



# 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 8, 2016

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

### UPCOMING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT IMMANUEL

#### **This Sunday December 11: Forum Hour: Christmas Families**

The loose plate offering will buy gifts for the 220 people not yet adopted by an Immanuel family, books for all families, and refurbishing/buying bikes. Please make checks to Immanuel, noted Christmas Families.

#### **Christmas Families activities this Sunday; helpers needed:**

**Ingathering of gifts**, presentation at the Altar and blessing at all services.

**Ingathering of used items**: clothing (marked by sizes), toys, books, computers

**Wrapping gifts**. Starting at 10:15 a.m. until 2 pm, Parish Hall. Need all hands on deck!

**Delivery**. Need several cars/vans to be loaded with gifts for delivery Monday morning 8:30 - 10 to Human Services, 2525 Mt Vernon Ave (entrance Mt Ida).

After the 9 am and 11:15 am services and around 1:30 to 2 pm for the gifts that have been wrapped

#### Sunday, December 18: **Two services only:**

7:45 p.m., Holy Eucharist I, Zabriskie Chapel

10:30 a.m., Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist, Immanuel Chapel

#### Wednesday, December 21

6:30 p.m., Blue Christmas Holy Eucharist, Zabriskie Chapel

#### Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m., Christmas Pageant with Holy Eucharist, Immanuel Chapel

10:15 p.m., Prelude music begins for 11 p.m. Eucharist, Immanuel Chapel

11:00 p.m., Festival Holy Eucharist (Midnight Mass), Immanuel Chapel

#### Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Zabriskie Chapel (Note time change, NOT 10:30 a.m.)

NOTE: The Office will be closed from December 26 – January 2.

#### Sunday, January 1, New Year's Day (**One service only**, no 7:45 a.m.)

10:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Zabriskie Chapel

#### Sunday, January 8: **Two services only:**

7:45 p.m., Holy Eucharist I, Zabriskie Chapel

10:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist, Immanuel Chapel

#### Sunday, January 15: **Two services only:**

7:45 p.m., Holy Eucharist I, Zabriskie Chapel

10:30 a.m., Confirmation and Holy Eucharist with our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston.

**On January 22 we return to three services. The Annual Meeting will take place that day in the Parish Hall, following the 9:00 a.m. Eucharist.**

## THE ASSOCIATE'S CORNER

We will offer a Blue Christmas service Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in Zabriskie Chapel.

A Blue Christmas liturgy provides time and space when we can, with others, acknowledge any "blue" feelings we have as Christmas approaches, the reasons for them, and to offer them to God. December 21<sup>st</sup> marks the Winter Solstice when we experience the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Some consider this the "long dark night of the soul" and "the winter of our discontent." During these times, memories of past painful experiences and/or the hurt of present day encounters can be overwhelming. For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult; for others, Christmas Eve, or New Year's Eve, or the beginning of another New Year can be hard to bear.

You may be dealing with the death of a friend or loved one, feel estrangement or separation in a relationship, are trying to cope with the loss of a job, live with a disease or diagnosis that puts a question mark over the future, or any number of other human situations which make parties and joviality difficult to face. We invite those who gather to reflect on the pain, the loneliness, and the sadness they may feel and offer it to God for healing and transformation. We pray there may be hope and comfort in knowing that we are not alone.

We believe that God knows our pain and loves us unconditionally. Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill invites you to join us for a service that remembers that, and offers time for reflection and acceptance, as well as healing and hope in times of darkness.

*Grace & Peace, David+*



The Third Week of Advent begins with "Gaudete Sunday." *Gaudete* means "rejoice" in Latin... The spirit of joy that begins this week comes from the words of Paul, "The Lord is near." This joyful spirit is marked by the third candle of our Advent wreath, which is rose colored...

We prepare this week by feeling the joy. We move through this week feeling a part of the waiting world that rejoices because our longing has prepared us to believe the reign of God is close at hand. And so we consciously ask:

*Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness  
that hinders us from feeling  
the joy and hope which his presence  
will bestow.*



### OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIPPING WITH LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Sunday, December 11,** 5:00 p.m., offered by Virginia Theological Seminary, at Immanuel Chapel. Our Rector, the Rev. Randy Alexander, will be one of the readers.

**Sunday, December 18,** 10:30 a.m., join the Immanuel clergy and choir for a service of Lessons and Carols at Immanuel Chapel. (Note, there will be no 9:00 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. services that morning.)

### OTHER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



**Friday, January 6, 2017, 7:15 p.m.,  
Immanuel Chapel**

**The Feast of the Epiphany with the  
presentation of the Dean's Cross**

The Rt. Rev. James J. Shand, D.D., chairman of the Board of Trustees, and The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D., dean and president of VTS, invite you to The Feast of the Epiphany with the presentation of the Dean's Cross for Servant Leadership to The Rev. Douglas W. Hiza, Joan Hudson, The Most Rev. Paul Kwong (in absentia) and Heather Zdancewicz. A reception will follow the service in the Welcome Center. Admission is free, but registration is required. Please register by January 2, 2017 at [www.vts.edu/epiphany](http://www.vts.edu/epiphany)

**VESTRY ELECTIONS APPROACHING:** Come be part of the dozen members who help shape Immanuel's future! A vestry term is a short three years and brings wonderful opportunity to guide our parish to new growth and deepen our worship and community. Ask any current or past vestry member about this genuinely rewarding experience. We'll be announcing the slate in January and vestry elections will be held at the Annual Meeting on January 22. If you are interested in tossing your hat in the ring, or have any questions, please contact our Senior Warden, Doug Onley, **by January 3**, at [dougandkam@verizon.net](mailto:dougandkam@verizon.net) or 443-248-7885.

**SENIOR MINISTRY NEXT STEPS DIALOGUE, TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017:**

The next Senior Ministry Brown Bag Lunch from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm in the Parish Hall is an opportunity to share feedback on 2016 Senior Ministry activities with the Rector and the Vestry Steward for Senior Ministry. What is working, what could be improved, and what changes would you suggest? How can we increase involvement? What new directions could we explore in 2017? We need your input and ideas! Bring your lunch and a friend: we will supply dessert and beverages. RSVP to [jaddington@icoh.net](mailto:jaddington@icoh.net) or (703) 370-6555.



**IMMANUEL'S MONTHLY SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY** will

meet 17 December, 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 **Compassion**. This month we will read **Luke 6:31-38**, 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](mailto:sbunn8@gmail.com)) or Chrissie Crosby ([cmcfaddencrosby@gmail.com](mailto:cmcfaddencrosby@gmail.com)).

**STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:** As of December 8, we had received 124 pledges for 2017, for a total of \$459,857. Our total last year was almost 200 pledges for around \$560,000. So we are off to a good, strong start, but we have a ways to go. If you have not yet pledged you may do so by completing a pledge card in either narthex and dropping it in the offering plate, or mailing it in to the office, or you may pledge online at [icoh.net](http://icoh.net), following the Stewardship button on the homepage. Please consider prayerfully God's many blessings in your life, and the ways in which you give back from all that you have been given, of your time, your talent, and your treasure, towards the growth of God's Kingdom.



**VALLEY DRIVE COOPERATIVE**

**PRESCHOOL:** Valley Drive Cooperative Preschool is beginning enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year. We are holding a tour for prospective families on

Tuesday, Dec. 13th at 10:30 a.m. If you are interested in touring the school before the annual Open House, please contact [membership@valleydrive.com](mailto:membership@valleydrive.com).

Valley Drive is hosting its annual Open House for prospective families on Thursday, January 12th, at 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. If any Immanuel families are interested in our 2-year-old, 3-year-old or 4-year-old programs they are encouraged to contact [membership@valleydrive.com](mailto:membership@valleydrive.com). Immanuel families get priority enrollment if there is an opening in the class you are interested in, so please mention to membership that you are a member of Immanuel.

**DO YOU EVER SHOP ON AMAZON.COM?**

**WANT TO HELP IMMANUEL AT THE SAME TIME?** If you are planning to buy something from Amazon, and want to help Immanuel in the process, simply access Amazon through our parish webpage, [www.icoh.net](http://www.icoh.net). On our homepage you may simply click the Amazon button and it will take you to the Amazon site. You may then proceed with your purchase as you normally would, and Immanuel will receive a small percentage of the amount of your order.



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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



Lectionary Readings and  
Schedule of Services



**December 11, The Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:4-9; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11  
7:45 a.m., HEI and 9:00 a.m., HE II, Zabriskie Chapel; 11:15 a.m., HEII, Immanuel Chapel

**December 18, The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

7:45 a.m., Holy Eucharist I, Zabriskie Chapel  
Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25  
10:30 a.m., Service of Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist, Immanuel Chapel  
Genesis 2:2b-9, 12-25; Genesis 3:1-22; Isaiah 40:1-11; Isaiah 64:1-9a; Baruch 4:36—5:9; Isaiah 7:1-15; Luke 1:26-38