



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



May 19, 2016

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

FIVE TALENTS - On April 24, we had an inspirational Forum Hour on the work of Five Talents . Immanuel has supported Five Talents for the past ten years to help the neediest in some of the poorest and most strife torn countries in the world. Working with local Episcopal churches, Five Talents provides training on how to start savings and loan groups and on financial literacy and business skills. With the prayers and support of their groups, members learn to develop sustainable businesses using their God-given talents and turn their lives around.

In South Sudan alone, FT has helped over 20,000 people, mostly women, more than all similar organizations combined. The following is the story of how, with our support, the sacrifice and determination of one of them overcame suffering and grief:

Kondok grew up on the border of Unity State in South Sudan witnessing frequent cattle raids and attacks on her local village. Amidst poverty and harsh conditions, she became the third wife to a polygamous elder. Kondok lost her first four children due to lack of medical treatment.



"I just lost them because whenever they became sick, I could not have any money to take them to towns where the hospitals are."

In 2012, Kondok fled her home with her only surviving daughter, escaping an attack that killed many of her neighbors. Leaving everything behind, Kondok and her daughter ran for their lives and eventually came to a refugee camp in Kuajok, the capital of Warrap State. It was there that she met Five Talents program partners and was invited to join a small group. She learned how to earn an income and save starting with

only 50 cents a week. Eventually Kondok joined the new community bank and started her own business:

"I am now very happy. I am able to feed my family from my business. . I pay for my house rent from my business; I pay for school fees for my daughter, I always borrow money from our community bank to do my business and from my profit I buy clothes for myself and my daughter. Last month she was sick with malaria and I took her to hospital. I would not have managed to take her to hospital. Maybe I could have lost her like the other four of my children that I lost before if I had not joined this program."

There are many more women like Kondok in need of our support. Go to fivetalents.org to learn more and help Five Talents empower more mothers with hope and opportunity.

Everett Post

THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S CORNER:

On May 13th, I attended a Friday program at Virginia Theological Seminary led by the former Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, on "Caring for Creation: Sharing in Creation." She reminded us that as God speaks, things happen, and that God speaks of blessings and goodness that is distinct and diverse. In God's creation, we are called to help the earth be fruitful, to yield fruit and seed for feeding.

We considered the different Creation accounts and "other" creation stories like Noah and the flood, the Exodus through the desert to Canaan, returning from exile in Babylon, and some of the prophetic visions. +Katharine said that being made in the image of God, "we are not stewards of creation; rather we are co-creators"; gardeners, housekeepers, and members of a household, that God, through the Holy Spirit, calls us to join together in the holy work of "co-creating."

The next Sunday at the May 8th Forum kicking off our 75th Anniversary of Immanuel ("God with us"), Bishop Katharine touched the Anglican Five Marks of Mission, noting specifically the 5th Mark:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation;
- ***To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.***

During the Friday program, I learned about a mission involving VTS students, staff, spouses, and faculty who together promote environmental and community sustainability and health, as well as social justice through gardening, activism, and sustainable practices. You can read more about it on Facebook at CultivateVTS on or at <https://sites/google.com/site/CultivateVTS/>.

One garden at VTS grows wheat that is 'cultivated' into whole wheat flour. Since the seminary recently began using gluten free bread at Eucharist, they have a much reduced need for their home-produced wheat flour. I'm wondering if able Immanuelites might like

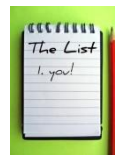
to begin baking bread for our use. VTS is happy to share their flour with us. It could be a new wonderful ministry or guild within our parish, and would give us yet another life line/tie to the seminary.

Also, if parishioners want to get involved in the CultivateVTS effort for parish/campus gardening, the seminary would be happy to work together with Immanuel. Let me know if this interests you. Thanks.

Grace & Peace,
David+

DID YOU KNOW?

ARE YOU ON OUR LIST? We maintain a parishwide mailing list that is used to send notices of funerals, emergency announcements, and the weekly electronic newsletter "This Week at Immanuel," highlighting Sunday's activities and other upcoming events at Immanuel. If you are not receiving this information, it's simple to add yourself to the list by going to the "News & Calendar" tab at www.icoh.net, clicking on "Subscribe" and typing your name and the email address you want us to use. (Or we can do this for you – just call Jennifer in the Parish Office 703-370-6555).



IMMANUEL ON YOUTUBE! Did you know Immanuel has a YouTube channel? When we videotape sermons, services, Forum Hours, or other events, we post them to YouTube as well as our own website. You can go directly to our channel by clicking the YouTube icon on Immanuel's homepage www.icoh.net or by entering the following address in your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ImmanuelChurchontheHill>

Dear Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill,

I write this letter as I prepare to depart for my ordination to the Diaconate, and only a matter of weeks before our time together draws to a close in this way, and I move on to God's next call for me. It truly does not feel as if I have already been with you for two years, as the time seems as if has gone in a flash.

Despite this feeling, our time is nearly done, and I wanted to thank the people of Immanuel for everything over the last couple years. From the time I unloaded my first pumpkin truck during the fall semester of Junior Year, well before I was a seminarian here, I have felt a welcome part of this community. Since then, I have been invited to participate in many more ways in the parish. From carving pumpkins with youth from the parishes in our area to attending last year's Lenten retreat, I feel like you have all provided a place for me to learn with you, and be better prepared for leadership in the Church.

Along this line, I also felt supported as the youth and I set out last Advent to explore the Advent cycle of our Episcopal tradition in some new ways. The support of the parish has been wonderful in exploring how I might best live into my call to priesthood. Immanuel has played an important role in this preparation, and I am extremely grateful for the community being one in which I can live and grow, and with which I can worship.

I also wish to remain in contact and ministry with the parish, and hope to be able to share an update soon on where Trish and I will be after graduation. It is my hope to be able to do this in the next few weeks, as I would not only like to see y'all if you ever find yourself in the area looking for a place to worship on a Sunday or otherwise, but would also like to remain in touch with how my future parish and this one may learn from each other in different ways.

Lastly, I feel the need to share my thanks with both Fr. Randy and Fr. David, along with the Vestry of Immanuel, for allowing me to serve with you these last two years. As you may know, each seminarian also has a committee of lay members of the parish who guide and help in many ways. For me, this committee was led by Mike Eaton and included Scott Bunn, Kyrah Drasheff, Matt Haskin, Faith Olson, Linda Serabian, and Betty Wanamaker. To them, I say thank you for everything in this wonderful ministry to which you have shown so much commitment.

With the Love of the Risen Christ,

The Reverend Kyle T. Martindale



On April 30, 2016, Virginia Theological Seminary held a “**Celebrating Our Seniors**” Eucharist at Immanuel Chapel, followed by dinner at the Refectory. In attendance were Immanuel's seminarians, Rachel Shows and Kyle Martindale, Rector Randy Alexander and members of our seminarians' Lay Committees. Pictured here are, (left to right, back row) Mike Eaton, Matt Haskin, Mark Fearer, the Rev. Kyle Martindale, and (left to right, front row) Faith Olson, Linda Serabian, Brooke Roberts, Marcus Rarick, Rachel Shows, Rick Glassco, Betty Wanamaker, Rosi Stewart, The Rev. Randy Alexander.

Dear Immanuelites,

What a blessing it has been to serve with and among you these last two years. I cannot believe how quickly the time has flown by! It feels like just yesterday I was being introduced as the new seminarian. Although the time has flown, I am grateful for the amazing opportunities I have had to learn, grow, and share in your faithful ministries here.

Many of you were able to hear me preach and experience me in Sunday morning liturgies. I also spent time with the youth, in particular by leading and teaching the Confirmation class this year. I led a forum on my Holy Land experience, helped with the Christmas pageant, and sang the Exultet last year at Easter Vigil, amidst many other things. One of the best things about serving at Immanuel is that there is never a shortage of ways to be involved, and I certainly discovered that in my time here.

I remember the first time I stood unloading pumpkins outside on a relatively warm October day. I stood in the assembly line as one pumpkin after another was passed on to me, and then I would pass it to the next person. It was exhausting work, and I have never done anything like it! As I passed on the pumpkins, one person to the next, feeling the sweat start to pour, Father Randy yelled over from another assembly line, "Hey Rachel, welcome to Immanuel!" It was the first time I truly saw the community of Immanuel coming together for God's mission!

One of the best things about Immanuel is the incredible energy around giving to God's glory, particularly of time and talents. It has been wonderful to see how people have continued to step in and work together, even as we moved into the new chapel. As we read in Hebrews 10, "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..." Immanuel is a great example of an encouraging parish. As I leave, I encourage you all to continue working to explore new ways of reaching people, in the name of Jesus. Hospitality is such a key piece of being the Church, in and outside of the church walls. Look for ways to bridge generations, introduce yourself to those you do not recognize (even if they happen to be long term members!) and ask about them, and reach new people by not being afraid to share with them your faith and what Immanuel has to offer. Most importantly, show the world your faith and trust in Christ Jesus by the way you live, speak, and act; I think it is one of the most important things I have learned in my time in Seminary and at Immanuel. We have such an immense gift in the love of God through Jesus Christ that it must be shared with the world!

As I say goodbye for now, I want to thank all of you for your love, support, and prayers, especially in the most recent times of transition. You all have been with me through my working toward my M.Div., preparing for graduation, taking the General Ordination Exams, finding a job, planning for ordination to the transitional diaconate, and getting engaged to my fellow seminarian, James Rickenbaker. I have felt immensely supported by so many, and I would remiss if I did not name those on my lay committee who have patiently walked alongside and guided me these two years: Julien Randolph, Mark Fearer, Rosi Stewart, Brooke Roberts, Marcus Rarick, and Rick Glasco. Thank you!

For those who do not yet know, I will be graduating on May 19, 2016, and getting married two days later. We will follow our wedding with a quick honeymoon to Costa Rica, and upon our return, we'll be moving to Stafford, VA. I begin as the assistant rector at Trinity Episcopal Church in Upperville, VA, on June 1st, and James starts the same day at Aquia Episcopal Church in Stafford. I will welcome any visitors to Upperville, so please don't be a stranger!

I will miss you all as I leave this place! Thank you for the incredible opportunity for me to join in God's mission alongside you all. The Holy Spirit is doing wonderful things at Immanuel; we all just have to be ready and willing to hear God's call and then to jump right in. May God's peace, love, and encouragement be with you all!

Love,

Rachel Shows

NEWS FROM REGION IV:

In my last Associate's Corner article (April 21, 2016), I wrote about Region IV of which Immanuel is a part, along with seven other Episcopal parishes in Alexandria. The designated representatives of laity and clergy from each parish met recently to, among other things, review the financial status for the Region and approve an Outreach Budget for 2016/2017.

The designated Outreach Ministries allocated funds include:

Child & Family Network Program: Established over 30 years ago by concerned mothers whose children had failed kindergarten, the Region designated \$100 to show continuing support for their work.

Church of St. Clement Hypothermia Shelter: A winter shelter operating from January-March, providing an overnight place for men screened through Carpenter's Shelter. The Region continued with a \$1,500 donation to the shelter.

Hunger Free Alexandria: A relatively new initiative response to an April 2014 report highlighting obesity as an issue due to the lack of food. This ecumenical effort spans different denominations and houses of worship in Alexandria. The Region approved \$400 and actively encourages church involvement.

Meade Memorial Bag Lunch Program: This program provides lunch to approx. 50 men 6 days a week. Various Alexandria churches make the bag lunches. Hosting the program has a large impact on utility costs and cleanup. The Region approved continuing the \$2,000 donation for support.

West End Lazarus Ministry: Hosted by Church of the Resurrection since Sept. 2015, this extension of the Lazarus Ministry begun by Christ Church and St. Paul's now ministers to the needy in Alexandria's West End. Operating Thursdays between 3-6 p.m., financial counseling and emergency funds are available to assist residents within the West End region. The region designated \$1,000 for this ministry.

There are other opportunities to support those among us in this City of Alexandria which we could not fund now, but hope to eventually.

If you have questions about any of these initiatives, or wish to get involved in some way to help, please contact me. Thank you.

~ David+

CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES:

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JUNE 26-30: This summer, for the first time, Immanuel will be joining with the congregations of Christ Church and Grace Church for a Vacation Bible School program! This year's theme is "Pilgrimage: Seeking the Kingdom of God." It will run Sunday, June 26 (5-7pm) and Monday to Thursday, June 27-30 (9am to noon) at Grace Church. We will be exploring the medieval church and saints throughout the ages through stories, worship, games, crafts, and lots more fun! VBS is open to campers age 3 – rising 5th graders. Additionally, all ages are invited to join the fun as volunteers. Registration is now open

<https://ccalexvbs.wordpress.com/registration/> or through the (bright yellow) registration on the church website. Childcare will be provided for the members of your family who are too young to be registered for VBS. The nursery will be available during the week of VBS itself. Reimbursement for the registration fees are provided by the parish and can be obtained by contacting John Hogg, Director of Children Youth and Family Ministries, (jhogg@icoh.net).

EYC SPRING LOCK-IN: All youth in the 6th grade and up are invited to join us for this spring's Lock-In, starting at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday June 4 and concluding the following morning. This is an overnight event that always proves to be extraordinary. We will be having a spaghetti dinner, an ice cream social, movies, games, bonfires and generally having a great time together. For the sake of estimating a head count for dinner we are asking for RSVPs to John Hogg (jhogg@icoh.net) or Jeannie Cummins Eisenhour at jceconsulting@comcast.net. If you haven't been able to join us before, please don't let that stop you from joining us now. Everyone is invited and friends are always welcome.

Immanuel Church -on-the-Hill
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and
Schedule of Services



May 22, The First Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15
8:00 a.m., HEI, 10:30 a.m., HEII

May 29, The Second Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 18:20-30; Psalm 96; Galatians 1:1-12; Luke 7:1-10
8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., HEII

June 5, The Third Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 17:17-24; Psalm 146; Galatians 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17
8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., HEII