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 19, 2015

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

CHRISTMAS FAMILIES
2015

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.' (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.

You can sign up to buy gifts for a family, or part of one, before or after each service on three Sundays, Nov. 22, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 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 the altar at the services on Dec. 13; or you can bring them to the parish office.

Using parishioners' donations, we have purchased two books for each child and a *Better Homes & Gardens Cookbook* for parents who requested a cookbook. Come to Zabriskie's parish hall after services Dec. 6th to retrieve the books (bundled by family number) that we have selected for your Christmas family, or call Connie Kurz (703) 370-0062.

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. 13. **The special offering on Dec. 13 is dedicated to Christmas Families**.

There are many opportunities to help with fixing bicycles (the experts will show you how), Internet and midnight shopping to take advantage of Black Friday sales, arranging and tagging the toys (Sa Dec. 12, 9 am -), sorting gifts (M Dec. 14 9 am -), transportation, data input. See, call, or email one of us for detail or go to www.icoh.net and click on the "Xmas Families" button.

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@whollygenes.com). Ashley Chappell <ash22301@yahoo.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)

THE ASSOCIATE'S CORNER

Immanuel Chapel Dedicatory Year

Seldom is heard by a preacher at the door following worship, "That was a home run!"

Thomas G. Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, GA, was recently at Virginia Theological Seminary. I had the pleasure of hearing one of the most esteemed homiletics professors of this day lecture on "The Good Funeral and the Good Funeral Sermon" (a.m.) and (p.m.) "Preaching in More Than One Voice: Enchantment, Wisdom, and Disruption." It was engaging, insightful, and helpful. As most preachers labor more over Sunday sermons rather than the occasional funeral homily, the afternoon lecture carried the day for me.

Dr. Long said a Narrative form of storytelling has been the primary mode for sermons for the last 50 years. Sermons began with a main idea, touched on three points (1, 2, 3) and then pointed to a conclusion. Stories would knit lessons that were read and heard to the presence of God acting in our lives, appealing to the minds and hearts of both the congregation and preacher (Note: If the Word preached doesn't first speak to the one in the pulpit, it won't reach anyone else!) Long suggests that there are 2-3 "voices" proclaiming the Good News that are now emerging in the homiletics arena of preaching. Sermons these days speak through Enchantment, Wisdom, and Disruption.

Biblical Wisdom draws primarily from the epistles in the New Testament. They are 'letters from pastors to fragile communities' on lessons to be encouraged or amended, if not altogether corrected, guiding people to better knowledge of God and stronger belief in Jesus. Enchantment brings the 'language of transcendence' into the process of storytelling--> teaching-->storytelling--> ethics to make relevant the Word of God to and for us in this time and place. And the third voice reminds us just how "disruptive" the Gospel truly is! The Good News of Jesus Christ comes "corrupting the corruption of the culture." In that, I hear the constant challenge to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Listen, hear and know that the 'edginess' of the Gospels can be life-giving!

Tom Long is one of the most popular preachers in our country today. He confessed to having the occasional good or not so good preaching moment, feeling he's more often 'middle of the road.' Hardly. I share this because the Holy Spirit and you continue to mold me as a preacher in our Church and for this parish, Immanuel. May we constantly seek that voice which God intends for each of us as proclaimers as we break scripture open together. May God be proclaimed always, in all ways!

Let me hear what you hear from the pulpit. I'll be listening at the door.

~ David+

ADVENT WREATH MAKING: Begin the season of joyous anticipation and come make a family Advent wreath. Families of all ages are invited to join us for this year's Advent Family Work Shop. Immanuel Church will be hosting this fantastic workshop on the first Sunday in Advent, November 29th from 12:45-3:00pm, in the Parish Hall at Zabriskie Chapel. There will be lunch, wreath making materials and plenty of opportunities for fun, fellowship and a little learning.

A selection of baked chicken, eggplant parmesan, salad, and refreshments will be provided. Please feel free to bring a side or main dish to share.

Wreath making materials will be made available, but all families are kindly asked, if able, to bring blue ribbon. In addition, individuals are also invited to bring any additional materials they wish to add to their wreaths or to share with others. For example, holly and evergreen cuttings are two materials that are always in high demand but forever in short supply and we will be grateful for any donations we receive.

Please stay tuned for more information to come. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Rebecca Cooper rcooper@sssas.org or John Hogg at jhogg@icoh.net

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SIGN-UPS begin on Sunday November 29th at the Advent Family Workshop. There will be a list of open parts and rehearsal dat4es posted at this time. If you are unable to make it to the Advent Workshop, the sign-ups will also be made available at other services and times.

GIRL SCOUTS TO OFFER BABY SITTING: Girl Scout Troop 5416 has been babysitter trained and is offering babysitting on Saturday, December 5 from 3-5:30 at Immanuel in the Parish Hall and Fairchild Room. Potty trained 3 year olds to 3rd grade children may participate in this event. The cost is $20 for the first child and $10 extra for each sibling. Space is limited. To reserve a spot, please e-mail Susan Miranda at TheMirandas@Verizon.net.

BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY: Immanuel's monthly Saturday morning Breakfast Bible Study will meet 21 November, the third Saturday. We gather in the Fairchild Room at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast, with Bible study beginning at 8 a.m. We promise to be done by 9 a.m.! Our theme for this year is God Calls Us to Listen. This month we will read Luke 11: 27-28, 33-36, using the African Model of Reflection. Come, be fed in body and spirit with food, fellowship and God's word. For more information, please contact Scott Bunn (sbunn8@gmail.com) or Chrissie Crosby (cmcfaddencrosby@gmail.com).

A(NOTHER) LETTER FROM A FORMER PARISHIONER: Good Morning: It was 1989 when I left Immanuel after years of being there, serving on the vestry, as Senior Warden, Stewardship chair, Sunday school teacher. The wilds of Wyoming called.

Immanuel has a place in my heart and will always be my home parish, despite all the parishes I have been in along the way. I left Immanuel and Alexandria and VTS - where I was a lay listener in Homiletics and Colloquy lay person and later an honorary alum.

Along in the wilds of Wyoming came the man who is now my husband. At the time he was the Bishop of Wyoming and then off to Jerusalem where he was Dean at St. George's College. Immanuel remained, in my heart, my home parish.

As I read your newsletter, smiling because *The Almond Tree* and the Kazantzakis quote came about in my time, it is heartening to see the incredible outreach Immanuel has always done and to continue to be such a vibrant community. There is a reason you remain my parish of heart. Many of my Immanuel friends have moved or retired from committee work in the parish or "gathered" however they probably still "hover" as I do.

This is all a long way of asking if you would kindly add me to your newsletter list. The long way is, for me, simply a walk down memory lane as I watch the sunrise from my Colorado home.

Blessings, Mary Page (Rollins) Jones

MESSIAH SING-ALONG All members of the Immanuel community are invited to join in a joyous celebration of Christmas: a sing-along of Handel's masterwork, *Messiah,* to be held at the new VTS Immanuel Chapel on Sunday, December 13th at 3:00 p.m. This is one of the special events planned as part of the Dedicatory Year of Celebration for the new chapel. The performance will be directed by Dr. Mark Whitmire, who directs the NOVA Community Chorus and is a former music director at Immanuel. Choral support will be provided by choir members of a number of Alexandria's Episcopal Churches, including Immanuel, the VTS Chorus, the NOVA Chorus, and the St James (Richmond) Choir – well over one hundred voices in all. Orchestral support will be provided by members of the Washington Philharmonic Orchestra. The celebration will culminate with the *Hallelujah Chorus,* to be conducted by the Very Rev. Ian Markham, Dean of the Virginia Theological Seminary. *But this is, first and foremost, a sing-along, and we encourage everyone to come prepared to lift your voices and join in the choral portions.* We expect to have a number of scores available for sharing at the event, but encourage you to being your own, if you have one. If you have questions, please direct them to Doug John at djohn@jhenergy.com or the Rev. David Crosby at dcrosby@icoh.net."

HELP IMMANUEL WHEN YOU SHOP ON AMAZON Do you ever shop on Amazon.com? Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill is participating in the Amazon Associates program. If you click on the Amazon icon on our website (it's under Immanuel's address/phone) and shop at Amazon.com, our church will receive a donation of a minimum of 4% of the purchase price of your shipped items. Once you're on Amazon's site, you just log into your account or create a new one, then shop and check out normally. You will pay the same Amazon prices and can use coupons and promotions as usual. Amazon will "remember" that you came through our website and make a donation to Immanuel. **The key is to enter Amazon.com through Immanuel's website** by clicking on the icon or going through our Amazon Associates page. Please consider bookmarking that page (www.icoh.net/amazon) so you don't forget! And no, the Rector will not get to see a list of what you ordered from Amazon.com; this program operates solely on the basis of the amount of your purchase. THANK YOU for making this extra effort to help Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill.

Parish Activities in Photos

Veterans' Day Remembrance Service

Youth Group bonfire

Blessing of the Animals

Dr. Timothy Sedgwick: "The Christian Art of Dying"

Peter Beckmann carves his pumpkin at the Region IV youth gathering

VESTRY ELECTIONS APPROACHING:
Would you like to help run the church? We are calling all those interested in serving on the Vestry to let us know now because we are creating the slate for the next Vestry elections to be held at the Annual Meeting in January. If you would like to serve on the Vestry or would like more information about serving, please contact our Senior Warden, Sara Fein, at sarabfein@gmail.com or 703-931-5824.

DO YOU HAVE FINANCIAL EXPERIENCE?
Grace Episcopal Church (3601 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22305) is interviewing candidates for a part-time interim Financial Administrator. This 20 to 25 hour a week interim position includes recording incomes and donations, writing checks and balancing accounts, and working closely with the Treasurer and Rector in all areas of parish finance. Computer and software skills are necessary.
Please contact the Rev. Robert Malm at 703-549-1980 or rector@gracealex.org, if interested.

YARD CLEAN UP A SUCCESS! It was a rainy day Nov 7th, however 20 brave parishioners arrived to clean up left over Pumpkin Patch debris and also helped out with tree trimmings in the Memorial Garden, also the Rector's garden, the berm and other important improvements in our church yard. Thank you all. Thanks to: Warren Phillips, John Bednar, Doug Onley, Dayquan Henderson, Nabil Amir, Caroline Bergmark, Rick Glassco, Phyllis Sims, Andy Biache Sr., Holly Morton with Nicki and Isabella, Mike Eaton, Tom and Sally Guy Brown, Sara Fein, Bruce Morton, Barbara Currie, Lisa and Christina Yount, Kevin Kirby, and Natalie Doyle-Hennin who supplied the soups along with Chris von Schoening for a hearty lunch with bread, butter and apples. A special thank you goes to Bill Duran who always helps with all necessary tasks, before and after the Pumpkin Patch ordeal.

ENTRY TO IMMANUEL CHAPEL: Starting this Sunday, November 22nd, we will be asking people to enter Immanuel Chapel mainly through the side doors, on the Grove Side of the Seminary. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first is that, as the weather gets colder, we will want to keep the large front doors closed. People may still enter through the two side doors, which have mini-Narthex areas. Perhaps the main reason for changing our entrance, though, is that we can have a true Narthex space on the other side, in the hallway. The tables with nametags will be located there, as will bulletins, sheets for sign-ups, and coat racks. This will also be a place for conversation upon arriving, which is so central to our fellowship, while also giving more space for quiet, prayerful preparation for worship within the Chapel itself. Please note there is a gently sloping ramp on that side, so no steps need be involved.

SAVE THE DATE!
Seniors' Advent Dinner
Sunday, December 6 at 6 p.m.
In the Zabriskie Parish Hall
Space is limited, please RSVP to Jennifer in the parish office by Dec. 1

ADVENT WORSHIP AT IMMANUEL

Sunday, November 29, First Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel
9:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel
11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel

Sunday, December 6, Second Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel
9:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel
11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite I, Immanuel Chapel

Sunday, December 13, Third Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel
9:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite II, Immanuel Chapel
11:15 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Immanuel Chapel

Sunday, December 20, Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist Rite I, Zabriskie Chapel
10:30 a.m., Service of Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist at Immanuel Chapel

Immanuel Church -on-the-Hill
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Alexandria, VA 22304
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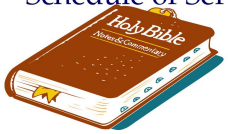
office@icoh.net
http://www.icoh.net

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



November 22, Last Sunday after Pentecost, Christ the King Sunday
2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 132:1-13; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII, 11:15 a.m., HEI
November 29, First Sunday of Advent
Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII
December 6, The Second Sunday of Advent
Canticle 4, Baruch 5:1-9, Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
8:00 a.m., HEI; 9:15 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEI