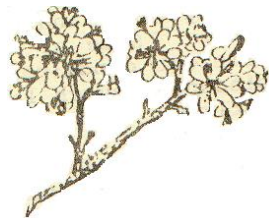


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

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



April 24, 2014

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

WHAT DO THE GOOD THINGS I AM ALREADY DOING HAVE TO DO WITH MY FAITH?

I am regularly impressed by the wealth of good being accomplished in the world by the people of Immanuel. We have volunteers of many stripes: coaches, folks working in homeless shelters, delivering meals for meals-on-wheels, serving as board members of local charities, working on political advocacy, and the list could go on and on. A lot of people are doing a lot of good in a lot of directions. Yet it is not unusual to hear from people they have never connected in their own minds the good they are doing with their Christian faith. They are doing good just because it is the right thing to do. I wonder if we are missing a real spiritual opportunity here. . . .

I am convinced that the Christian life to which we are called is far larger than we regularly imagine. It is not limited to what we do within the walls of the church building—far from it. In fact, the life-changing worship in which we engage within the church building, or anywhere else for that matter, is meant to fortify us to live as Christians in the world, in all times and in all places. Theology and spirituality are not separate from most of our lives, but front and center in all that we do—how we treat people, what we value, how we define ourselves, how we disagree, how we shape priorities, how we respond to anyone hurting or in need, how we tend our relationships. In other words, ***all of life is a laboratory for the Gospel.***

It seems intentionality is the key. Invoking God's presence and naming some good we are doing in the world as an expression of our love for God and God's people can place even a mundane activity on a much higher plane. St. Paul tells us, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

I recommend a slim volume for your consideration, a classic of Christian devotion: *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence, a man who lived in the 17th century. Lawrence served as a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery in Paris, not having the education required to become a priest. Yet he became known for the profound peace he exuded, and many sought him out for counsel. His goal was to see God in everything that he did, even work in the kitchen or mending the brothers' sandals. Lawrence writes, "Men invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself in the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple. Is it not quicker and easier just to do our common business wholly for the love of him?"

Lawrence concludes, famously: "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

I also find this quote from Brother Lawrence deeply moving: "Nor is it needful that we should have great things to do. . . We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."

Spirituality is the lived experience of the presence of God. Isn't that our calling?

See you in Church, *Randy+*

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Morgan, Catherine, Mary, Duncan MacDonald, Yvonne Pover, Natalie Doyle-Hennin, Bill Frye, Dana Hengst, Chris Stanek, Warren Phillips, Sharon Waiss, Norma and Dick Taliaferro, John and Louisa Smucker, David Lindsey, Dick Hobson, Rollin Huntington.

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, 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, Marjorie Glassco, Paul, Kathryn, Carol Brown, Scott, Bob Weeks, Sharon Laboditz, D. Elizabeth Peters, Patricia, Howard Sutherland, Mary Jean Anderson, Mildred, Dan Wells, .Erin and Rob Schiesel, Marianne and Gerard Ennis, Bill Ennis, Jack Lewis, Linda Monzi, Elesa McFadden, Thomas Arminio, Boyd Noorda, Jewel, Rya, Andre Casavant.

Those who have died: Jean Schnedl, Roy Lynch.
Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them.

Those serving in the U.S. and overseas: Todd Bates, Ian Phillips, John Patrick Miller; Jon and Nicole Anderson, Noah Barker, Will Murtha, Allen Kellogg, Keith June, Carolyn Bartley, Janice Corbett.

HOLY WEEK FEEDBACK: The clergy, worship stewards, and parish staff would appreciate hearing about your Holy Week experience at Immanuel. It would be helpful to receive any thoughts you may have in writing. Please feel free to direct your feedback to Rev. David at dcrosby@icoh.net. Thank you.

IMMANUEL MEN'S ANNUAL FISHING



TRIP Ahoy, men of Immanuel. The date of this year's Annual Immanuel Men's Group's rock fishing expedition is **Friday, May 2nd**. As in the past, our

fishing boat(s) will be departing that morning at sunup from Deale, Maryland (about one hour from D.C./Alexandria). Also as in the past, we'll be gathering the evening before (Thursday, May 1st) at the Herrington Harbour Inn (located nearby the boat launch site) for our traditional Amanly meal and a good night's sleep. We have secured the same boats as last year (the "Miss Grace" and the "Miss Margaret") and I have reserved a block of rooms in my name at the Herrington Harbour Inn. I am assembling a list of planned attendees and would like to hear from anyone who might be interested in going, so that I can put together an expanded distribution list, and, if necessary, consider making more specific food and room arrangements. I will be issuing a detailed memo, which will contain more information on cost, schedule, *etc.* In the meantime, you can contact me by e-mail, phone or in person at Church. My home phone number is 703-751-9238 and my e-mail address is djohn@jhenergy.com.
Doug John

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW. The 33rd annual Step ALIVE! Walkathon will be held on Sunday, May 4, to raise funds for ALIVE!'s Child Development Center (CDC), a full-day preschool program serving children of low-income working parents. This 5k or 5 mile (walker's choice) stroll starts at 2:00 pm at First Christian Church, 2723 King Street, Alexandria, and ends at the same place with food, music and prizes provided by the CDC. Register in advance online at www.alive-inc.org or at the event on May 4 starting at 1:15 pm or call 703-837-9321 to obtain a registration form.



SHRINEMONT IS COMING SOON! The annual Immanuel parish retreat at Shrine Mont retreat center in Orkney Springs, VA (about 2 hours away) will be *Saturday, May 24 (noon) through Breakfast, Monday, May 26, 2014*. What better way to start your summer than with Immanuel 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 Rector, the Rev. Randy Alexander, 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)

CIRCLE OF QUIET: In our busy and stressed-filled lives, it is often hard to listen to the still, small voice of God. Meditation is one means to practice listening for God. Immanuel parishioners are invited to learn more about meditation and explore ways to enrich their prayer lives. Each Sunday in the Easter season, the Circle of Quiet members will offer a form of meditation with instructions for that type of prayer. The leader will explain the format for the prayer, and the group will practice that prayer form. Instructional materials will be provided. No experience with meditation is necessary to participate in the group. Each session stands alone, so parishioners are welcome to attend some Sundays if they are unable to participate in all sessions.

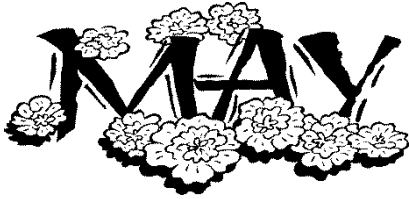
The Circle of Quiet meets Sundays at 10:30 a.m. in the Upper Room. The schedule of meditations is as follows:

April 27	Centering Prayer	Andy Biache
May 4	Praying with Our Experiences	Dana Hengst
May 11	Praying with Icons	Mary Ann Rehnke
May 18	Praying with Scripture (Lectio Divina)	Sara Fein

SCHOOL FOR THE SPIRIT: There is still time (and space) to register for School for the Spirit. Classes are Wednesdays, April 30 – May 21, beginning with supper at 7 p.m. Following supper there will be a short meditation offered and classes will begin at 8 p.m. Class choices are: "The Riches of the Book of Common Prayer" led by the Rev. Randolph Alexander; "African Bible Study" led by Sudie McGahuey, or "Heaven, Hell and Points In Between" , led by Martha Taggart and Lisa Yount. Pick up a flyer at church on Sunday or call the parish office at 703-370-6555. You can also register on our website, www.icoh.net.

FORUM HOUR: The Rev. Dr. Frank Wade will lead a two-week forum entitled "A Defense of Judas Iscariot," this Sunday, April 27, and the following Sunday, May 4

Judas has gotten a lot of "bad press" over the past 200 centuries. One could argue, though, that there are facts and implications in the Bible that cast him in a much different light. We will engage in a "Forensic Bible Study," presenting the case for seeing Judas as a struggling follower like the other disciples and, unlike the other disciples, the first to get a glimmer of what Jesus was really about.



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
05/05 Briggs Burkhalter
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 Gasperek
05/13 Zachary Cohn
05/14 Jim Taylor
05/14 John DeMoors
05/14 Jasmine Tyler

05/14 Will Toman
05/15 Evan Johnson
05/15 Paul Blakeslee
05/16 Caitlin DeMulder
05/16 Peter Alexander
05/17 Max Rotermond
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
05/23 Benton Powell-Switaj
05/24 Dave Reiner
05/24 David John
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

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



April 27, Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

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

May 4, Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

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

May 11, Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

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