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 21, 2016

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

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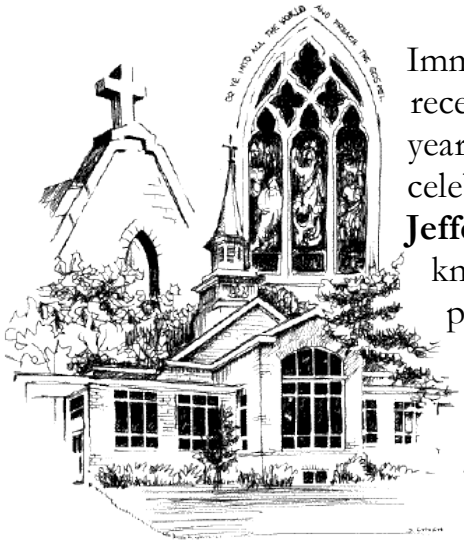
COME CELEBRATE IMMANUEL'S 75th ANNIVERSARY ON SUNDAY, MAY 8th!



Immediately following the 10:30 a.m. service, there will be a festive reception in the parlor and on the grove-side terrace to kick-off our year-long celebration of Immanuel's 75th year. Come greet our special celebrant and former Presiding Bishop, the **Right Reverend Katharine Jefferts-Schori,** and **our seven newly confirmed youth members.** We know some of you will be observing Mother's Day that day, so please plan a late lunch or early dinner with Mom, if possible, and join your fellow parishioners and guests for a while for a drink and a bite to eat. We know you won't be disappointed!

This kick-off celebration is the first in a series of gatherings, worship, forums and special events during 2016-2017 that will help us recall the founding of our parish on May 2, 1941, when the coming war was changing lives and this sleepy, semi-rural neighborhood forever. Our programming also will look at some of the notable people and their concerns over the seven-plus decades since.

In fact, **did you know that the parish's founding actually happened over *dinner*** in a packed-to-the-gills refectory (dining hall) on the seminary grounds? Some things don't change — **Immanuelites still love to eat, drink, visit and learn together!** Come hear more about how Immanuel started, why we are here, and where we might be going in the future. Our collective life on the Holy Hill and our ongoing ties to the Virginia Theological Seminary are fascinating stuff indeed!

Do you have ideas to share about our 75th celebration or want to get involved in the planning? Please contact Connie Kurz at 703-370-0062 or cgkurz@aol.com.

IMMANUEL SHARES IN ANOTHER BISHOP'S AWARD FOR OUTREACH Coming on the heels of Immanuel receiving the award in 2014, the 2016 Bishop's Outreach Award has been given to all of Region IV for its support of the new West End Lazarus Ministry. Since the ministry's doors opened last September 17 at the Church of the Resurrection, the eight Episcopal churches of Region IV and the Outreach Committee of Goodwin House Alexandria have worked together to reach beyond their walls to assist those in great need in Alexandria's West End. As of March 17 this ministry has functioned on 22 Thursday afternoons, with volunteer counselors serving 181 individuals and paying $34,594.78 toward 187 bills. That's an average of $185.00 per bill in payment of rent, utilities and medical expenses—costs that can mean the difference between self-sufficiency or homelessness for those living on the financial brink. The Immanuel Outreach Committee made a grant of $2,500 to the West End Lazarus Ministry in 2015 and has budgeted $2,000 for it in 2016. Julie Bruns, Janice Corbett and Pierre Shostal are serving as volunteer counselors and would welcome your interest in being involved in this wonderful ministry.

A WHOLE PARISH OPPORTUNITY: Immanuel is in the process of setting up a prayer group for the whole parish. And it doesn't involve driving to the church, bringing snacks, or scheduling an additional meeting in your busy week.

This is how it works: On the parish website, click on the "Worship" drop down menu and find "Weekly Sunday Service Bulletins" where the "Parish Notes" are listed. Throughout the week, use this prayer list during your own devotions and prayer time to remember fellow parishioners and others. "Parish Notes" are updated every week.

An on-line Prayer request template has also been developed. It can be found on the "Resources" drop-down menu under "Forms".

Please do send feedback on this strategy!

Callie Curtis, calcurtis@mac.com

STEP ALIVE! On Sunday May 1 ALIVE! will host the 35th annual Step ALIVE! 5K/5Mile Walkathon to benefit the ALIVE! Child Development Center (CDC). The fun begins at 2:00pm at the CDC at First Christian Church, 2723 King Street, with on-site registration beginning at 1:15pm. After the walk there will be a picnic of food, music and fun and games at the CDC. Fees (including a tee-shirt) are $25 for individual walkers; $10 for youth 12-18 and Seniors 70+; and children under 12 are free. Online registration is available at www.alive-inc.org. Proceeds assist ALIVE! in bridging the gap between the CDC's costs and what families can afford to pay. Please consider forming a team and soliciting sponsors. **Questions? Contact Nancy or Jim Wise at 703-642-8225, jrwise52@hotmail.com.**

DC WALK TO END GENOCIDE: *"DO NOT STAND IDLY BY…"* Come to the 2nd annual DC Walk to End Genocide on Sunday, May 1 from 1:30-4:00 p.m. The Walk begins with a short program featuring radio talk-show host and activist, Joe Madison, and follows a 2-mile route beginning in the field behind the US Holocaust Memorial Museum with stops at the MLK, Jr., Lincoln, and World War II Memorials. The Walk is organized by Darfur Interfaith Network (DIN), a local, interfaith group, in partnership with Jewish World Watch and is co-sponsored by Immanuel. Parishioner, Rebecca Cooper, is a member of DIN and is organizing activities for children and families before the walk begins. Funds raised will assist survivors of genocide and mass atrocities in Sudan, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Visit DC.WalktoEndGenocide.org for more information, to register to walk, or pledge your support. Contact Rebecca for more details (rcooper@sssas.org or (703)785-8226)

THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S CORNER:

If you are not already aware, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill is one of eight Episcopal churches in the City of Alexandria that is recognized by the Diocese of Virginia as Region IV. The other seven churches are:

- Christ Church, Old Town
- Emmanuel (on High Street)
- Grace Church, Russell Road
- Meade Memorial
- St. Paul's, Old Town
- Church of the Resurrection
- St. Clement, Quaker Lane

A Region within the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia is "a community of congregations formed to collaborate in shared ministry within a geographic area and to enhance communication between the Diocese and a congregation." There are fifteen regions currently defined with our diocese. Each region has a clerical (ordained) Dean (appointed by the Bishop from rectors among the region's parishes) and a lay or clerical representative to the diocesan Executive Board. I am presently the Region IV representative to Executive Board, serving my second year of a three-year appointment.

Meetings of the Regional Council occur 3-5 times a year. Per the diocesan Canons, "Regional Councils shall be responsible for seeing that the ministrations of The Episcopal Church are made available to every person living within the boundaries of such Region and shall exercise authority for the Region as a whole in safeguarding the interests and extending the ministrations of the Church throughout its borders, so that the Region may function as a unit in matters of common concern and responsibility. A Regional Council may, for these and other purposes, and subject to the approval of the Executive Board, adopt and administer a budget."

Region IV parishes have worked together to give financial support to outreach ministries such as the West End Lazarus Ministry, Hunger Free Alexandria, the Meade Memorial Bag Lunch Program, an annual hypothermia shelter at St. Clement, the Child & Family Network , and VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement); Christian Formation & Discipleship opportunities include the Alexandria churches' Lenten Series and a well-received Region IV Youth Event hosted by Immanuel in October 2015.

If you have questions or are interested in learning more about the work of Region IV, please see me. Thank you and God Bless! ~ David+

UPCOMING FORUM HOURS:

April 24 - Sonia Patterson, CEO of Five Talents, returns to talk about how Five Talents uses support from us and others plus partnership with local Anglican churches to fight extreme poverty and transform lives through savings groups and business training.

May 1 – The Rector, with lay worship committee support, will report on the result of last fall's survey on worshiping in Immanuel and Zabriskie chapels. Questions and discussion then will help prepare for the survey on the results of our changes in our worship pattern this spring.

May 8 - Founders Sunday, celebrating the founding of Immanuel on May 2, 1941 and the start of our 75th Anniversary Year, former Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Schori will be our forum hour speaker.

May 15 - We will have a special coffee hour to give everyone a chance to thank Rachel Shows and Kyle Martindale for their work with us as seminarians and to say goodbye as they leave VTS to follow their call and careers and head for ordination.

May 22 - David and Chrissie Crosby will lead a discussion on the funeral service. They will cover its liturgy and theology and what plans individuals and their families can make for it.

May 29 - Shrine Mont Retreat Sunday. There will be no forum hour.

THE NEWCOMERS AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE will meet on Monday April 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fairchild Room. We will review the committee's report and discuss the next steps we can take to encourage new members to join Immanuel's vibrant Christian worship and community. Award-winning chocolate chip cookies and Starbucks decaf coffee will be served. Please contact Janice Corbett at 703-300-5682 or by e-mail at Janice.Corbett77@gmail.com if you are interested or have questions. New members are welcome to join us in this exciting opportunity to grow our community.

NEWS FROM OUR CONFIRMATION CLASS: The Confirmation Class this year consists of seven students, who are studying and exploring more about who God is and how they experience and practice their faith daily as followers of Jesus. We have learned about the Old and New Testaments, talked about Baptism and the Holy Spirit, studied the Nicene Creed, and experienced an instructed Eucharist, just to name a few areas of study. On April 17th, we will have a half day retreat following Sunday worship, during which we will explore how we practice our faith at school, in the community, abroad, and at home. We will particularly focus on prayer and spiritual disciplines. Then, on May 8th, the Confirmation service will take place during the 10:30am Eucharist. Please keep these seven students in prayer as they continue to discern their identities within the Church and the Christian faith: Addie Biache, Ben Wilson, Cilla Houck, Corey Wargo-Bergmark, Samantha Ros, Wade Greiner, Lily Greiner.

One of our students, Corey Wargo, has shared his experiences with the Confirmation class thus far:

How has Confirmation class been going? What are some of the things you've been doing in class?

Class has been going great. I really like it because it is fun. Rachel and Kyle know how to include everyone. They are both really good teachers. Fr. Randy talked with us about Holy Week - the days and what they mean.

With Kyle and Rachel we talked about Parables. I really liked the Parable of the Sower. They've asked us to think about who Jesus is to us. They have shown us pictures of ways different churches see Jesus and that has been really interesting.

Rachel & Fr. David took us to Temple Beth El for their Shabbat service one Friday night. They did readings in Hebrew, which go from right to left and were hard to understand. Their Torah are the first five books of the Bible. We both worship the same God, the Father, but they don't believe Jesus is the Son of God. They believe that Jesus was real and a major Prophet, but they don't think Jesus was the Son of God. They are still waiting for the Son of God to come.

What new things have you learned about your faith?
I've realized how little of God I actually know.

What does Confirmation mean to you?
Confirmation to me means coming closer to God. It is kind of like a second Baptism, but this time I'm saying, "Yes, I want to be close to God," instead of just my parents saying yes, I want my child to be closer to God.

Why do you want to be confirmed?
I want to be confirmed because I want to be closer to God than I am currently. I think both the class and the service will help me.

Rachel Shows, Seminarian

THE PARISH BARBECUE, HEIFER FAIR & YOUTH SUNDAY The weekend of April 8 should be a point of pride for our congregation, especially our children and youth. The Barbecue hosted by the EYC on Saturday night was a wonderful time and this, when combined with the brilliant Youth Service on Sunday, hopefully further demonstrated the unlimited potential of our youth and their standing as equals in the congregation. So much of their work happened behind the scenes that it made it all seem as if we had been doing this for years. Furthermore, there were a few additional hands that need to be recognized for their hard work and dedication in everything from cooking the barbecue, preparing it, and helping in the kitchen or at the grill on Saturday evening. They are: John Bednar, Andy Biache, James Catto, Carrie Cuddy, Tom Cuddy, Jeannie Cummins, Chrissie Crosby, Dianna Beckman, Paul Beckman, Kyrah Drasheff, Kevin Kirby, Eileen Monin Kirby, Doug Onley and Francine Wargo. I especially want to thank Andy, James and Kevin for working all of Friday night and well into Saturday morning cooking and pulling the pork. Without everyone's help, youth and adult alike, this fantastic event would not, it could not, have happened. I also want to thank Imannuel's Shrinemonters for providing us with your musical stylings. In addition to the barbecue we also had the real pleasure of watching our children deliver yet another very successful Heifer Fair on Sunday morning. This would not have happened without the participation and passion of all our Sunday School children and their teachers. This is a remarkable ministry and I feel blessed to witness the many gifts our Sunday School program brings to our parish and to the larger church.

– John Hogg, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries.

Pictures of the Barbecue

Off to a good start

Thank You to Immanuel's Shrinemonters for your many talents and providing us with the evening's wonderful entertainment.
(Pictured left to right: Kevin Kirby, Paul Smyth, Kyrah Drasheff, Jeannie Cummins-Eisenhour, Amanda Eisenhour and Doug John.

Kevin Kirby and John Hogg manning the grills

A good time was had by all ages!!

Keeping those fires burning

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

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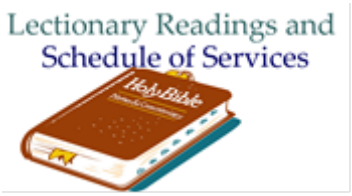

April 24, The Fifth Sunday of Easter
Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21:1-6; John 13:31-35
8:00 a.m., HEI, 10:30 a.m., HEII
May 1, The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22—22:5; John 14:23-29
8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., HEII
May 8, The Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17; 20-21
8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., Confirmation, HEII