



# 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



July 21, 2016

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



### Bringing Immanuel's Generations Together Through Storytelling

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill has witnessed immense demographic, technological, and cultural change in recent decades. It often seems our youth speak a different language than previous generations: today's lexicon includes Snapchat streaks, selfies and dubstep. How do we bridge the gap? What do we have in common, and what can we learn from each other despite our differences that will "Bind Us Together, Lord" as one Church?

Immanuel's EYC and Senior Ministry took this challenge to heart. We used the ancient method of oral tradition to bring the generations together in a joint spiritual learning adventure, but incorporated

21st century technology that allowed us to pass on these stories to the entire parish. Storycorps\* is a nationwide initiative enabling Americans to record interviews with each other, either in soundproof recording booths in major cities, or in the comfort of their own homes using smartphones. These interviews are uploaded to the Internet and archived so anyone can listen to them. EYC and Senior Ministry used the Storycorps technology to create our own parish archive of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill stories, memories, and celebrations. We are calling our project "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

On Saturday, June 4th, 2016, nine teams consisting of an EYC member and a long-standing member of the parish came together for a spaghetti dinner. During our meal, each person at the table shared two truths and a lie about themselves, and the others at the dinner table guessed what the lie was. It was a great way to break the ice and learn some interesting facts about each other! After dinner, the teams went to separate rooms and interviewed each other. Each team had a question about their experience at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill that both teammates got a chance to ask and to answer. They then took photos of each other and uploaded their stories to the Storycorps website.

Both youth and adults praised this opportunity to share some deeply personal reflections about Immanuel with another parishioner whom they have not spoken to regularly. Despite a wide range of experiences, the love of their church remained a common thread. They laughed and cried together, and some found new connections they never knew they had: a profound appreciation for the music and worship that Immanuel offers, a longing to share with others the unique sense of community Immanuel provides, and a desire to make a difference, no matter how small, that brings us closer to God.

The stories gathered through Go Tell It on the Mountain will be featured in a special 75th Anniversary webpage on [www.icoh.net](http://www.icoh.net).

*Jeannie Cummins Eisenhour, Vestry Steward for Senior Ministries*

\*For more information about Storycorps, see [www.storycorps.me](http://www.storycorps.me)

## **THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S CORNER:**

Sharing my remarks at the Alexandria Vigil for Orlando on June 15, 2016 at Market Square.

Hello. My name is David Crosby. I'm an Episcopal priest here in Alexandria. A large part of my ministry involves showing up and being present, listening and praying, and serving or speaking out.

I am here tonight, alongside other community faith leaders and city and state officials to add my voice where other voices have been silenced prematurely. We gather to remember those who lost their lives in a mass shooting at a nightclub in Orlando, to stand with the LGBTQ community there as they hurt, grieve, and heal; and also to support the LGBTQ communities here in Northern Virginia, throughout this country, and around the world.

More than two years ago, in front of the courthouse of this city, I spoke at a Valentine's Day action as a Call to Love, in order that friends in my church might have the same opportunity as I have to live and love together with our chosen ones in a faithful, monogamous, lifelong relationship. They are here tonight having celebrated on Monday the anniversary of their marriage in our church.

Tonight I stand before City Hall to add my voice to others who call out for action in support of Humanity. We must, as caring people and houses of faith, stand up to speak out, and to work toward ending the madness of violence in our country against our fellow human beings, especially through the abuse of guns. Now, I am not against guns. But I am for gun safety measures that might curb the devastation that is quickly unleashed using guns that can kill, injure, and maim.

Two promises we make in the Episcopal Church when we initiate someone into the household of God through Holy Baptism are worldly in scope.

One promise is to 'seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves.' As beloved children of God, we are called to witness in gratitude to God's unconditional love, which has made a new way of life possible for us all. So we promise to help those who reject or distort the truth about themselves or others, to see that there is an alternative way to live by loving them, and by allowing them to love themselves and another of their choosing, as the God of Love has loved us all.

Another promise is to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being." We believe it right to acknowledge that God's reign of justice and peace, that is, of

reconciliation, is a reality. Therefore, we promise to demonstrate in ways both great and small what it means to live together as a people restored to unity with God and one another in the name of our Lord.

In those promises, or vows, I have committed myself to honoring and respecting the uniqueness and value of ALL people, whether they be male or female; Straight or LGBTQ; Black, White, Hispanic, or Asian; Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or a non-believer.

I regularly call for prayers for those affected by any kind of violence. And while I believe in the power of prayer to bring comfort amidst pain, and understanding out of confusion, prayer must also be paired together with bold, reasonable, common sense action to change, unless we continue to let hate win. Hate cannot and will not win. Love wins. Love will win. "Love is Love is Love!"

As a Christian, I believe any action or ideology that draws boundaries between individuals, classes, races, genders, sexual identity, and religions is NOT of God.

I believe my baptismal promises and my ordination vows as a priest require I stand here tonight with all of you, but most especially with my LGBTQ brothers and sisters, to support their right to be who they are, and to be with whom they choose to love.

Those same promises and vows also call me, and us, to action. It is time that common sense reforms be enacted to prevent the unnecessary tragic loss of life in this country and this world by firearms. Write your congressional delegate and call your state senator; ask them to reinstate the ban on assault weapons, and to keep those on terrorist watch lists from being able to legally purchase guns. At least, let's honestly discuss what could be done legislatively to help with gun violence prevention. Be counted and be heard. Stand outside the NRA building in Fairfax and be a visible and vocal witness as many did yesterday. But also call for increased funding and action on matters pertaining to mental health care. Above all, what we all can do is to stop blindly blaming people for being different.

When you see injustices in this world, be brave and confront them. Change will not happen unless we demand it! Hope will not die unless we let it! Love must win! Enough is enough!

I hope and pray that the hearts and minds of those who have authority over the laws of our country will work diligently and courageously to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being."

May the gracious and amazing God who loves us, bless us all. Thank you.

**OUR YOUTH DEPART ON THEIR MISSION TRIP TO PHILADELPHIA:** The Diocese of Virginia Youth Mission trip to Philadelphia left Immanuel's parking lot Sunday, July 17<sup>th</sup> with prayer and a blessing. Immanuel's missionaries include Addie Biache, Lily Clausen, Phoebe LaMountain, Corey Wargo-Bergmark, and John Hogg, our Children, Youth & Family Ministry Director.



**AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE REV. GIDEON POLLACH:** I am so excited to share the news that I have been called to be the 16th Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Cold Spring Harbor, NY (<http://stjcs.org/>). Looking forward to working with Jesse Lebus, Nancy Cordes, Steven Finch, Carol Weitner, Adam Waywell and Josie Rosado and the whole team there. Thankful for the work of the Revs. Fred Miller and David Ware and all the clergy who have served the church throughout its history.

The last 8 1/2 years at EHS have been an incredible blessing to me and the friendships I have made with students, faculty and staff have been a source of grace and inspiration. I will carry all my students and their families with me in my prayers as we move on.

I give thanks for the chance to serve in God's mission.

Please keep Sarah Broaddus Pollach and me in your prayers as we prepare to move.

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALEXANDRIA** is currently looking to hire an Assistant for Family Ministries and Evangelism. Initially, this will be a part-time position of 25 hours a week, including Sundays. The Assistant to the Rector will be responsible for the Children's Ministries, including Christian Education; Youth Ministries, including a large and active J2A (Journey to Adulthood) program; Evangelism and Newcomer Ministries. Those interested should send a letter of introduction and a resume to Amy Medrick at [Parish.Administrator@gracealex.org](mailto:Parish.Administrator@gracealex.org) or contact her at [703.549.1980](tel:703.549.1980).

**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](http://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).



**A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER:** We hope that all of you are enjoying your summer and finding rest and relaxation and hopefully some time off. Please remember that the bills at

Immanuel don't take time off so please keep your pledges up to date as much as possible!



July 20, 2016

Dear Friends at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill,

I want to thank you all for your steadfast support of the Haiti Micah Project.

As a Parish, Immanuel has been supportive in so many ways. We are thankful that your Vestry allows us to use the church facilities for meetings and as our business address. We are thankful for the Immanuel parishioners who volunteer so much time and effort to this ministry, especially Pierre Shostal, Martha Shimkin, Jim Snow, Tom Kerns, and Patty Alexander. Immanuel has been a leader in the Diocese of Virginia in supporting cooperative efforts among churches including construction of the newly completed vocational center, financing a new solar energy project, and building the water well and treatment facility. Most importantly, Immanuel parishioners are supporting dozens of children in our Sponsor-a-Child Program, the bedrock of our work.

Last April, we paused to celebrate our ministry and to look at what we've been able to accomplish with God's help and that of our many supporters. In the last decade, we've prepared over a million meals for the hungry, saved lives in our orphanage, helped to educate hundreds, provided safe water at a time of the cholera epidemic, and gave children a refuge and respite from the perils of life on the streets. We are not resting on our laurels because there is so much more to do, but we are simply thankful for this ministry that the Lord has given us. It is a ministry of which Immanuel is a vital part.

I ask you please consider sponsoring a child. While visiting the children in May, we learned that most of the sponsorship money is now needed just to pay the ever increasing costs of food. While any amount is welcome, this year a full sponsorship can be made for \$365 – a dollar a day. In your charitable giving, sponsorship has perhaps the most immediate and direct impact on the children we serve. Please consider sponsorship by making your tax deductible check payable to the "Haiti Micah Project" and mailing it to your parish office or putting it in the Sunday plate. Please write "Sponsor-a-Child" on the memo line.

Please follow us on our website at <http://haiti-micah.org>, and keep the children of Haiti in your prayers. I pray that God will continue to bless you and your loved ones.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph M. Constant".

The Rev. Joseph M. Constant  
President



*Immanuel seniors pause for a photo during May's guided tours of Washington, DC sacred spaces, including the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre and Washington National Cathedral.*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**THE REV. RANDI HICKS ROWE** will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests on Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at Church of the Resurrection on Beauregard Avenue, in Alexandria.

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND SAVE THE DATE** for Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill's New and Newish Member Welcoming reception.

September 18  
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Zabriskie Parish Hall 3606 Seminary Rd.  
Alexandria, VA 22304

Please e-mail [Janice.Corbett77@gmail.com](mailto:Janice.Corbett77@gmail.com) if you plan to attend the Newcomers' Reception.

We look forward to seeing you there!



**PUMPKINS COMING!** Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, when we will hold Mass-on-the-Grass and then take delivery of two truckloads of pumpkins for our annual Pumpkin Patch. Two more trucks will come on successive Wednesdays, October 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Last year's Patch was very successful with a net profit of over \$58,000. These funds make possible our local, regional, and international outreach. This kind of success requires the hard work of the whole parish, so start thinking about what you might do. We'll need volunteers to help unload pumpkins; to help with sales; to bake breads, cookies and other culinary delights; and to coordinate volunteers and undertake the many necessary small tasks. It takes a parish to do it all! More information will be forthcoming in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have questions or want talk about what role you could play, contact us at [pumpkins@icoh.net](mailto:pumpkins@icoh.net). – Jim Wise, Jamie Conrad, and Jim Snow.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Lectionary Readings and  
Schedule of Services



**July 24, The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Hosea 1:2-10, Psalm 85, Colossians 2:6-19, Luke 11:1-13

8:00 a.m., HEI, 10:30 a.m., Holy Baptism and HEII

**July 31, The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

Hosea 11:1-11, Psalm 107:1-9, 43, Colossians 3:1-11, Luke 12:13-21

8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., HEII

**August 7, The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**

Isaiah 1, 10-20; Psalm 50:1-8, 23-24; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40

8:00 a.m., HEI; 10:30 a.m., HEII