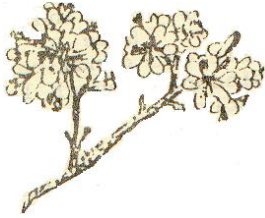


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

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



September 11, 2013

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

DON'T GO TO CHURCH . . . BE THE CHURCH!

I once read about a Church youth group that had the above slogan emblazoned on t-shirts. It made quite an impact in their town as these youth made a spot-on, absolutely core Christian point: Church is not a place to which we go, let alone a building; it is wherever and whenever the people of God gather.

The word "Church" comes from the Greek *ecclesia* (root of the word ecclesiastical), meaning "called out", a people called out from the world, or an assembly. Whenever and wherever Jesus' followers gather the Church is present. So what's the point? Why did those kids make those t-shirts? Well, the point is this: If we view Church as just a place to go, and then leave, it is a much more passive notion of the whole enterprise. It generally follows from this model that the laity are the "consumers" who are there to be fed by the Clergy and staff. It is also far too easy to infer that the life of faith is confined to the walls of the church building, with little relevance to the rest of life, (read "real" life).

Contrast this to a picture from the early Church (notice the use of capital "C" when talking about the gathered assembly). From the book of Acts in the New Testament we read: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:41-47a).

We see here a supremely dedicated group who supported one another, shared what they had, and worshipped, prayed and learned together. Through severe persecution and beyond, that little group changed the world, and they changed history. I often wonder what they make of some of the ways in which that exciting movement they were part of has been institutionalized and domesticated. Even more to the point, what does Jesus make of it?

Now, as someone once said, "Don't hear what I'm not saying." I'm obviously not saying the Church shouldn't be an institution, or organized. Any time you have more than one person worshipping together you have organized religion. I am also not belittling consecrated, sacred space, hallowed by gatherings of God's people. What I am saying, and what those kids were saying, is that we must never lose sight of the vision of the Church as a living, organic fellowship of all kinds of Jesus' people, all striving to grow in the faith and to support one another. Our people were first called "Christians" in Antioch, because of the love others observed they had for one another. Love for the Lord and for one another, worshipping together, having open and generous hearts, growing in the faith--these are all ways to be "Church." May that kind of life be our goal at Immanuel, as I know it has been for so much of the parish's history. *As we live this way those around us will take notice*; a lost, hurting, searching world will take notice.

See you in Church,
Randy+

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Duncan MacDonald, Morgan, Lloyd and Jean Mostrom, Janet Siegrist, Catherine, Mary, Natalie Doyle-Hennin, Bill Frye, Yvonne Pover, Chris Enstrom, Arlo and Katie Lloyd, Samantha Taggart, Judy Bednar, Jessi MacLeod, Barbara Fornoff, Mei Lung DeVight.

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, Percy Hays, 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, Quinn, Erin Monroney, Marjorie Glassco, Paul.

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

RETURN TO THREE SUNDAY SERVICES

On September 15 we return to our schedule of three Sunday services, 8:00 a.m. (HEI), 9:15 a.m. (HEII) and 11:15 a.m. (HEI alternates with HEII). This will be the Sunday schedule through the end of December when we will move to just two services through January. **Pumpkin Sunday, October 6, we will also have only two services, 8 a.m. and Mass on the Grass at 10 a.m.**

HEALING PRAYERS: Beginning September 15, the clergy will offer prayers, the laying on of hands, and anointing following all services on the third Sunday of each month.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IS STARTING: Come to the Growth and Education Ministries Fair after the 9:15 service on Sunday, 15 September to register your children for Sunday School. The children will hear the story of Jonah and the Whale in preparation for the puppet show to be presented by the Sunday School teachers in the Parish Hall after the 9:15 service on Sunday, 22 September. The first day of Sunday School in the classrooms will be on Sunday, 29 September.

GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE NEW IMMANUEL CHAPEL with a reception following, will occur this Saturday, September 14 (Holy Cross Day) at 11:00 a.m. All members of Immanuel are cordially invited to attend this special event in the life of our parish. The ceremony will take place on the Grove close to the location of the new Immanuel Chapel.

SHOPPERS WANTED: Christmas Families is looking for people who would like to help shop for toys and clothing either online or at local stores. Much of the shopping will take place just before and on "Black Friday": Thanksgiving Day, Thursday Nov. 28 4 p.m. to Friday Nov. 29 11 a.m. Many things can be bought online starting Friday Nov. 29 at midnight (earlier for some stores), but we still need to go stores to look at new toys and find bargains not available online. We need to select items, call the online person who is standing by to see whether the item is available online, load up shopping carts, wait in line to pay, load up cars, and take things to Santa's workshop. It is a community-building experience and a lot of fun working through the night and thinking about how children will get joy and learn from the toys we select.

We also need right away someone who is very knowledgeable about art supplies and can advise on art kits to buy so we can order them wholesale.

If you think this is something you'd like to help with contact Linda Serabian at serabian@somaarchitects.com or at 703-683-5226 during the day.



ADDRESSES WANTED: STUDENTS, PARISHIONERS ABROAD, ETC. Leaving for College? Studying

abroad? Serving in the Military or State Department? As you pack your bags, make sure the Immanuel church office and Pastoral Care Committee have your up to date mailing and e-mail addresses. You're an important part of our Immanuel church family! Send your address, email address, and details on where you are studying or serving to our Associate Rector, The Rev. David Crosby at dcrosby@icoh.net, and to Jennifer Addington, our parish administrator, at jaddington@icoh.net.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: The Friends of Alexandria Mental Health Center and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria's Anti-Stigma HOPE Campaign are seeking assistance from a faith community on a special community service project. The purpose is to foster the recovery of community members with mental health conditions and to reduce the stigma often associated with mental disabilities.

The project involves several members of the participating congregations. These representatives would join forces with the Anti-Stigma HOPE Campaign in planning this year's annual community art exhibit "Art Uniting People", featuring the artwork of Alexandrians whose lives have been affected by mental health conditions. In its third year, the exhibition is as uplifting as it is educational, providing a positive experience for Alexandrians working toward recovery and a supportive experience for their families. The exhibition aims to reduce the stigma often associated with mental illness, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities by revealing the feelings we all share, as well as the perceptions and interests that characterize our individuality, showcasing the talent, imagination and creativity of the participating artists. These artists are children, teenagers and adults, including those in recovery and those who are in juvenile detention and jail.

There would be no financial obligation for a congregation participating in this collaboration. The congregation's representatives would become part of the Anti-Stigma committee team. They would attend periodic meetings between September 2013 and May 2014, help to brainstorm ideas, participate in implementing the exhibit and its opening reception, and encouraging their fellow congregants to attend the free opening reception in May.

If interested, please contact Jim Wise at jrwise52@hotmail.com for more information.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! ALIVE! (Alexandrians InVolved Ecumenically) distributes furniture to the less fortunate on the last Saturday of each month. As an ALIVE! member parish, Immanuel staffs this effort twice each year. Saturday, September 28 will be our next turn to provide volunteers. While some items may be heavy and require volunteers with muscle, many items are smaller and easier to carry. If you can help, please contact Nancy or Jim Wise, at 703-642-8225, or

jrwise52@hotmail.com. This is also a great opportunity for younger Immanuelites to acquire community service hours. "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then said I, 'Here am I; send me.'" Isaiah 6:8

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SEPTEMBER 17TH: The Northern Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Interfaith Center invites you to a free screening of *A Place at the Table* and a community discussion about hunger and poverty, particularly as it impacts children in Virginia. Made in 2012, the film explores the current status of hunger in America and the public policies that affect it. ***A Place at the Table: A Community Screening & Discussion***

Tuesday September 17th

Refreshments and fellowship at 6:30, program will begin at 7pm

Annandale United Methodist Church, 6935 Columbia Pike

The program is free and open to the public. Download a flyer here and invite your congregation, neighbors and friends! Please consider bringing a canned food donation for a local food pantry.

This program is brought to you by Strong Kids, Strong Virginia and the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

SEARCH FOR NEW PRESIDING BISHOP:

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church will elect a new Presiding Bishop at our meeting, June 25-July 3, 2015. We are beginning our search and nominating process.

The Joint Nominating Committee wants your input. This survey instrument will be used to help the Nominating Committee write a document describing the priorities and hopes of the Church in our selection process. It will also inform our understanding of the qualities and skills we would like to see in our Presiding Bishop. We ask you to take a few minutes to complete this survey. Please know your responses will be kept confidential

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GGCLYCQ>



OCTOBER IS COMING — AND SO ARE PUMPKINS!

Pumpkins will arrive by Sunday October 6, 2012. We will be celebrating Mass-on-the-Grass that morning at 10 a.m. Pumpkin unloading will begin immediately after the service, so wear pumpkin appropriate attire – suitable for unloading. This year we will again have two trucks the first day. The next two trucks will arrive on Wednesday, October 16.

It's the 20th year for this wonderful event – our largest annual fundraiser to support Immanuel's OUTREACH programs that serve people in need in our community and abroad.

So how can you help NOW?

FIRST: If you are new to Immanuel since last October, or you just want more information about our Pumpkin Patch, *please talk to Pierre Shostal, Jim Snow, Jamie Conrad, or Martha Manson.*

SECOND: *Please start COOKING and FREEZING* your own preferred recipe of SOUPS and BREADS and list the ingredients. A substantial portion of our profit for outreach comes from food sales. We have standard quart containers for soups; we've learned this size and container works best for both cooks and customers. Breads can be packaged as you choose. The containers are located in the Narthex. If you run out of freezer space at home, we have a freezer at church; however, please coordinate with Soup Coordinator Connie Kurz or Bakery Coordinator Phyllis Ginger before using the church freezer. Remember that pretty packaging (such as a ribbon or sticker) really helps our sales of these items. And please don't forget the LIST OF INGREDIENTS (which helps our customers avoid food allergy issues).

THIRD: *We still need a Food Manager* to oversee and coordinate preparation and sales of food items with Connie and Phyllis above. This person is a critical part of our Pumpkin Team! Can you help? If so, please talk to the Pumpkin Patch leaders listed in the First point, above.

FOURTH: *Start considering when in October YOU can SELL.* This will be a busy pumpkin season and we need many volunteers. The SIGN-UP CALENDAR is in the Narthex! Contact Candy Levin or Pierre Shostal with questions.

FINALLY, save the date *Saturday November 9 (after the Patch) for Immanuel's Evensong and Harvest Dinner* to celebrate our blessings!

If you have any ideas, contributions or suggestions please contact Pierre Shostal, Jim Snow, Jamie Conrad, or Martha Manson, or email to pumpkins@icoh.net. And plan your participation in Pumpkin Patch proceedings NOW!



FINDING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Our talents are spiritual gifts from God, and like most presents, they can't be fully appreciated until we open them up and share them with others. The

Stewardship Committee has launched a new webpage that offers a self-assessment tool designed and shared by the Lutheran Church. It is a survey that will guide you through a process of self-examination and exploration. Once you have identified your special gifts and talents, we hope you will share them by volunteering with one of the many programs or activities here at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill.

By clicking on the following link, you will be able to access the survey on the Lutheran Church website: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Evangelizing-Church/Assessment-Tools/Finding-Your-Spiritual-Gifts.aspx> You will see a list of 60 questions and be asked to choose from the drop-down-menu, the answer that best describes you. At the end of the survey, click on the "Score button." Your answers will be tallied and a chart will highlight your particular gifts and talents (you can even print the chart).

Back on the Immanuel website on the Spiritual Gifts page <http://www.icoh.net/Serve/Giving/Spiritual-Gifts/> you can click on any of the listed spiritual gifts to find a brief description and a list of volunteering opportunities or programs within Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill that make use of each gift. We hope you will think about unwrapping your gifts and sharing them with your Immanuel family.

DO YOU HAVE A BIKE (OR BIKES) TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMMANUEL BICYCLE PROGRAM FOR CHRISTMAS FAMILIES? If so, please bring



them to the church and put them in the back, under the deck. Questions? Call Bill Frye at 703-548-8591 or email at wffrye@hotmail.com.

WHAT'S NEW ON IMMANUEL'S WEBSITE?:

God challenges each of us to give generously of our time, talent and treasure. Helping Immanuel parishioners with this critical responsibility is the job of the Stewardship Committee, which has just completed a thoughtful revision of the Stewardship and Planned Giving sections of www.icoh.net. They have also compiled lists of volunteer activities at Immanuel, on the new "Spiritual Gifts" page. Please take a moment to check out these valuable resources, all under the "Serve" tab on our homepage!

INOVA FALL FITNESS CLASSES will begin the week of Sept 16th. Many classes are offered, from senior fitness to yoga to Tai Chi! and there are quite a few offered at here at 5 Immanuel in the parish hall. This fall, the classes run for 10 weeks, so that participants can exercise closer to the holidays. To register, go to www.inova.org then to search and register for classes tab.

BEYOND GRACE AND GRATITUDE: Last week Hance Haney gave many hours of time and effort to me in the parish office to put together these two lateral file cabinets – making the parish office a much classier place, not only to work in, but also a place to welcome visitors. Thank you Hance, for all your hard work. It is much appreciated. And many thanks too to Stefanie Reponen and Brooke Roberts for cleaning up all the boxes in the Undercroft!

Jennifer Addington



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



September 15, The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10

8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI (NOTE: Return to 3 services)

September 22, The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 8:18—9:1; Psalm 79:1-9; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13

8 a.m., HEI, 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEII

September 29, The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEI