



THE ALMOND TREE

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr., Rector
Jennifer Addington, Editor



September 1, 2017

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

A Pastoral Letter from the Rector

Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel:

Like everyone I know, I was saddened and horrified by the events leading up to, occurring during, and following the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville on August 12th. From a Christian perspective, and from a citizen's perspective, there are so many things to condemn, but there is also much to affirm.

A core belief of the three great monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, - is that all human beings are made in the image of God: "in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27). Our Declaration of Independence lists this among the "self-evident" truths, that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

Our Christian faith would tell us that any time any race or ethnicity proclaims itself as superior to another that false proclamation flies in the face of this basic, foundational tenet of our faith. When our Lord was asked who constituted a neighbor deserving of respect and care, He told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), where the unexpected, foreign passer-by, the Samaritan, was the one who stopped to help the man who had been robbed and beaten and left for dead. Jesus then asked those in the crowd who had behaved as a neighbor. They answered, of course, that the Samaritan had. Jesus then commanded them to "go and do likewise."

One of the beautiful aspects of the Christian faith, in particular, is the belief that all, "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:7), may choose to follow Christ and become a Christian. Unlike a tribal, ethnic, or national religion, Christianity is meant to welcome any and all. From the mightiest Kings and Queens to the poorest of the poor, people have found life, light, and salvation in Jesus's words and in the fellowship of believers. We as Christians and followers of Jesus must, then, reject any notion of white supremacy, or the supremacy of any race, as antithetical to our faith. The Epistle to the Hebrews further instructs us to "not to forget to practice hospitality, for by doing so some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2).

I wonder whether we as followers of Jesus have ever really caught hold of the amazing, egalitarian, all-encompassing reach of His invitation and embrace. Can we all set aside our race and ethnicity and other outwardly-defining characteristics, to define ourselves as children of God? That simple, convincing, and convicting truth rings with such authenticity to me, and I think it could speak to all of us in these days, whatever our race or ethnicity. All are made in the image of God, all are our neighbors, and we are called to treat them as such, with care and with respect.

At every Baptism we are asked: "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" And we answer: "I will, with God's help." (*Book of Common Prayer*, page 305). I'm glad that response includes "with God's help." It is so honest in admitting that, left to our own devices, we might quickly pursue our own selfish ways, or ways defined by fear of the other. So often our faith's admonitions to love, justice, forgiveness, and peace can sound rather simplistic or out of touch. This recent national experience may serve to remind us that we are in a universal struggle between good and evil, and that we are always called to examine which side we are supporting.

What we saw in the streets of Charlottesville was evil at work. Evil seeks to tear down, to separate, and to sow fear and hatred. One of the ways that fear has taken root and flourished across the millennia of human history is in the fear and distrust of anyone considered to be different, or other. Perhaps this is an opportune time for each of us, and for all of us, to seek out some folks who are different from us, so that we may be reminded of our essential sameness. We might also benefit from their take on life, and even from their experience of God.

We will be celebrating Homecoming Sunday at Immanuel on September 10th, with a visiting Bishop, Confirmation, and our always-amazing Homecoming potluck lunch. What a vital time to gather as a community, to re-ignite our fellowship, and to renew our individual and collective call to follow Jesus and to work ceaselessly towards the spread of God's Kingdom of love, salvation, justice, and peace. It may often seem like we as individuals can do so little. But when the roughly 1,000 of us who are associated with Immanuel work together, we can be a mighty force for good. This is also a perfect time for each of us to look around and identify someone who might be looking for a Church home, someone who could benefit from our Christian fellowship, and invite them to "come and see" (John 1:39).

I thank God for the witness of our Christian faith, and I thank God for our fellowship at Immanuel.

See you in Church, especially at Homecoming,

Randy

The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.
Rector

HOME COMING, SEPTEMBER 10

10:30—Festival Holy Eucharist with Bishop's Visitation and Confirmation—Immanuel Chapel
The Rt. Rev. J. Neil Alexander, former Bishop of Atlanta and currently Dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South, will be with us. The choir returns, along with special instrumentalists. All of this is followed by the annual Homecoming Potluck lunch in the Parish Hall at Zabriskie. This would be a great time to invite any friends or neighbors who may be looking for a Church home to come join us!!

Our youth class will be Confirmed, but this is also **an opportunity for any adults who have never been Confirmed, or who have never been Received into the Episcopal Church**, to do so. If this interests you, please speak with the Rector, and we will discuss the preparations.

HOME COMING POTLUCK LUNCH: in the Zabriskie Parish Hall, following the 10:30 Holy Eucharist

Parishioners are asked to bring a dish to share that will serve 8-10 people. Categories are listed below (first letter of last name):

A-B: Desserts

C-E: Side dishes: salads, coleslaw, beans,

F-H: Appetizers: cheese & crackers, deviled eggs, vegetable trays, fruit, salsa,

I-Z: Main course dishes: Sliced ham, fried/roasted chicken, sandwiches, casseroles, quiche, chicken/tuna salads, pasta dishes, vegetarian specialties, etc.

Please bring your dishes *and serving utensil* (marked with your name to ensure their return to you) to the kitchen before the service.

Volunteers! Please contact Jim Clausen (james.clausen@verizon.net). Volunteers are needed on Saturday to lay tablecloths and set tables, and on Sunday for acceptance of food, helping serve the dishes, and clean-up.

Immanuel Welcomes New Staff Members

Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel,

As you know, Jennifer Addington will be retiring as Parish Administrator at the end of September, and the Rev. David Crosby recently completed his service as Associate Rector. We have conducted thorough and energetic searches to fill both positions, receiving applications from a wide array of talented individuals. I was aided in these searches by a top-notch committee, and I am deeply grateful for their service. Our conversations were deep, deliberate, and infused with love of God and love for this parish. I thank those who served on this search committee for both positions: Brooke Roberts, Hance Haney, Connie Kurz, Tom Kerns, Susan Gilbertson, Sara Fein, Doug Onley, and our two current Wardens, Tom Hewson and Bill Kilpatrick.

I am pleased to announce the addition of two new staff members at Immanuel. Our new Parish Administrator will be **Aleta Powell**, who brings a strong record of service and leadership in both the corporate and non-profit sectors. She is also a Christian -- in fact, she is an Episcopalian, and she views this new opportunity not just as a job, but as a ministry. Please see a short note from her below.

Our new Assistant Rector is well-known to many at Immanuel. **The Rev. Rachel (Shows) Rickenbaker**, who was with us as a seminarian. Many bonded with Rachel during that time and were very impressed by her budding ministry and faithful presence. She felt called to "toss her hat in the ring" with us during this search, and I am pleased and honored to report that she will be our new Assistant Rector. Among the characteristics we were searching for was someone of a "generous, creedal, orthodox Christian faith, steeped in the Anglican tradition, who would join our team of committed clergy and lay leaders." I believe that describes Rachel very well, indeed. Please see a short note about her below, as well.

Ms. Powell began in the office this week, with a full month of serving with Jennifer Addington in learning the many dimensions of this key function in parish life. The Rev. Rickenbaker's first Sunday with us will be October 1st. Please pray for both of these talented, faithful people as they prepare to join the staff.

Blessings to you all, The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr., Rector

Aleta Powell



Hello Immanuel Church Family! My name is Aleta, and I am very happy to have the opportunity to serve as your new Parish Administrator. I am a Loyola College in Maryland alum with extensive administrative skills; and marketing, corporate development, print publications and website copywriting experience. I was received into the Episcopal Church

in 1992 at the Cathedral Church of the Incarnation, Baltimore and am a member of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross, Dunn Loring.

Finally, as a lifelong Baltimorean who moved to Alexandria last fall, I'm always interested in learning more about this city, so please don't hesitate to share your favorite historic tidbits and recommended cultural gems. I look forward to meeting all of you.



The Rev. Rachel Rickenbaker, with her husband, the Rev. James Rickenbaker

The Rev. Rachel Rickenbaker is excited to return to Immanuel as an Assistant Rector. She is originally from Montgomery, Alabama, but after many years in Virginia, she calls Virginia home. She previously served as Assistant Rector at Trinity

Episcopal Church in Upperville, Virginia.

Her husband James is also a priest in the Diocese, serving at Aquia Church in Stafford, the county where they also reside. Rachel has fond memories of her seminarian years at Immanuel and looks forward to together growing deeper in relationship with Jesus Christ. In her free time, she enjoys reading (audio books during her commute, as of late), running, Jazzercise, singing, and spending time with James and her two kitties.

DEAR PEOPLE OF IMMANUEL: This is a brief broad note that carries immense thanks for the outpouring of love shown to me and Chrissie through bountiful receptions of food, fellowship, remembrances, prayers, well-wishes, and an amazing purse. Your generosity continues to exceed and amaze me! Reading the list of contributors, I see so much grace in each person, couple or family, and I remember stories we made together, recalling our ministries shared, and times that were both great and joyful and hard and sorrowful.

It has been my incredible honor and pleasure to serve with and among you as a priest in this parish church. You have helped mold me further in ministry along the way, loving me always, and guiding me constantly. I learned much because of you, and have been given a glimpse of the kingdom here on earth as God intends it. I take you now in my heart and mind out into different parts of the vineyard, continuing to pray for you all, and giving thanks for you and all you do as beloved people of God.

Thank you for your abundant Grace. Please know you will always have my deepest Gratitude.

In Christ's Love, David Crosby+



SHOW YOUR IMMANUEL PRIDE! Get your Immanuel magnets and mugs! We will have Immanuel car magnets available, for free, at most of our services. Please just ask an usher or the clergy. We

also have a few of the classic Immanuel coffee mugs left, as well.



Pumpkin Patch Signup!

Sign up now to work the Pumpkin Patch this year. Unloading of the trucks happens on October 1st after Mass on the Grass. Starting this Sunday someone will be available after services with a laptop to assist with signing up. Here is a short url to signup. <https://goo.gl/AysCHt>



IMMANUEL MEN'S ANNUAL FISHING TRIP

Ahoy, Gentlemen of Immanuel. As some of you will remember, the annual Immanuel Fishing Trip was cancelled last spring due to severe weather conditions. The date of this year's make-up fishing expedition is Friday, October 6th. As in the past, our fishing boat(s) will be departing that morning at sunup from Deale, Maryland (about one hour from DC/Alexandria). Also as in the past, we'll be gathering the evening before (Thursday, October 5th) at the Herrington Harbour Inn (located nearby the boat launch site) for our traditional "manly meal" and a good night's sleep. For those of you who pre-paid for your hotel room for the Spring outing and who also attend the make-up fishing trip, The Herrington Harbour Inn will apply your payment to the Fall outing. For those planning to car pool, we generally leave the Zabriskie parking lot at about 5:15 p.m. on Thursday and arrive at the Inn well before 7:00 p.m. You should all be back in Alexandria by 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Please let Doug John know by September 17 whether you can join us this Fall. He would particularly encourage those of you who may be new or who, for whatever reason, have not joined us in the past to think about signing on. No experience or particular skill necessary. If you have questions, you can contact Doug by e-mail (djohn@jhenergy.com), phone or in person at Church. His home phone number is 703-751-9238 and his cell is 202-412-2138.



BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY RETURNS!!

Immanuel's monthly Saturday morning Breakfast Bible Study

will start up again on September 21, 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 **Truth and Integrity**. This month we will read **Matthew 15:1-20**, 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 Chrissie Crosby (cmcfaddencrosby@gmail.com).

WORSHIP SERVICES TO RESUME:

Wednesday Evening Eucharist

The Wednesday evening Eucharist will resume on Wednesday, September 13th, at 6:30 p.m. in Zabriskie Chapel.

Sunday Evening Eucharist—The 5 p.m. Sunday evening Eucharist, sponsored by Immanuel, Virginia Theological Seminary, and Episcopal High School, will resume on Sunday, September 10th, in Immanuel Chapel. Come experience this worshipful opportunity to begin a new week, as we experience quiet, different kinds of music, and various ages and experiences.

A LETTER FROM JOHN HOGG

As your Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries (CYF), I am eager to get the coming year underway. Especially this year, when we continue to grow those ministries and program areas that have really come into their own. Sunday School will remain focused on teaching children the lessons of our faith and growing into a community. As we have learned over the years, Sunday School is as much about learning as it is about helping a child build their own community of friends within the Church. That is why this year we will continue to offer fun and interactive ways for children to learn alongside their friends. Our Godly Play ministry will teach scripture but in its own unique and interactive ways that engages children at their level and at their pace. Immanuel's youth group, the EYC, will have another year filled with amazing activities centered around fellowship, leadership, and personal formation. These ministries, when combined with the Acolyte ministry and the growing Children's Choir, offer the children and youth of this parish an incredible place to be who they are and develop his or her relationship with God in their own way.

Then of course, there are the relatively new and exciting additions to the CYF ministries that we began last year. These new additions, the Children's Eucharist and the Family Nights have been well received and attended. Therefore, we will continue to offer both and on their set days. Except for a few special occasions throughout the year, the Children's Eucharist will remain on the First Sunday of each month. For example, our first Children's Eucharist will be on October 8 to avoid conflicting with Pumpkin Sunday on October 1.

Family Nights will remain on the 3rd Sunday of every month from 5:30-7:30 in the Parish Hall of Zabriskie Chapel. This is becoming an important way for members of this congregation to get to know one another outside of worship. A fellow parishioner mentioned that our Family Nights are starting to have the same "vibe" they feel during the annual parish retreat at Shrine Mont. Personally, I take that as a good sign and I am excited and open to finding new ways to encourage this "vibe" for everyone. . Therefore, the goal of Family Nights this year will be to keep the momentum going but with an eye on growing the reach and meaningfulness of this ministry.

This is going to be another year filled with promise and opportunity for Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill. I look forward to seeing you all in the coming year. Please feel free to stop by my office or contact me should you have any questions or want to volunteer your time in any of these great ministries.

Peace

John E. Hogg

Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries

ATTENTION ALL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES. On Sunday, September 10, we will be holding registration for Sunday School, Godly Play, and EYC immediately following the 10:30 Holy Eucharist at Immanuel Chapel.



The Invitations of Advent: Ways to Wait and Prepare

Advent Retreat

December 8-10, 2017

Holy Cross Abbey, Berryville, Virginia

Advent Retreat

The invitation of waiting, with its personal evocations and inherent mystery . . . the call to prepare for the coming of the Lord, with all the inner and outer stirrings that attend that newness . . . the growing darkness, with its time of looking within, and resting in trust and wonder . . . Each year, the season of Advent invites us, both as individuals and as a community, to listen for the calls of this singular time, to prayerfully attend to the many ways that, like Mary, we are called to “make room” for new life, unexpected life.

As a wise writer said about this sacred time in the church year, we are to “Watch with expectation the hope that is within you.” This contemplative Advent retreat, set in the comfortable and evocative Holy Cross Abbey in Berryville, will blend quiet time for reflection, journaling, reflections by the leader, discussion and sharing, optional monastic services, and a closing Communion. It is a perfect way to center, quiet, rest and reflect amidst a busy season. We hope to come away with new ways to think of, and pray into, this season of joy and surprise.

"Mary proceeds—as we must do in life—making her commitment without knowing much about what it will entail or where it will lead. I treasure the story because it forces me to ask: When the mystery of God's love breaks through into my consciousness, do I run from it? Do I ask of it what it cannot answer? Or am I virgin enough to respond from my deepest, truest self and say something new, a 'yes' that will change me forever?"

— Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace*

Our retreat leader will be Nina H. Frost, a vocational counselor and spiritual director in private practice in New York City and Virginia. A frequent speaker at churches, she also designs retreats and workshops that help people integrate Christian spirituality with the ongoing challenges and invitations of their lives. She was formerly the head of Adult Education at Marble Collegiate Church in New York. She has a M.A. in Spiritual Direction from the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, and is a co-author of the book [Soul Mapping: An Imaginative Way to Self-Discovery](#). She is also a founding partner of www.creativecontemplatives.com, a company offering retreats and other spiritual formation resources, and is delighted to be with the ICOH community once again.

The retreat will begin on Friday afternoon, December 8, shortly before the evening meal and will end after the noon meal on Sunday, December 10. For more information on the monastery, see their website <https://www.virginiatrappists.org/about/>.

The \$350.00 registration fee includes all materials, comfortable accommodations, individual rooms each with a bathroom, and all meals. **Following Holy Cross Abbey policy, we may not be able to accommodate retreat reservations received after November 10.**

Two scholarships given in memory of Charles Willis are available; please contact the rector for scholarship assistance. If you receive a scholarship, please complete a registration form and indicate that you have a scholarship. To provide an opportunity for parishioners who have not attended a retreat recently to participate, preference in awarding scholarships will be given to those who have not received a scholarship in the last two years.

Registration is limited to 15 persons; please reserve your space using the form in the *Almond Tree*. If you have questions about retreat logistics, please contact Mary Ann Rehnke, mrehnke@verizon.net or 703-836-7142. Participants needing a ride to the Abbey may contact the retreat carpooling coordinator, Carla Murray, at tigmurray08@gmail.com or 703-751-9241.

**Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
Advent Retreat
Holy Cross Abbey Retreat House
December 8-10, 2017**

1. First person registering for retreat

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

E-mail _____

2. Second person registering for retreat

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Number of registrants _____ x \$350 = _____ Total registration fee

Please make check payable to Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill and label it Advent Retreat. Return this form and your check to the Immanuel Church office, 3606 Seminary Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22304. Please put Advent retreat on the envelope.

If you need to cancel your registration and there is no one on the waiting list who can take your place, Holy Cross Abbey retains the \$50.00 per room deposit. All but \$50.00 of your registration fee would be returned to you.

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



September 3, The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

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

September 10, the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Homecoming Sunday

Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

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

September 17, The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42

8:00 a.m., HEI, 9:00 a.m., HEII; 11:15 a.m., HEII