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

November 18, 2014

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

WELCOME IMMANUEL'S NEW DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY: John Hogg, a native of Tidewater VA, comes to Immanuel Church with his wife Cameron, and their eight-month-old twin boys, Peter and Silas. Cameron is a Nurse Practitioner at George Washington University, where she both works full time and is completing her Doctorate in Nursing. In 2011, John and Cameron moved to Alexandria from Charleston, SC so he could begin his studies at Virginia Theological Seminary. He first moved to Charleston in 1995 to undertake his undergraduate studies at the College of Charleston. After his graduation in 1999, John went to work for the American Red Cross as part of the Armed Forces Emergency Services (AFES). While in AFES, he was assigned to work alongside the men and women of the 10th Mountain Army Division at Fort Drum, NY. John worked as the Acting Station Manager, primarily serving the 10,000 plus soldiers and their families on base. It was his mission to respond to disasters, keep military personnel in contact with their families during times of personal crisis, and improve their overall quality of life. As part of his responsibilities, he was deployed to Iraq in 2003 to serve as an advocate for frontline troops in Kuwait and Iraq. In addition to keeping soldiers in contact with their families in times of emergency John served as "a confidential and unbiased ear" for soldiers on the front line when they needed to talk about their experiences.

In 2004, John resigned his commission in the Red Cross and returned to the College of Charleston to earn a Master's degree in Public Administration, which he completed in 2007. It was in his last year in graduate school that he met Cameron and they were married October 10, 2009. John and Cameron were active members in Charleston's Grace Episcopal Church and grew to love the community they found there. John is currently a Candidate for Holy Orders from the Diocese of Southern Virginia and graduated this past May with a Master's of Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary.

John has had a lifelong commitment to a vocation of service, especially with youth and families. He grew up serving as part of the elected leadership in Junior High and High School EYC, serving at the convocational and diocesan levels. In addition to his various professional undertakings, John has always enjoyed all aspects of volunteering with youth. In college, he spent a number of summers as a counselor at Camp Chanco in Surry, VA, serving as a youth advisor at both the parish and diocesan levels. Over the years, he remained committed to his work with youth in the Episcopal Church and in his surrounding community. In Charleston, he routinely volunteered for the Children's Hospital, working with children and their families suffering from terminal or chronic illness. Here in Alexandria, John spent part of his time at Christ Church Old Town, his Field Ed parish, taking turns leading Children's Chapel and helping with Vacation Bible School. In addition to his volunteer endeavors John enjoys a number of hobbies that include cooking, wood working, fishing, spending time outdoors and tackling whatever adventure comes his way.

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

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, Peggy Ann Stancil, Robert Barnes, Stan Weilga, Charlie Welcome.

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.

FORUM HOUR ON NOVEMBER 23 Rachel Shows and Chrissie Crosby will share some of their experiences from their January immersion trip to St. George's College, Jerusalem. This will not be a travelogue, but pictures, stories and reflections on walking the paths that Jesus trod.

THANKSGIVING DAY EUCHARIST The Church recognizes the traditional Thanksgiving holiday as a holy day for our land, life and heritage. So "we will gather together to ask the Lord's blessing" on Nov. 27th at 10:30 a.m. Please come join us.

If you thought you missed the mark, you haven't missed the Gospel! Students and faculty of the Virginia Theological Seminary are offering again their **dramatic presentation of The Gospel of Mark**, this time at The Falls Church (115 E. Fairfax St, Falls Church, VA 22046) on Wednesday, November 19th @ 7:00-8:30 p.m. The presentation is free. Don't miss it!

DID YOU KNOW.... that Immanuel has a knitting group that meets monthly at the 1823 Cafe at VTS? Yes, and while it is a time for knitting needles to "fly", there is much comraderie, laughter and learning. This special group that has been in existence for many years, and is open to any member of the church who is interested in knitting, decided this year to make and donate knitted hats for our Pumpkin Patch. These ladies came through with 24 hats, including precious pumpkin top infant hats, which were sold for $15 and made a tidy profit of $360 for our Patch contributions to the community which we serve with our proceeds. A special thank you to Callie Curtis, Barbara Fornoff and Martha Sedgwick for these contributions and to the group for your support with your special gifts.

IMMANUELITES STEP FORWARD FOR CHRIST HOUSE: Christ House is a charitable organization, located in Old Town that provides a nightly meal for over 60 homeless individuals. Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill has been an important part of this program for many years in providing the meals 6 times a year. Since our leader of many years, Susan Carter, recently relocated to North Carolina, we are continuing but need more volunteers. In asking for volunteers, the chairs were overwhelmed with the volunteering of over 15 of our members. We thank Mary-Jo Cooney, Andy Biache, William Dols, Linda Donahue, Lyn Gas, Dotty Eisenhour, Betty Wanamaker, Ann & Rollin Huntington, Wayne & Sheila Iskra, Eileen Monnin-Kirby, Bruce Morton, Phyllis & Dodd Sims, & Georgia Maas for graciously volunteering.

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGES OF 21 AND 30 AND DO YOU LIKE ADVENTURE? Then the Episcopal Church's Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) could be the perfect opportunity. Each year young adults from across the Episcopal Church live, work, and pray with our brothers and sisters across the Anglican Communion. Immanuel Church's own Jacko Post is currently volunteering in the Richmond area and others YASC volunteers are serving in a wide array of countries around the world. This year the Episcopal Church would like to expand participation in the program with the goal of placing 30 new volunteers in 2015. The application deadline is January 2, 2015. If you are interested or would like more information regarding this fantastic opportunity, please contact John Hogg or by visiting www.episcopalchurch.org/yasc

THE IMMANUEL HANDBELL CHOIR will begin to rehearse on Thursday, November 20, from 6-6:45 p.m.. If you have a basic knowledge or rhythm, you can ring handbells and it is a lot of fun and beautiful to hear. We will play for the 11:00 service on Christmas Eve.

All are welcome! Jane Tavernier

FRIDAYS AT THE SEMINARY are a series of lectures and/or workshops offered during the academic school year. The second offering is:

* **Shepherds, Stable, Star and ... Popcorn?** The Nativity of Jesus in the Movies - December 12, 2014

Since the beginning of cinema the story of Jesus' life has been a popular subject for film-makers and cinema-goers.

What kinds of decisions go into making films about the Messiah?

How do the different movies depict his birth, and can we see different ideas about who Jesus is in the different ways the nativity has been depicted?

The programs run from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and are held in the Lettie Pate Evans Room, on the lower level of the Addison Academic Center.
Registration includes morning refreshments and lunch.

Please visit www.vts.edu/fridays for more information and to register.

THE ALEXANDRIA TUTORING CONSORTIUM still needs dependable volunteer reading tutors for first graders and kindergartners once or twice a week. Tutoring takes place in the Alexandria City Elementary Schools during the school day. Training, lesson plans and materials targeted at each child's reading needs are provided. Contact 703-549-6670 ext. 119 or atc@opmh.org if you have questions or need an application. To register, please go to www.alexandriatutors.org. This is truly a very rewarding volunteer opportunity. Jan Campbell (tutor)

CHRISTMAS TREES: As they have for more than 35 years, the Fairlington United Methodist men's group will be selling Christmas trees beginning on Thursday, Dec 4th. Trees arrive approximately 5 p.m. at the Fairlington United Methodist Church at 3900 King St. As always, 100% of the proceeds go to support those in need in our community.
(They advertise our pumpkins, so we are returning the favor!)

NEW PARISH PRAYER GROUP TO FORM: Callie Curtis, a parishioner and long-time member of an active prayer group, has offered to call together a group of Immanuel parishioners who will meet to pray for the parish and for the needs of the world. The group may also receive individual prayer requests (signed or anonymous) from any who would wish to submit one. Please let Callie know directly if you might be interested, and feel called, to such a ministry. Her number is 703.920.0775, or email is calcurtis@aol.com. Once a small group is gathered they will decide upon a meeting schedule that works for the group.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR A PAGEANT. It is time for Immanuel to begin planning its Christmas Eve Pageant. This will be a great opportunity to have fun, be creative, and for fellow ship. The pageant sign-up has been posted in the Parish Hall and there is something for everybody with an interest, even if they do not wish to have a speaking part. Children and youth of all ages, including those of us who are young at heart, are invited to take part in this wonderful event. So please sign up today and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak with or email John Hogg, jhogg@icoh.net, or call him at the parish at 703-370-6555.

CHRISTMAS FAMILIES 2014

And the king will answer them, `Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (from the reading for Sunday Nov. 23, Matthew 25:40)

For many families at Immanuel it would not be Christmas without bringing the good news of Christ's coming and God's love in a very tangible form – a toy to grow with, clothing to keep warm in – to another family, transforming a bleak Christmas into the light of Christ present.

We will have about 100 families designated by Child Protective Services (45 so far, a second batch coming).

You can sign up to buy gifts for a family, or part of one, before or after each service on four Sundays, Nov. 16, Nov. 23, Nov. 30 and Nov. 7, before and after each service or outside the parish office in between. In addition, **used computers** (in good working condition, with or without an offer of set-up and some initial orientation), **used bicycles, good used toys and children's books, calendars you receive in the mail, and gently used clothing and blankets** (for children and adults), especially warm winter coats and clothes to wear to a new-found job, are very welcome. (Please label packages of clothing as to kind and size.) All contributions will be collected and presented at theAltar at the services on Dec. 14; or you can bring them to the parish office. We buy children's books in quantity very cheaply. The books will be on display in the parish hall on Sunday, Dec. 7. **You can select some books (2 – 3 for each child) for your adopted family**. We will prepare a set of books for each remaining family.

If you prefer, **you can contribute money and we will do the shopping for you**. Please make your check out to Immanuel and mark it "Christmas Families". Gifts bought with contributed money will be wrapped during the forum hour on Dec. 14. **The special offering on Dec. 14 is dedicated to Christmas Families**.

There are many opportunities to help with fixing bicycles (the experts will show you how), midnight shopping to take advantage of Black Friday sales, arranging and tagging the toys (Sat. Dec. 13, 9 am -), sorting gifts (Mon. Dec. 15, 9 am -), transportation, data input. See, call, or email one of us for detail or go to www.icoh.net and look under Newsroom.

Let us brighten many children's Christmas, bringing them some of the joys and opportunities of God's new creation, a light in our own celebration.

Dagobert and Lissa Soergel (703-823-2840, 703-585-2840, dsoergel@umd.edu; 703-869-9848, lissa@wholly genes.com).
Linda Serabian (703-683-5226 X17, 703-836-4670H, serabian@somaarchitects.com)
Connie Kurz 703/370-0062 <cgkurz@aol.com>
Julie Bruns (703- 534-7913, drbruns@bellatlantic.net)

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PUMPKINS' END: Ever wonder what happens to the Immanuel pumpkins left over after Halloween? They nourish needy animals! Many thanks to ALIVE! for lending us a truck, to haulers Jim Wise and his daughter Rebecca, to Owen Malone who used his personal SUV and trailer in this endeavor, and to all those who helped load the vehicles. Below is Jim's eyewitness account of the warm reception from Rikki's Refuge Animal Sanctuary in Rapidan Virginia, home to more than 1200 animals of 20 different species

"The trip to Rikki's Refuge went very smoothly. Rebecca and I left Immanuel around noon and were home by 4:30, having delivered the pumpkins, eaten lunch, and returned the truck to ALIVE! Bill was correct - the fried chicken at the ShopMart in the BP station is excellent.

"Many volunteers were on hand at Rikki's to help with unloading. We pulled into the 'cow field' and drove to a slope (followed by a group of curious cows) where we parked with the rear facing downhill. A herd of sheep began ambling our way but saw the cows and turned around en masse - they were like a furry Blob. Rebecca and I climbed out to help unload, but the door was already up and pumpkins were literally flying out of the truck thanks to the eager volunteers. We ducked out of the way and began taking pictures.

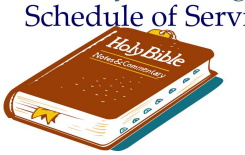
"I felt a nudge at my elbow and turned to see a very (VERY) large cow licking my elbow. Goats wandered over to check us out -- scratching their heads resulted in a gentle head-butting of affection. The lone horse trotted over and ate up the attention (along with some pumpkin). The cows formed a wall in front of the truck - it was like being in a Chik-Fil-A commercial. Moments later unloading was done, we cleaned out the truck and were on our way with many thanks from all on hand (and from us for their taking our leftovers)."

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Link to the December calendar
http://tinyurl.com/decemberICOH

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



November 23, Last Sunday after Pentecost, Christ the King Sunday
Ezekiel 341-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII
November 30, The First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 64:1-9, Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI