

THE ALMOND TREE

NEWSLETTER OF IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL



November 2019



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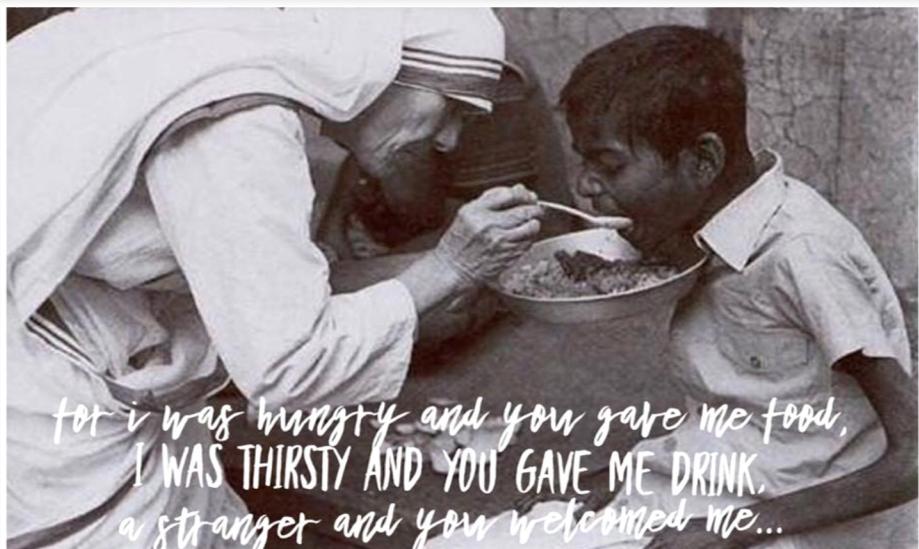
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From The Rector

DRIVING IT HOME: CONNECTING THE GOOD WE ALREADY DO WITH OUR FAITH



I am regularly amazed when I hear of the good things folks at Immanuel are doing in the world. Beyond what we do together as a parish, I hear stories of people who volunteer with Meals on Wheels, or tutor, or mentor youth, or volunteer in a hospital or with the PTA. Some work on political campaigns, some work to make pre-school available, others lead Bible study in a jail, or work with their neighborhood association, or serve meals in homeless shelters. Many talk about recycling and trying to use less energy. Some speak of moving past racial or economic differences. All those actions make a difference!

Occasionally I ask how all that good work has deepened their Christian faith, and I sometimes am met with a blank stare, or a “I hadn’t thought of it that way” look, or sometimes a little excitement at the possibility of connecting the two. It seems we don’t often complete the circle, connecting the good we are already doing in the world with our faith.

How might we begin? It’s all about intentionality, and naming what we are about to do as a prayerful exercise of devotion. It might go something like this:

- † This person I am about to visit is a child of God: what would Jesus have me offer them?
- † This team I am coaching is full of amazing, talented kids; how would my faith have me treat them?
- † This shut-in person to whom I am bringing meals needs more than food. How might I encourage him or her? How might I show God’s love?
- † Do people know that I am a Christian? Do they know I go to Church? Do they know I can hold a confidence?

Our Lord helps us with this intentionality. In Matthew’s Gospel, when Jesus tells his disciples that they had visited him, they were shocked. He replied (using the image of a mythical king addressing his people): “‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ 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 25:35-40).

I think there is opportunity here. There is the chance to enlarge and ennable even the good we are already doing, to place it on a higher plane. We could be doing all of this good not only because it feels right and helps others, but we could be glorifying God in the process. This, in turn, could help us to remember the status of the beloved children of God that we are helping, and our status as a beloved child of God. It should also help us to receive help when we need it.

St. Paul, or a close disciple of his, helps us with this sense of intentionality, as well. “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

Each of these opportunities to make a difference offers us a moment to step away from our own needs, fretting, worries, and preoccupations, to consider the needs of someone else, while ALSO worshiping God. I see evidence of this in parish life all of the time. I am thinking of an emblematic moment, the foot washing on Maundy Thursday. I always encourage those who are washing and those who are being washed to pray for the other as the action is happening; to pray for God's best for them, to give thanks for them, and to be grateful that we are sharing this faith journey with them. Most folks usually hug after the washing is done, and it is amazing to see. It is a little vision of the Kingdom, I would say.

We could be doing all of this good not only because it feels right and helps others, but we could be glorifying God in the process.

So, it's inventory time. Can you think of two or three good things, maybe very little things, which you do regularly for someone else? You're already doing them, so this shouldn't be that hard. Now, the next time you do one, can you do it in light of your faith? Perhaps you can give thanks for the person in front of you, or for the ability you have to make a difference. Perhaps you can be in awe at the gifts and talents you see in the other, which come from God? Perhaps you can pray for the other person daily and intentionally for a week, and then bring them into your prayers at Church on Sunday? There are so many possibilities. . .

Thank God for you all, and all that you do to God's glory, for God's world, and for God's people,

See you in Church,

Randy

THE REV. J. RANDOLPH ALEXANDER
Rector



WHAT'S UP WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN CONGREGATION AT IMMANUEL?

I get variations of this question often, and with good reason. As I said when I made an impromptu presentation at our recent forum about stewardship and budgeting, we have not done a good job communicating about this ministry, and there is some good news to communicate.

First, how did it start? As you know, Immanuel has a long history of being a home to seminarians, including international seminarians. When he first arrived from Kenya as a student, the Rev. Peter Gachira started worshiping with us at Immanuel. After all, he didn't need a car to get here! As he worshiped more with us, Fr. Peter came to encounter more and more Anglicans from Kenya in this area who either didn't have a Church home or didn't have an Anglican home. He felt there was a growing mission field here, and one that Immanuel might engage. Before even meeting Peter, I had often wondered whether Immanuel might be called, in this major international capital area, to welcome intentionally our brother and sister Anglicans from all around the world. This feeling/question seemed to meld with what Peter was feeling, and it started to feel like a possible call from the Holy Spirit, one to which we needed to pay attention.

So, we stepped out in faith. And we got a lot of help. Thanks to pioneering efforts of Doug Onley and Jim

Snow, we received a Mustard Seed grant from the Diocese to help with Fr. Peter's legal expenses related to changing his immigration status. Dean Ian Markham and the Seminary continued to allow Peter to live in the dorm after he had graduated, as an investment in this new outreach. We worked with an international law firm and secured the proper Visa for Peter to be able to work in this country. Again, Doug Onley was centrally involved, and I am so grateful to him, along with the Vestry as a whole.

A little group started to form, meeting in Zabriskie Chapel at 11a.m. on Sunday mornings. It was a slower start than any of us might have hoped. Some members belonged to more than one church. Human nature being what it is, there was some conflict and a need to sort out the mission. Inevitably, and correctly, questions arose as to what the longer-term goals were, and about the level of financial support from Immanuel. The Wardens and I had some challenging meetings with the members of the international congregation where we all told some truth, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

As a compromise and a way forward, the Vestry in 2019 budgeted a flat, block grant amount of \$10,000 in support for the congregation. The bulk of this was to provide health insurance for Fr. Peter, but still left a bit for support of other expenses. This block grant represents about 1% of our total budget. Beyond this support, though, the congregation itself would have to step up and raise the totality of Peter's salary and related expenses. This felt like a faithful way forward, offered in prayer, that we were honoring both Immanuel and the original call we had felt, and giving the International congregation the chance to step up.

So here's the good news. They have! Their support of this new ministry has more than doubled from last year. Our budget this year calls for the International congregation to raise \$27,555. Tracking that by this point in the year, we would have expected them to raise \$22,962 by the end of October. They actually raised \$21,157, which means they are on track to meet their full budget this year.

What does this mean for Immanuel? Is this an open-ended commitment? Not at all. We will review carefully as part of our budget process whether we renew the block grant at the same level, or at a lower level, or whether it is needed at all. This will be a respectful, faithful conversation between the Vestry and the leaders of the International congregation.

I am remembering Confirmation Sunday in February, when 4 members of the International congregation were confirmed. I am remembering Mass-on-the-Grass, for a couple of years, when our folks have all joined together. Once again the International congregation staffed their own tent at the pumpkin patch, where they sold Kenyan tea and baked goods, the proceeds of which went towards the congregation's expenses. We have named a representative from the International congregation to attend Vestry meetings, and there are other ways we could plan to join together, while also allowing space and time for their distinctive community to continue to form.

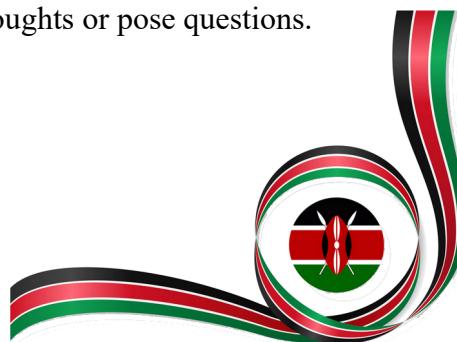
I would welcome questions from any of you about this effort and the ways forward. I'm sure our Wardens, Jim Wise and Keith June, would as well. It has not been without missteps and false starts, but I can assure you it has been attempted in good faith and with a sincere desire to follow what felt like a calling. That stepping out in faith has already borne fruit, as people are worshiping together and growing in faith. As we look to the future, we will explore other ways that the International congregation can be more integrated into other areas of Immanuel.

Please pray for the International congregation, and for discernment of its call and mission, and for Immanuel's support and partnership in this Gospel effort. Again, I would sincerely like to know when you have questions and comments about this or any other Immanuel-related function. Please let me or one of the Wardens know, or other Vestry members, if you would like to share thoughts or pose questions.

God bless,

Randy

**THE REV. J. RANDOLPH ALEXANDER
Rector**





With Glad and Generous Hearts

Your call to Action -- Give “With Glad and Generous Hearts”

Immanuel’s Every Member Pledge campaign has offered moving Stewardship Minute “testimonials,” prayers and Forum presentations to help all of us contribute fully to the strong financial support of this church community.

This is your invitation to pledge now. If you haven’t already, submit your confidential pledge to an usher, to the church office or online at www.icoah.net using the “PLEDGE NOW” button at the top of the home page.

In so many ways, God is always at work in our lives challenging each of us to step up and be counted.

As of Monday, November 25, our Every Member Pledge campaign is approximately 60 percent of the way towards meeting our financial goal and 50 percent of the way to our participation goal.

The Vestry and Every Member Pledge committee will begin reaching out in mid-December to those who have not pledged. Please welcome this outreach with thanksgiving and respond faithfully.

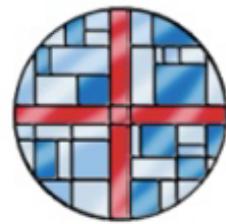
SALUTE TO IMMANUEL’S VETERANS:

Coming in the December 2019 Issue



The Response to our call — found in the October issue of **THE ALMOND TREE** — for names of our veterans was unpredictably overwhelming — and we are truly thankful. As such, we must ensure that **all** names (and additional content received) are included and categorized accordingly; as such, we must postpone the release of the article to our December issue.

Thank you all for your submissions, and your patience.



By the Grace of God

The Vestry and People of
St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
Bethesda, Maryland

request your prayers and presence
at the Celebration of our New Ministry with

The Reverend Patricia Phaneuf Alexander
as Rector

Saturday, December 7, 2019
11 a.m.
St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
5450 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland

+

The Right Reverend Chilton R. Knudsen
Assisting Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington
Presiding

Luncheon follows
Clergy: Red Stoles

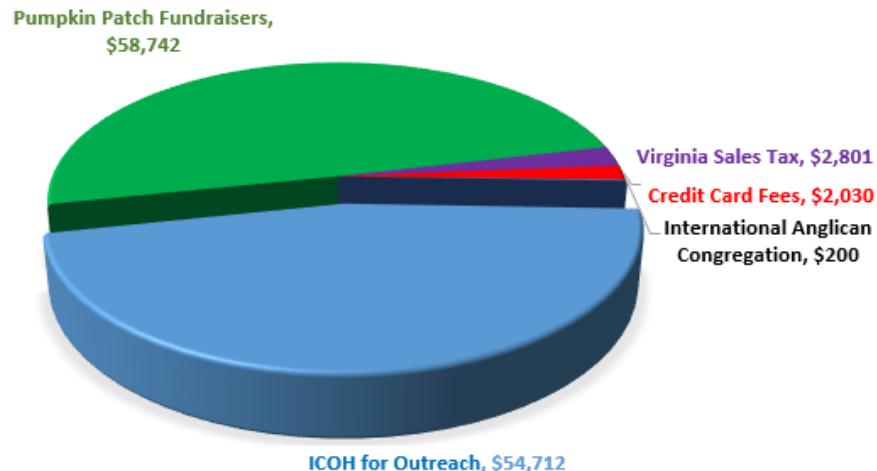
RSVP by December 1
admin@stdunstansbethesda.org
301.229.2960

Results of Immanuel's

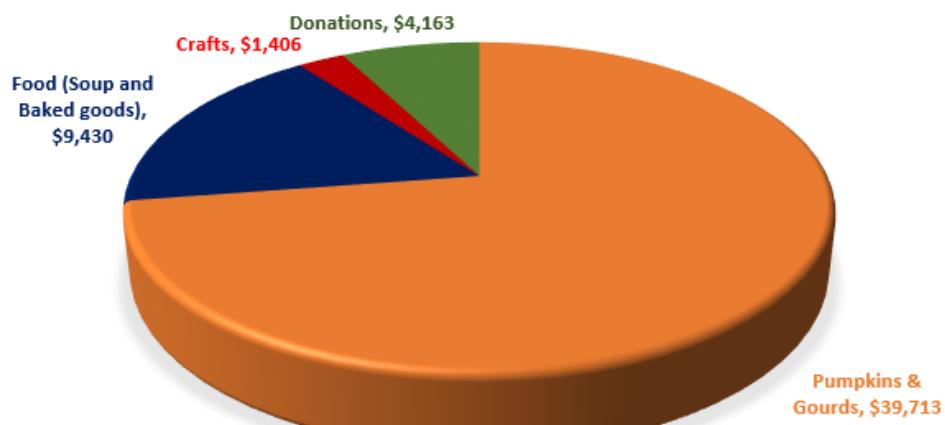


October 2019

PUMPKIN PATCH 2019 DISPOSITION OF GROSS RECEIPTS, TOTAL \$118,484



PUMPKIN PATCH 2019 BREAKOUT OF ICOH INCOME, TOTAL \$54,712



Financials courtesy of Rick Glassco

HILL HAPPENINGS

The Special Event Calendar of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

TOMORROW at 1p.m.- ADVENT WREATH WORKSHOP : Join us in the Parish Hall tomorrow at 1p.m. for a fantastic Advent wreath-making workshop. We will have wreath-making materials available; however, families are asked — if possible — to bring blue ribbon, shears or pruners, and any additional materials you wish to add to your wreath and/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. We'd also be grateful for any donations.



Chalice Training @ 10:15 a.m., Zabriskie Chapel

Forum Hour December 8th: Let's Dream and also Believe -- Living into God's Plan for Immanuel
Planning for 2020 — the year of perfect vision — is underway at Immanuel. What would you like to see Immanuel start doing, stop doing, and continue doing? Bring your best, favorite and inspired ideas to the Forum on December 8, at 10:10 a.m., in Zabriskie Parish Hall.

Pick the small group of your choice and be ready to tackle the topic and share your ideas. Choices are:

1. Our children and youth formation
2. Our adult and senior ministries formation
3. Our caring concern for parishioners and enhancing community-building at Immanuel
4. Our buildings, grounds and our concern for the planet
5. Our outreach mission and funding sources
6. Our worship, music and sharing the Good News

Jeannie Cummins Eisenhour kicks off this planning and brainstorming session that will generate specific ideas for more talk, planning and Vestry consideration at its retreat early next year.



**Aida Studios Winter Recital and Reception:
"CHRISTMAS, CINEMATIC AND T.V. FAVORITES"**
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH AT 3:00P.M.
Zabriskie Chapel
followed by Reception in the Parish Hall
Admission is Free!

Enjoy a wide variety of student performances as they play and sing some of your favorite tunes made famous on the small and silver screens.

Concert is free and open to the public; however, given the reception, reservations are greatly appreciated. Simply send the number in your party attending to Tona Brown, Director, Aia Studios via email at AidaStringsVA@gmail.com.



CHRISTMAS FAMILIES: THANKS to all who signed up last Sunday to make a needy family's Christmas happy. So far, we have 18 parishioners signed up to "adopt" that many families -- 35 children and 20 parents, out of the total of 100 families with more than 300 people hoping for our help. Please take this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children and families in our community who are in need: Signup boards will be available in the church narthexes at all services today and on December 8th. During the week, the boards will be in the Zabriskie Narthex .

Also, we still need used bikes, especially for children aged 3 - 16. You can bring a bicycle to church or let us know by contacting Tom Cuddy (twcuddy@hotmail.com, 703-967-7660) or Dagobert Soergel (ds@dsoergel.com, 703-585-2840) know. Thank you!



Voices of Immanuel in CONCERT



VOICES OF IMMANUEL CONCERT AND PARTY: The singers of Immanuel Church on the Hill, friends, and The Shrine Monters will present a concert of seasonal and classical favorites for the Advent and Christmas Season with a Christmas Carol sing-a-long on **Sunday, December 8, from 2-3:30 p.m. in Zabriskie Chapel.** Following the concert, all are invited to a festive reception in Zabriskie Parish Hall featuring great food and merriment for the entire family.

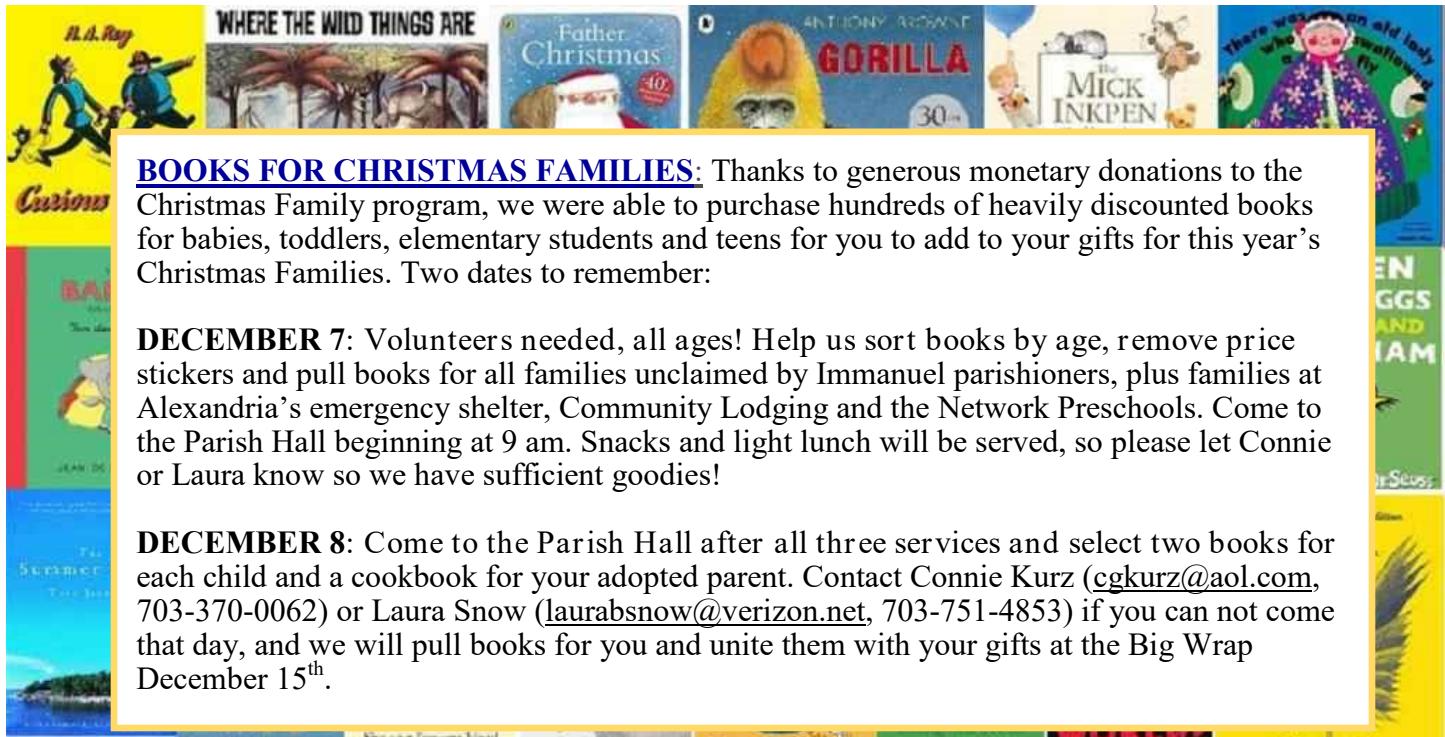


SENIOR MINISTRY SING-A-LONG LUNCHEON AT NOON ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH: Senior Ministry and Fellowship will be hosting a luncheon for Immanuel's seniors (60+) on Wednesday, December 18, beginning at noon in Zabriskie Parish Hall. The merrymaking will include singing our favorite hymns of the season, led by our Director of Music, Dr. Jane Tavernier. Please RSVP for this event, so we know how many lunches to provide (and whether we will need a van from Goodwin House to provide transportation): call the Parish Office at 703-370-6555 and **press 9** when you hear the prompt.

CALLING ALL KIDS! This year Immanuel is hosting a "Children's Christmas Tableau" before a Festival Holy Eucharist on Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m., and we need child and youth volunteers to participate in this presentation of the Christmas Story. Hartley Hobson Wensing, Rachel Wilson, Martha Shimkin, and Ally Powell-Switaj are coordinating but you can contact Hartley at ahobson21@comcast.net or 703-625-1236 or Martha at mkshimkin@gmail.com with any questions

It's going to be a great celebration of our Lord's Incarnation, so we hope you can join!





BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS FAMILIES: Thanks to generous monetary donations to the Christmas Family program, we were able to purchase hundreds of heavily discounted books for babies, toddlers, elementary students and teens for you to add to your gifts for this year's Christmas Families. Two dates to remember:

DECEMBER 7: Volunteers needed, all ages! Help us sort books by age, remove price stickers and pull books for all families unclaimed by Immanuel parishioners, plus families at Alexandria's emergency shelter, Community Lodging and the Network Preschools. Come to the Parish Hall beginning at 9 am. Snacks and light lunch will be served, so please let Connie or Laura know so we have sufficient goodies!

DECEMBER 8: Come to the Parish Hall after all three services and select two books for each child and a cookbook for your adopted parent. Contact Connie Kurz (cgkutz@aol.com, 703-370-0062) or Laura Snow (laurabsnow@verizon.net, 703-751-4853) if you can not come that day, and we will pull books for you and unite them with your gifts at the Big Wrap December 15th.



CALLING ALL 4TH AND 5TH GRADERS FOR DEC. 15!

The PrEYC group of 4th and 5th graders will go to lunch after the 10:30 am Lessons and Carols service, visit the St. Nicholas exhibit for some fun activities in the Welcome Center and return to Zabriskie to help with gift wrapping. As we are a small group, we welcome children close to the ages of 10 - 12 as well. RSVP to Rob Johnson at Rajohnson3@gmail.com by December 13th.

Please send your child with \$10 for lunch, and plan to pick her/him up at 3 pm in the Zabriskie parish hall.



CHRISTMAS GREENS, FLOWERS

and

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC DEDICATIONS

This Christmas season you are invited to make a donation to help offset the cost of our Christmas greens and flowers, and/or the special music at our Christmas Eucharists. To make a memorial or thanksgiving donation for a loved one, or to make a thanksgiving dedication for some blessing, please complete and send this form along with your check to the Parish Office or place it in the alms basin at the offering. Names will be printed in our Christmas bulletins for all donations received by noon on TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH. Please print all names very clearly, or email names to **DEDICATIONS@ICOH.NET**. Any amount is welcome and appreciated.



GREENS/FLOWERS: \$ _____

Given by:

Phone Number: () _____

In Thanksgiving for:

In Memory of:



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS \$ _____
MUSIC: GENERAL

Given by:

Phone Number: () _____

In Thanksgiving for:

In Memory of:



Christmas Strings Quintet at Immanuel

Please indicate your special gift below with a checkmark .

Strings SPONSOR \$100 Strings PATRON \$200

Given by:

Phone Number: () _____

In Thanksgiving for:

In Memory of:

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

DEDICATIONS@ICOH.NET



Christmas Message and Salute to Immanuel's Veterans
In Our December Issue:

www.jcoh.me

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
3606 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304-5200



Advent and Christmas Eucharists 2019

DECEMBER 8		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	8:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
Holy Eucharist Rite II	9:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
International Anglican Congregation's Holy Eucharist Rite II	11:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
Holy Eucharist Rite II	11:15 a.m.	Immanuel Chapel
DECEMBER 15		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	8:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist Rite II	10:30 a.m.	Immanuel Chapel
International Anglican Congregation's Holy Eucharist Rite II	11:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
DECEMBER 22		
Holy Eucharist Rite I	8:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
Holy Eucharist Rite II with Holy Baptism	10:30 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
International Anglican Congregation Holy Eucharist Rite II	11:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel
DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE		
Children's Christmas Tableau with Festive Holy Eucharist II	5:00 p.m.	Immanuel Chapel
Choral Prelude and Special Music	10:00 p.m.	Immanuel Chapel
Midnight Mass with Holy Eucharist II	10:30 p.m.	Immanuel Chapel
DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY		
Christmas Day Holy Eucharist II	11:00 a.m.	Zabriskie Chapel