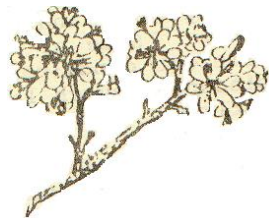


THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

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



December 11, 2014

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

Dear friends,

There is much that gets appended to Christmas that is not worthy of the name. However, at the core of Christmas there is holiness indeed. There is the ever-fresh reminder that the God of the universe became one of us, took on our flesh, lived our life, ate, drank, slept, was sick from time to time, skinned his knees, cried, and ultimately died a death like ours. No other religion in the world can claim this. In fact, many hold it in derision. Since that Birth the world has never been the same. Neither have we who have tried to grab hold of this breathtaking Truth.

The greetings that herald this season are varied: Merry Christmas, Happy Christmas, Season's Greetings, etc., but more and more we only hear these days, "Happy Holidays." Perhaps we need to be reminded of the roots of the word 'holiday.' The word simply comes from an amalgam of Holy-Day, which became 'holiday.' It follows that a holiday traditionally wasn't simply a grand excuse for a party or giving gifts, but its essence was a Holy Day of observance.

Christmas at Immanuel is a wonderful time. It is a time of little shepherds and angels, of greenery, of glorious music from the choirs, the organ and other instruments, of candlelight, of sharing with those in need, of carols and fellowship, and the Christmas Eucharist, which is, indeed, the Christ-Mass.

There are many trappings of Christmas that can be a whole lot of fun. For them to be kept in proper perspective, though, the core needs to be firm. The core of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps more this year than usual, with fear, conflict, and tension swirling all around us, we as Christians need to be reminded of this central truth of our faith: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John 3:16). Join us as we seek to let that Truth wash over us, and perhaps hear the angels sing.

Merry Christmas and a blessed Holy-Day,

Randy+



2014

Christmas Families

As last Sunday's lessons and hymns remind us, in Advent we are called to prepare the way for Christ's coming and to comfort his people. Christ comes to help the poor and needy; he comes to guide us to justice, truth, and love. In Christmas Families we prepare the way, we prepare for a new earth by bearing gifts for children who would otherwise have little so they too are included in the celebration of the good news, the new beginning of Christmas, gifts that have lasting value for creative play and learning. Imagine a boy or girl opening a present on Christmas – a doll or a Lego set or art supplies or a science kit

– and Christ shining through their eyes.

We will provide gifts for 310 children and 150 parents, 460 people in all, from Human Services, the Child and Family Network preschools, and the Alexandria Community Shelter. **Thanks to the 62 parish families who signed up to provide gifts for 120 children and 75 parents.** Please bring the gifts to the church on or before this coming Sunday.

Books are so important. Connie Kurz and helpers bought enough books to select a set for each family, to be delivered together with the other gifts or separately.

There are 190 children and 75 parents, 265 people in all, left. For these the Christmas Families crew bought gifts, usually at half price or less. Still, this many gifts and the books, even at a steep discount, take a lot of money.

Please contribute generously to the special offering this coming Sunday.

For the past several years we have dipped into a special fund established in 2005. We hope that this year there will be enough money, and we have faith that the parish will come through.

- ♥ Every year when we deliver the gifts to Human Services, Dorothy Kellogg sets up a boutique with gently used clothing for children and adults and good used toys so the social workers can bring joy to even more people. Please check your closets and **bring gently used clothing marked by size and used toys** to the church on or before this coming Sunday.
- ♥ **Used computers** will find eager fingers and minds.
- ♥ Children are thrilled to receive a bicycle; **used bicycles of all sizes are very welcome**, and if you can help fixing them up let Bill Frye know.

This coming Sunday, starting with the forum hour until we are done, we will wrap and sort the gifts that were bought. **Right after the 9:15 service and between 2 and 3 pm we will need drivers** that can load bags with gifts and take them to Human Services, 2500 Mount Vernon Ave, on Monday morning between 8:30 and 10.

We still can use helpers on this coming Saturday, Sunday, and Monday morning. See the Immanuel website or call one of the people listed below.

Christmas Families is about love and charity that bring justice, inclusion, and hope.

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



CHRISTMASTIDE AT IMMANUEL

All services, except for the Pageant on Christmas Eve, will take place in Zabriskie Chapel.

Sunday, December 21, 2014

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite I

9:15 a.m., Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

11:15 a.m., Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Wednesday, December 24, 2014, Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve Pageant and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

5:00 pm, Callaway Chapel, Episcopal High School, 1200 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria

Choral Preludes

10:15 p.m., Zabriskie Chapel

A special musical program with solos, choral pieces, orchestra and handbell music.

*

Festival Eucharist, Rite II

11:00 pm, Zabriskie Chapel

Thursday, December 25, 2014, Christmas Day

11:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist for Christmas Day, Rite II

Sunday, December 28, 2014

The First Sunday after Christmas

8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10:00 a.m., Congregational Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Sunday, January 4, 2015

The Second Sunday after Christmas

8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite I

9:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite II

11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite I

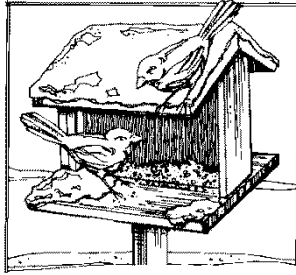
Tuesday, January 6, 2015

The Feast of the Epiphany

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist for Epiphany

12/01 Mercedes Burgess
 12/01 Lisa Frye
 12/01 Adam Donahue
 12/02 Lisa Clausen
 12/02 Catherine Eklund
 12/02 Lawrence Wilkes
 12/02 Morgan Knight
 12/03 John Hogg
 12/03 Shannon Gehrs
 12/03 Hannah Compton
 12/04 Ellen Gehrs
 12/04 Auggie Koch
 12/04 Lucinda Smadja-Goldsmith
 12/05 Gerry Anderson
 12/05 Manuel Ridao
 12/05 Martha Manson
 12/05 Bryan Phillips
 12/05 Preston Brown
 12/06 Timothy Sedgwick
 12/08 Marcia MacDonald
 12/08 Sarah Glassco
 12/08 John von Senden
 12/09 Jim Evans
 12/09 Joy McLaughlin
 12/09 William Albritton
 12/09 Ryan Rodriguez
 12/10 Annie Goldsmith
 12/10 Liam Kirby
 12/10 Julia Eklund
 12/11 Betty Wanamaker
 12/11 Rhys Shallbetter
 12/12 Rick Glassco
 12/12 Christine Hall
 12/12 Anthony Burke
 12/13 Susan Ferris
 12/13 Jamie Conrad
 12/14 Jim Snow
 12/14 Jen Davis
 12/14 Christopher DeMulder
 12/14 Katherine Warlick
 12/14 Sydney Onley
 12/15 Candy Levin
 12/15 Elizabeth Paulsen
 12/16 David Donlon
 12/16 Susan Stockton
 12/18 Judy Bednar
 12/18 David Peabody
 12/18 Kameron Onley
 12/18 Kendra Smyth
 12/18 Joan Cummins

December



12/18 Owen Malone
 12/18 Mike Michaelis
 12/19 Eve Anderson
 12/19 Martha Byron
 12/19 Cameron Hogg
 12/20 Mary Brinn
 12/20 Jo Ann Toledo
 12/20 James Henry
 12/21 Susan Ruberry
 12/21 David Phillips
 12/22 Gertrude Mitchell
 12/22 Toni Meenach
 12/23 Margaret Fogarty
 12/23 Bill McLaughlin
 12/23 Katydeans Price
 12/23 Holly Morton
 12/24 Candace Quinlan
 12/24 Debbie Hewson
 12/24 Tim Gildersleeve
 12/24 Jason Donahue
 12/25 Susan Johnson
 12/25 Carol Crossmire
 12/26 Amy Parks
 12/26 Anne Wagner
 12/27 Ismael Arciniegas
 12/27 Drew Parks
 12/28 Marda Robillard
 12/29 Norma Taliaferro
 12/30 Ken McDonald
 12/30 Jan Maas
 12/30 Patricia Brown
 12/30 Mae Hunt
 12/31 Honor Fede
 12/31 Charlotte Gehrs
 12/31 Emily Akins

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!

01/01 Derek Johnson
 01/01 Abby Murray
 01/01 Marjorie Burke
 01/02 Mein LaMountain
 01/02 Alec Burkhalter
 01/03 Mollie Warner
 01/03 James Graef
 01/03 Virginia Graef
 01/04 Brian Young
 01/04 Sham Suri
 01/04 James Kelley
 01/05 Kay Neer
 01/05 Alma Yopp
 01/05 Michael Reinemer
 01/05 Stewart Skubel
 01/05 Kelsey Irvin
 01/06 George West
 01/06 Jack Hatcher
 01/07 Dagobert Soergel
 01/07 Christina Becker
 01/07 Leslie Williams
 01/08 Tom Durmick
 01/08 Molly Corkern
 01/08 Trevor Baltes
 01/09 Thomas Shimkin
 01/09 Scott Conklin
 01/10 Teresa Skubel
 01/10 Jett Bastow
 01/12 Norma Jean Lawton
 01/12 Doug John
 01/12 Stephen Friday
 01/13 Bennett Miller
 01/13 Zachary Miller
 01/14 Jill Knox-Dick
 01/14 Sudie McGahuey
 01/14 Daniel Schmidt
 01/14 Colin Swisher
 01/14 Thomas John
 01/15 Bill Kilpatrick
 01/15 John Kilpatrick
 01/15 Anne Kilpatrick
 01/15 Tiffany Stuck
 01/16 Kim Cook
 01/16 Stuart Nordin
 01/19 Katherine Maas
 01/20 Alexis Von Schoening



01/20 Alex Cummins
 01/21 Betty Claypoole
 01/21 Jessi MacLeod
 01/21 Michiko Haney
 01/21 Ted Compton
 01/21 Jordon Scambos
 01/21 Daniel Guillory
 01/22 Gordon Peyton
 01/22 Yancey Hall
 01/22 Walter Richter
 01/22 Nicole Chavez
 01/23 Mary Ann Rehnke
 01/23 Janet Pawlukiewicz
 01/24 Kristin Burkhalter
 01/24 Pat Flagg
 01/24 John Warlick
 01/24 Libby Huffman
 01/24 Juliana Glassco
 01/24 Ellie Wilkie
 01/25 Richard Maynard
 01/25 Nicholas Greiner
 01/25 Phillips Mitchell
 01/25 Katherine Kron
 01/28 Bryan England
 01/28 Eileen Monnin-Kirby
 01/28 Chris Page
 01/28 Sophie Rust
 01/29 David Ingold
 01/29 Susan Gould
 01/30 Susan Post
 01/30 Alex Hollyer
 01/31 Rick Murphy
 01/31 Karen Bastow
 01/31 Charles Calloway

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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, Nancy Kelly.

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, Kathryn, Anna, Marty Cloy, Kelly, Peggy Ann Stancil, Robert Barnes, Charlie Welcome, Mary Margaret, Brandon.

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



Lessons &



CAROLS

FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY: A blessed and joyful Advent to all! This year, the Lesson and Carols Service will be presented at both 9:15 and 11:15 on December 21 followed by a festive coffee hour. Also, the Christmas Eve musical prelude will begin at 10:15 p.m. and includes music from the handbell choir, the adult choir, soloists and ensembles and hymns.

This is the season of expectation and beautiful music and I hope you will join us for these presentations.

DON'T FORGET TO FULLY YOUR PLEDGE COMMITMENT FOR THIS YEAR

If you pledged in 2014 by now you have received your 30 September 2014 statement from the Treasurer. Please review it. It is critically important that we finish this church fiscal year on 31 December 2014 in a strong financial position. If you are a bit behind in meeting your annual pledge, this is the last month to close the gap. As of 1 December, pledge receipts totaled \$439,192 out of a 2014 pledge budget of \$509,000. Historically, December has been a miracle month for catching up. Let's make sure this December maintains the trend. Thank you, *The Stewardship Committee*

ANNUAL GIVING STATUS: Thanks to the generous giving commitments we've received so far for next year, we're getting close to matching the pledge and gift commitments we received for 2014. So far 131 families and individuals have committed to give \$423,431 in 2015. This represents 83% of the \$509,000 promised last year at this time. As heartwarming as the response to date certainly is, the participation rate of 131 families and individuals represents less than half the approximately 375 households that comprise the active Immanuel community. If you are still considering your own commitment—your next step in discipleship—we ask you to consider not only that intentional giving reflects a faithful response to a loving and generous God—whose grace we experience in the midst of this community; but also that we have so much potential as a congregation to expand the mission and ministries of this parish—to help those in need ... and to spread the word of God—if all of us commit as we are able.

The Wardens and the Stewardship Committee

SEEKING REGIONAL COUNCIL REPS.—

Regional Council is a wonderful opportunity to establish and strengthen relationships with other faithful people from a larger Episcopalian community, as well as share ideas and coordinate activities between neighboring parishes. The eight Episcopal parishes in the Alexandria area comprise Region IV of the Diocese of Virginia. Regional Council consists of the active Clergy and Lay representatives from each of these parishes. By virtue of it's size, Immanuel is entitled to designate three Lay representatives to Regional Council. Please approach a member of the Clergy or of the Vestry if

you feel you may be interested in serving in this important capacity.

PUMPKIN PATCH FINAL REPORT.

Congratulations! This was our second best pumpkin season of all time (exceeded only by the record sales of 2013). For our 27 sale days in October, we had a **net profit of \$64,069.00** on gross receipts of \$132,700.00. Over a quarter of our profit, \$17,300.00, was from the sale of foods. From your hard labors were made 529 apple crisps, 1200 cupcakes, 950 brownies, 228 muffins, and 455 quarts of soup.

This success could not have been accomplished without the hundreds of hours of hard work by scores of parishioners. We won't try to name everyone, because we'd inevitably make omissions. Suffice to say you know who you are – including those who unloaded the trucks, the day managers who opened and closed each day, the sales persons who manned the table rain and shine, the bakers of delectable treats, the soup makers, and the apple peelers producing our best-selling apple crisps, to name but a few.

The month was not without its difficulties. Bad weather prevented the timely unloading of the second trucks. Several rainy days made for miserable sales. But throughout it all, good spirits generally prevailed. There were some particularly faithful workers who kept spirits up. Among them, John Bednar probably logged more hours than anyone at the sales table. Bill Duran kept the patch ship-shape day after day. Melinda Ashton led her team of crisp makers despite a hand injury. Connie Kurz and Phyllis Sims kept the soups and baked goods coming. And a special kudo to long-time parishioner, Catherine Stanish, who flew in from her new home in Chicago to sell pumpkins for a weekend.

All we do is for Outreach. Because of your efforts, we will help feed the hungry, house the homeless, provide medical care to the afflicted, educate children, and give hope to the friendless. Well done Immanuel!

GRACE AND GRATITUDE to all the many people who helped to sort out the kitchen to make it more functional for all the hospitality events that take place every week here. I especially want to thank Sara Fein, Phyllis Sims, Connie Kurz, Joan Raybold, and Gilma Balcercal for conferring and doing the hard work of moving pots, pans, coffee supplies, and dishes.

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.



PICTORIAL DIRECTORY: Beginning in January, the Parish Directory will include photographs. If you have a digital photo you would like to submit, please send it to pictorial@icoh.net. We can also scan a favorite portrait or snapshot for you (if you can temporarily leave it with our parish administrator, Jennifer Addington). We are looking for a volunteer photographer to take photos before and after services sometime between now and the end of January. We will also re-use photos from the Dec. 2011 pictorial directory. Going forward, photos will re-appear every time the parish directory is updated. You will always be able to add a photo for the first time or change an existing photo.



INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURES: With winter approaching and the chance of snow, we wanted to remind you that if the Fairfax County schools are closed, that the parish office will be closed as well. The information will be posted on our website.

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



December 14, The Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

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

December 21, The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Genesis 2:4b-9, 12-25; Genesis 3:1-22; Isaiah 40:1-11; Isaiah 64:1-92; Baruch 4:36—5:9; Isaiah 7:1-17, Luke 1:26-38

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

December 28, The First Sunday after Christmas

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-25; Isaiah 7:10-15; Luke 1:39-46; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-18-

8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:00 a.m., Lessons and Carols and HEII;