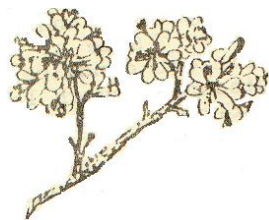


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

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



October 24, 2014

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

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

An occasional column looking at some of the things we do when we gather for worship.

Why do people make the sign of the Cross?

Making the sign of Cross is an ancient Christian gesture of worship, piety, and witness. It is practiced by hundreds of millions of Christians around the world. Not only a practice of Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Anglicans, and many Lutherans, among others, make the sign of the Cross. It is meant to be one way to witness our faith to the world. To begin to appreciate what it means, notice where the Cross "crosses"--right across one's heart. In other words, right at the very center of one's being the world can see evidence of our faith. It is meant to be a way to pray with the body, not just with the mind. There are a few particularly appropriate moments in the liturgy for making the sign of the Cross: at the opening invocation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, at the absolution after we have confessed our sins, perhaps before receiving Communion, and at the final blessing. Many also find signing themselves with the Cross to be a helpful way to begin the day, as they ask God's wisdom and direction for the day, and as the last thing at night, entrusting the day that is past to God's mercy and invoking God's protection for the night to come. The key here is that, like so many things in our Anglican tradition, this gesture is not required. Many find it to be a deeply helpful practice, but other equally-faithful Christians do **not**. As in any real community, room is made for a variety of practices within the same family.

WHAT IS 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 is a pivotal question, one that brings us up short, kind of taking our breath away. It is a question that becomes more obvious around what the ancient Celts called “thin” moments like birth, death, marriage, baptism, and graduation. Yet this question is usually crowded out by far more mundane questions, like what to have for dinner, where the children need to be, paying the credit card bill, pleasing the boss, getting the car inspected, you know, all of the 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 the question even as we go through the mundane tasks associated with living each day.

One of my favorite quotes from Jesus is, “I came that they may 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 human 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 ways 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 of our lives as to be mind-blowing. Such a simple premise! We should be able to grasp it easily and act upon it. Yet we neglect asking what is really important to focus our energy elsewhere, to our great peril, and to our own impoverishment.

Join us at Immanuel in engaging in the abundant life—through our relationship with God and through the ways we are called to treat other people--every day—not just in Church on Sunday.

See you in Church, *Randy*

PASTORAL CARE CORNER: Please remember these parishioners in your prayers: Kay Neer, Mary, Bill Frye, Chris Stanek, Grace Finne, Jacque, Warren Phillips, Morgan, Cadence, Dick Hobson, Catherine, Dana Hengst, Marcia Murray, Susan Kernan, Natalie Doyle-Hennin, Stephen Hansen.

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., Lois, Jane Burton, Jim Clear, Ann and Larry Kaplan, Aubree Bowling, Paul, Carol Brown, Thomas Arminio, Robert Carter, Stephen Miller, Jim Rarick, Molli, Marianne and Gerard Ennis, Bill Ennis, Donna Gray, Tina Bennett Kirkwood, Dorothy Phaneuf, Mildred, Nancy, Brian Crowley, Judy Pearson, Bill and Barbara Stafford, Rhonda Busch, William Corbett, Kathryn, Anna, Marty Cloy, Kelly.

Those serving in the U.S. and overseas: Todd Bates, Ian Phillips, John Patrick Miller; Jon Anderson, Noah Barker, Will Murtha, Allen Kellogg, Keith June, Carolyn Bartley, Ryan, Kendra Smyth and Ed Kabay.

ALL SAINTS' SERVICE: We are putting together a list of the names of those who have died for inclusion in our All Saints' Prayers. Those who have died since last year's All Saints' Day will be read aloud, the other names will be printed in the bulletin. Please call or email our Parish Administrator Jennifer Addington (703-370-6555, jaddington@icoh.net), with the names of those you would like to have included. All Saints' will be celebrated on November 2, the Sunday after All Saint's Day.

SPONSORS NEEDED FOR HAITIAN CHILDREN: One of Immanuel's major outreach ministries is support for the Haiti Micah Project (HMP) which addresses the needs of the street children of Mirebalais, Haiti. For these children, the HMP provides emergency shelter for the most vulnerable, a meal program serving over 400 children daily, educational support, and medical services. For some children, HMP intervention has been a matter of life or death. The HMP primarily relies on individual donations through its Sponsor-a-Child Program. Sponsorship of a child for a year is only \$300, although greater or lesser amounts are welcome. Please sign up on the board posted in the narthex of the church. Make your check payable to "Immanuel Church on the Hill" and put "Haiti Micah Project" on the memo line. Send your check to the church office or drop in the Sunday plate.

OPPORTUNITIES AT ALIVE!

ALIVE! (ALexandrians InVolved Ecumenically) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization of volunteers from over 40 religious congregations and the community at large working together to help those in need in Alexandria, Virginia. Founded in 1969, ALIVE! is the largest private safety net for the needy in the city of Alexandria, addressing short-term to long-term needs for those less fortunate in the community. ALIVE! is looking for several volunteers to assist with the Food Program. Open positions include:

- Food Program Coordinator: This individual will be one of two personnel who would coordinate the entire Food Program. He/she will work with ALIVE! Board members, ALIVE! Program Chairs, and the Capital Area Food Bank to coordinate and manage the food program. The food coordinator will be required to attend several meetings each month.

- Food Drive Coordinator: This individual will be the Lead to coordinate several food drives every year and work with individuals and groups who are looking to hold their own food drives.

- Food Database Manager: This individual will be in charge of the Food Database and will collect and enter applicable data each month. This will likely require 3-4 hours per month.

- Assistant Food Warehouse Manager: This individual will support the warehouse manager in running the overall food warehouse and supporting the receipt and shipment of food. He/she will need to be available as required throughout the month and at the end of each month to support the Last Saturday Food Distribution Program.

- Food Program Shopper: This individual will reach out to ALIVE! Program Chairs to understand food needs and conduct weekly shopping trips to the Capital Area Food Bank. This will likely take 3-4 hours per week.

If interested in any of these positions, please contact the ALIVE! Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@alive-inc.org

CARING FOR CREATION WHILE NURTURING OURSELVES



When was the last time you walked through the Memorial Garden at Zabriskie Chapel? Check it out. Our dedicated gardening team at Immanuel has quietly created a lovely garden with places to pause and reflect and places to sit and watch wildlife, all carefully planted with some exotic but mostly native species that thrive in our climate. The result is a garden that attracts and sustains beautiful wildlife and helps restore dwindling habitat to our urban area. As a faith community, Immanuel has taken the time and energy to care for the creatures with which we share our space – birds, animals, butterflies, and plants.

You might have also noticed a new “Wildlife Habitat” sign.

Immanuel Church is part of a growing number of schools, churches, and residences committed to caring for creation through habitat restoration, a nationwide program organized by the National Wildlife Federation. After meeting specific criteria to create a healthy and sustainable wildlife habitat, participants receive certification and earn the distinction of being part of the National Wildlife Federation’s Certified Habitat program. The sign tells an interesting story of people restoring wildlife habitat all across the country.

Immanuel’s garden team, led by Chris von Schoening, had to consider four elements in order to receive this distinction. The garden needed to provide food, provide water, create protective cover, and give wildlife a place to raise their young. Examples of wildlife food sources are oak trees and trees with berries like the American holly, seeds like those found on the perennial rudbeckia flower (black-eyed Susan), and shrubs like viburnum. Water is available at several birdbaths in our memorial garden and now at the pond. Wildlife require places to hide in order to feel safe from people, predators, and inclement weather so our gardeners created thickets of native vegetation. Many habitat features that serve as cover also double as locations where wildlife can raise their young, including wildflower patches where butterflies lay their eggs and small mammals burrow into the undergrowth to birdhouses and the pond.

The gifts of God’s creation in the Immanuel Memorial Garden are abundant. So go spend some time there. Not only does it serve as a sanctuary for our human spirits, but also as a flourishing ecosystem for wildlife. You will be enriched in this garden for all living creatures and beings. And thank you to the gardeners for your devoted attention to creating this sacred space.

If you would like information on transforming your own yard into a certified wildlife habitat, visit the National Wildlife Federation’s web site at www.nwf.org/Certify.

Denise Freeland, Creation Care Committee

IMMANUEL NAME TAGS: Do you need a new church nametag? Perhaps you’ve come since we began the program; maybe it went missing at home, in the car, or at church. Everybody really does want to know your name here. For the next few Sundays there will be a list near the nametag table to write down your name (and your family members) as you would like it to be printed on the tag. Also let us know if you would prefer the magnet or necklace card holder. Alternately, you could email the same information to the office. Your new tag should be on the storage board in the next week or two after you give us the information.

Name Tag Storage System: Please find and return your nametags to the storage boards. Pick any slot in the section labeled with the first letter of your last name. The returns basket will still be available for those who need it. Some families will prefer to group theirs together (especially if there is more than one last name in the family).

11/02 Max Freeborn
 11/03 Arlo Lloyd
 11/03 Dorothy Kellogg
 11/03 Kristine Hunt-Kron
 11/04 Ollie Patton
 11/04 Arthur Kron
 11/04 Kammy Hambrick
 11/05 Debby Hepburn
 11/06 Gary DeVight
 11/06 Mark Powell
 11/06 Mark Davis
 11/06 Carrie Rodriguez
 11/07 Liza Conrad
 11/08 Nancy Gilbert
 11/08 Caroline Kurz
 11/08 Charlotte Taylor
 11/08 Rebecca Taylor
 11/09 Faith Olson
 11/09 Julie Bruns
 11/09 Elspeth MacDonald
 11/10 Hugh Campbell
 11/10 Dave Cavanaugh
 11/10 Melinda Ashton
 11/10 Jane Temoshok
 11/10 Sasha Koch
 11/10 Isa Stockton
 11/11 Lissa Soergel
 11/11 Anna Mason
 11/11 Anna Woodward
 11/11 Lauren Jennings
 11/13 Richard Gould
 11/13 Beth Miller
 11/13 Paul Hunt
 11/14 Max Miller
 11/14 Melvin Miller
 11/14 Charlotte West
 11/15 Sandy Becker
 11/15 Kerry Kelly
 11/15 Michael Hussey
 11/15 Alexander Bruns
 11/15 Sam Hanoura
 11/16 Dana Hengst
 11/17 Franc Cooper
 11/17 Doug Henry
 11/17 Madeline King
 11/18 Rebecca Wise
 11/18 Avery Phillips



November Birthdays

11/18 Madeleine Boam
 11/19 Caitlyn Becker
 11/19 Gabby DeLeon
 11/20 Jane Yoder
 11/20 Dotty Eisenhower
 11/20 Cilla Houck
 11/20 Francesca Gabriel
 11/22 Marybeth Bates
 11/22 Nan Hobson
 11/22 Suzanne Dawkins
 11/22 Lori Jones
 11/22 John Baltes
 11/22 Judith Atwood
 11/23 Barbara Currie
 11/23 Tom Kerns
 11/24 Brian Boynton
 11/24 Nat Elberfeld
 11/24 Claire Nagel
 11/25 Mei-Lung DeVight
 11/25 Jim Wise
 11/25 Callie Stewart
 11/27 Anne Ross
 11/27 Alexander Temoshok
 11/28 Chris Von Schoening
 11/28 Marlene Baxley-Cadmen
 11/28 Judy Baroody
 11/28 Greta Arnold
 11/29 Norma Scott
 11/29 Kes Shallbetter
 11/30 Robert Huffman
 11/30 Lani Brown

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; 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!

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Link to the November calendar
<http://tinyurl.com/ICOHnovember>

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



October 26, the Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., Holy Baptism/HEII

November 2, Sunday after All Saints

Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-13; Matthew 5:1-12
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI

November 9, the Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20; Psalm 78:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII