

THE ALMOND TREE

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL



DECEMBER 2020

ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE





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Enjoy outdoor and virtual services and events this Advent and Christmastide. With a Mr. Grinch book reading and sing-a-long (lyrics are printed in this magazine), a living nativity with drive-by and pedestrian options, and sunset service on Christmas Eve, there's something for everyone! Take a look, and take part in the offerings.



Cover photo: Having performed in several productions, this experienced shepherd prepared to lead a lamb -- who happens to be his sister -- by the hand down the isle of Immanuel chapel. This was her first time participating in a Christmas pageant. Photo courtesy of Wendy J. See story page 16.

From the Assistant Rector

Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel,

The first candle on an Advent Wreath traditionally represents Hope. A quick google search will tell you we, as a worldwide Christianity, disagree somewhat about the other candles, but we're mostly on the same page about the first one. It means Hope. Christians pretty much everywhere begin the season of Advent, the season of waiting on the sweet baby Jesus of Christmas morn, with Hope.

The primary reason for this is that hope and waiting are inextricably linked. In fact, they are literally the same word.

The Hebrew Bible has two words for hope, yakhal (יָכַח) and qavah (קָוָה). Both of these words, used dozens of times in scripture, mean hope, anticipate, wait. The New Testament has the same concept. The greek word for hope, elpis (ἐλπίς) also means expectation or anticipation.

For Christians, to hope is to wait. To wait for God is to have hope.

And it is getting harder to wait during Advent, it's getting harder to carve out time for preparation or for hope.

A very normal Christmas message is one that suggests it's hard because the secular, commercial, Christmas season has clawed its way into other seasons. When did we see the first Santa this year? When did we hear the first Jingle Bells? If you told me July I wouldn't doubt you. I'm certain I can get mad about kitschy Hallmark Christmas if I really tried... but I don't really blame commercial Christmas for my restlessness, or sometimes hopelessness, in Advent.

Seeing Easter Bunny toys in Lent doesn't ruin Lent for me. I don't know why seeing Santa dolls in Advent would ruin Advent.

Advent is hard without any help.

Each year we return to the Sisyphean task of waiting and preparing for something that we know has already taken place. The unending challenge of Advent and Christmas is that we return to a familiar story of God in Christ. We've seen Christmas pageants. We've got Nativity crèches with the holy family, the cows, the donkeys, and very possibly whatever Elf on a Shelf is...

We've done this before. We've heard this story. We know how it ends.

And it ends with joy, and choirs of angels, and sweet baby Jesus.



Why should we spend any time in penitence, reflection, or contemplation? Can't it just be the joyful optimistic frivolity that we see in seasonal TV advertisements?

Well, because Christian hope isn't joyful optimistic frivolity.

Christian hope is waiting. We bear witness to extraordinary miracles and love in Christ, and we bear witness also to work that is unfinished. Our Good News is every bit as much about what God has done as about what God will do.

The happy-sunshine-rainbow-pie-in-the-sky kind of hope is presumably quite marketable, but it doesn't speak to people in need. It doesn't speak to people who are hungry. It doesn't speak to people who are sick. It doesn't speak to people who are mourning or afraid.

Whereas our good news, our Gospel, is absolutely and exactly for the people who are suffering, the people who are in need. Christian hope is a kind of waiting for the world as we have found it to be turned on its head. Christian hope is for the work of God's salvation in Christ to be finished.

I've been a clergy person a very short time and already I've had many people tell me that they don't want to bother me with their problems. I am blessed with a mentor in Father Randy, who assures me that this is a very normal part of ministry. A sadly pervasive problem among the faithful is the sense that what we're all going through is not a big enough deal to take to the minister. Perhaps a more distressing version is those of us who suffer and don't think it's a big enough deal to take to God.

This has been an extremely difficult year for many, if not most, people. There are millions hungry, out of work, or experiencing housing insecurity. Those of us who are blessed with more material security have still experienced unprecedented isolation, anxiety, and disruptions to almost every facet of normal life. Even in more normal years the holiday season brings many burdens to those of us with mental health or substance abuse issues.

There are seemingly limitless reasons why, this year in particular, any one of us might measure ourselves against the happy-sunshine-rainbow hope and find ourselves lacking.

But the kind of hope that is only optimism is not the hope of Advent.

I write to you at the start of this season to ask you to spend some time with the idea that Christian Hope is a kind of choice, a kind of waiting, a kind of expecting the world to get better in ways we can't even imagine from our vantage point. I write to you asking, on behalf of my colleagues Randy and Susan, that you seek a gentler way to measure yourself this Advent season.



We want you to reach out to us, whether or not what you're going through is a big deal. We, your clergy, want you to let us know how we can pray for and support you and your family. We will keep making pastoral calls, and reaching out to people who other people tell us might need something.

We do not seek to saddle you with some expectation that you should check in with your priests! But we want to push back, in general and especially right now, against the sense some have that they aren't important enough to bother the priests.


I've met almost all of you. You're absolutely important. We want to hear from and about you whether or not you sign up as an intercessor, whether or not you signed a pledge card, whether or not you came to outdoor worship. This, in particular, is not the year to feel weird about how you meant to spend more time at the church. This is, rather, the year for all of us to remember that we're a community, that we're a church family, that we are quite simply a church.

If you're reading this... you do belong, and the things you're going through are not somehow in opposition to this season of preparation and hope. The things you're going through are exactly why 2000 years of Christians have needed hope.

The work of Christ is unfinished. The Kingdom of God is very near, and we can build toward it and grow into it, but it is not here yet. So we wait, we hope, we prepare. We also pray, and we stick together, and we love one another as we wait upon the Lord.

And Isaiah, the great prophet of the Advent season, announces the Good News: "Those who wait (hope/qavah הִוָּקֵה) for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." ~Isa 40:31

Yours in Christ,


The Rev. Sam Sheridan
Assistant Rector
and Minister of Children, Youth, and Families



RECYCLING NEWS

RECYCLING CHALLENGE

Thank you, members and friends, for continuing to donate your plastic bags and films to Immanuel’s Recycling Challenge! Your commitment to bringing these recyclables to our collection bins not only keeps those plastics out of our streams, oceans, and bellies of wildlife, but also helps us reach our goal of collecting 500 pounds by Easter. When we reach our goal, Immanuel will receive a Trex bench for our outdoor sacred space.

You are awesome! So far, you have brought 253 pounds to our collection bins — we are half way to our goal!

Remember to continue bringing your plastic bags throughout the holiday season. You are helping to care for God’s creation.

Accepted items: single use plastic grocery or store bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood pellet bags, product wrap, ziplock and other re-sealable bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, plastic mailers, salt bags, and cereal bags. No hard plastics, please.



RECYCLING READ

Confused about the inconsistent rules of what we can or cannot recycle these days? Our confusion has huge consequences. Author Beth Porter provides answers to clear up that confusion and shares great resources about recycling, explaining its complexities, and guiding individual actions needed to strengthen our recycling system. “*Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine: Sorting out the Recycling System*” by Beth Porter is available at most bookstores.

— Kristin Whitman and Denise Freeland



Christmas Memory Lane



**In response to
Aleta's story call, five
Immanuelites -- all of
them parents -- share
their favorite Christmas
memories with us.**

Enjoy!





THE CHRISTMAS FIRE

by Susan Post

Immanuel old-timers will remember the year the Soergel's house caught fire. We were keeping the Christmas Family gifts there at the time and many were ruined. It was, however, a time when the church family, the community, and many others came together to ensure the children we served still had a happy Christmas.

I was on my way to the Soergel's house when I saw the firemen battling the blaze. I stopped at Diversions card shop on the way home. As I was telling the owner, Lindsay Bashore, about it the other shopper there identified herself as a newsperson and immediately called the story in to her station.

They responded rapidly and, with their coverage, the word went out all over the area. Donations poured in and just a few days later we had all the gifts we needed. When we were wrapping the gifts that Sunday, the news people came back to report on what had happened after the fire.

The reporter came up to our 10 year-old daughter Anna (Post) with a microphone and asked her what had happened. Anna responded, "People don't think that miracles happen anymore, but they do."

A true Christmas miracle.



Anna Post around the age of 10



Anna Post today.



1993

Immanuel's nativity used to allow children to dress as any animal. When (my son) Allen was about 4 or 5 he was an alligator, Jamie Byron was a shark, and Jacko Post was a king cobra. That may have been the last year that all animals were invited.

-- Dorothy Kellogg



THE HOLY FAMILY & WISE GUYS:
Jim Kellogg, Frank Martin,
Beverly and Franny Najalko,
Marcia McDonald and Jack
Schibel



PUBLICAN AND HIS WIFE: Tudor and Elaine Davies



HUMPHREY CAMEL puppeteers - 1993
Seminarian The Rev. Jeffrey Packard,
and Duncan McDonald (pageant writer/
director)



GABRIEL AND ANGELS: Susan Dawson, Mary Lou Trace, Dorothy Kellogg, Susan Carter and Jerri Stumpt (From Dorothy K, center above: *As Gabriel the Messenger, I rode down the center isle of Zabriskie Chapel on a bicycle -- to the sound of my then 2-year-old son Allen yelling "That's my Mommy!" from the balcony.*)



HAPPY SHEPHERDS: Fiona McDonald (Marcia McDonald's daughter), Chrissy Davies, (later The. Rev.) Jim Papile, and Terry Arnold

Photos on pages 12-14 courtesy of Dorothy Kellogg




Caroline as “The Star of Bethlehem,” with siblings Isabella and Nicky, as Mary and Joseph.

2015

I wanted to share a memory of the Christmas pageant in 2015: Caroline (then a few months from turning four) signed up to be the Star of Bethlehem--and it turned out that the star “costume” itself had been in use for many (many many) years and was more than a little bit worse for wear. I dedicated myself to sewing, glueing, taping, and otherwise repairing it so it would hold up for one more Christmas Eve celebration. My work paid off, and Caroline shone as she solemnly led the procession into Immanuel Chapel and took her place behind the manger.

-- Katherine M.





I've been enjoying Immanuel's Christmas Eve traditions since marrying Dave in 2006. Although the military hasn't always allowed us to be here, we try to make it when we can.

Christmas Eve 2015- Almost 2-year-old Thomas decided he wanted to be an angel because of the beautiful "buh-er-fly" wings. We lived here at the time, so that was easy.

Christmas Eve 2017- We had just moved from Las Vegas to South Carolina, so we chose to enjoy the holidays away from moving boxes. We were excited for Cora to join in on the tradition! Thomas, our little shepherd, walked his little lamb down the aisle, even though he was severely jet-lagged. I'm pretty sure he fell asleep during that service.

Thanks!

David and Wendy J.



2020 PUMPKIN PATCH REPORT

by Rick Glassco

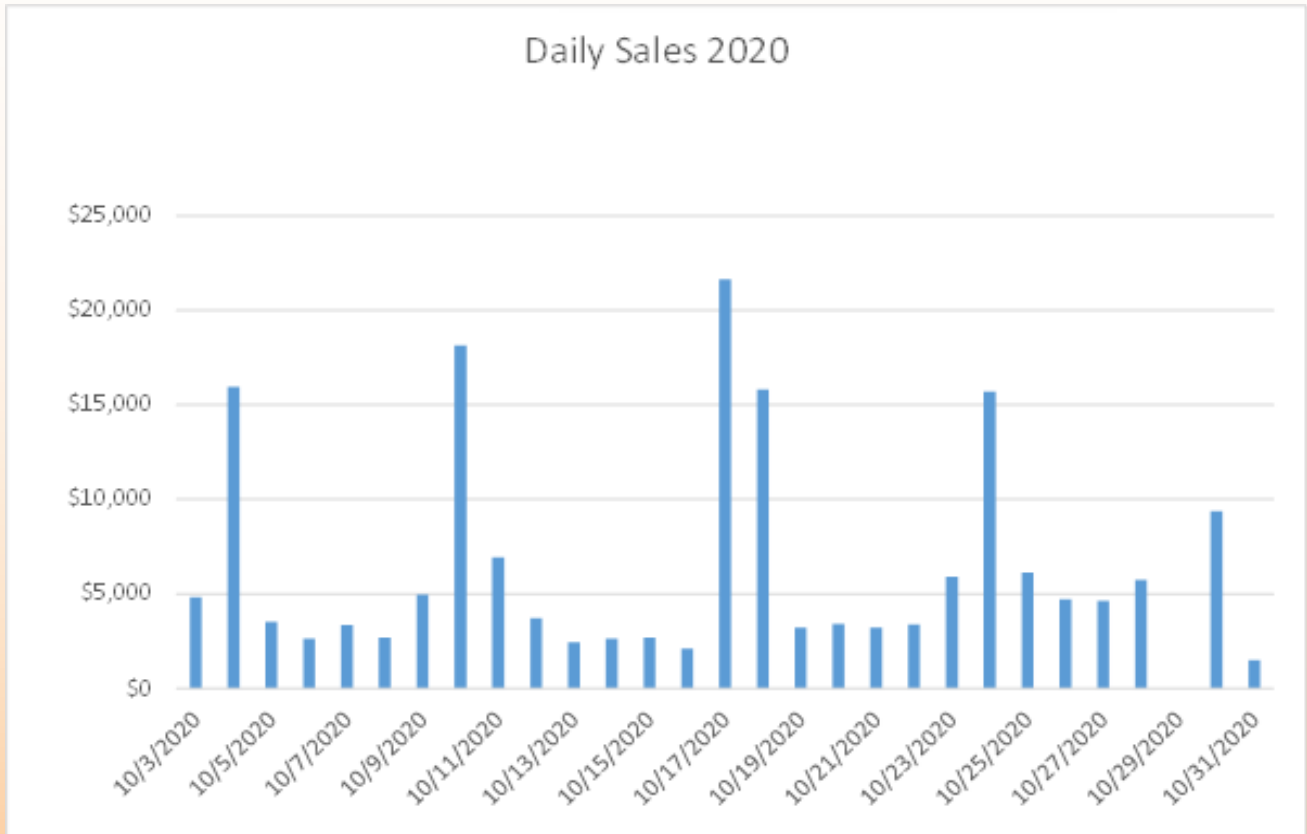
Amid all the surprises the year 2020 has brought, one that stands out for Immanuel parishioners is the staggering success of this year's Pumpkin Patch. Given the very real public health crisis, the Outreach Committee was uncertain whether we should even hold a Patch this year. We were unsure whether customers would come, and we knew that many stalwart volunteers of past years would not be able to volunteer this year. Nevertheless, we decided to repeat our annual Pumpkin Patch for the 27th year, to fulfill community expectations, to involve our parish in a large-scale cooperative effort, to support the Navajo pumpkin growers, and most importantly, to raise money for local, national, and international charities that need funds more than ever.

Many, many folks worked diligently to devise a method for shipping and unloading the pumpkins in a safe manner, and to design the safe operation of the sale, receiving the cachet of certification by the Alexandria Health Department.

We quickly discovered the level of our community's desire for pumpkins - the very first moment pumpkins began coming off the truck, customers flocked into our front yard, eager to buy pumpkins, crafts, and baked goods. At least a half-dozen of them signed up to work at the patch, another first. We broke our daily sales record the next day, broke it again the following weekend, and again the weekend after that! We were blessed with good weather most days. Dedicated preparers of soups, apple crisps, and baked goods, and dedicated sales volunteers were kept hopping throughout the month.

Here is a chart of our daily sales. Clearly the weekends were our best sale days. Every day we sold more than the corresponding day last year. We were closed on 10/29 because of heavy rain, but that left more pumpkins for the last two days. We had to stop selling by noon on Halloween Saturday because we had sold every single good pumpkin we had, plus some of the squirrel-chewed ones.





The following table presents the breakout of sales by category, and the disposition of the money taken in. Immanuel retained the money received from food and craft sales and 40% of the money received from pumpkin (and gourd) sales, less taxes and credit card fees. The amounts retained by Immanuel are highlighted in blue below. The following chart illustrates these figures. The “bottom line” is \$90,048 for outreach in the coming year – by far the most money that has been raised in one year.

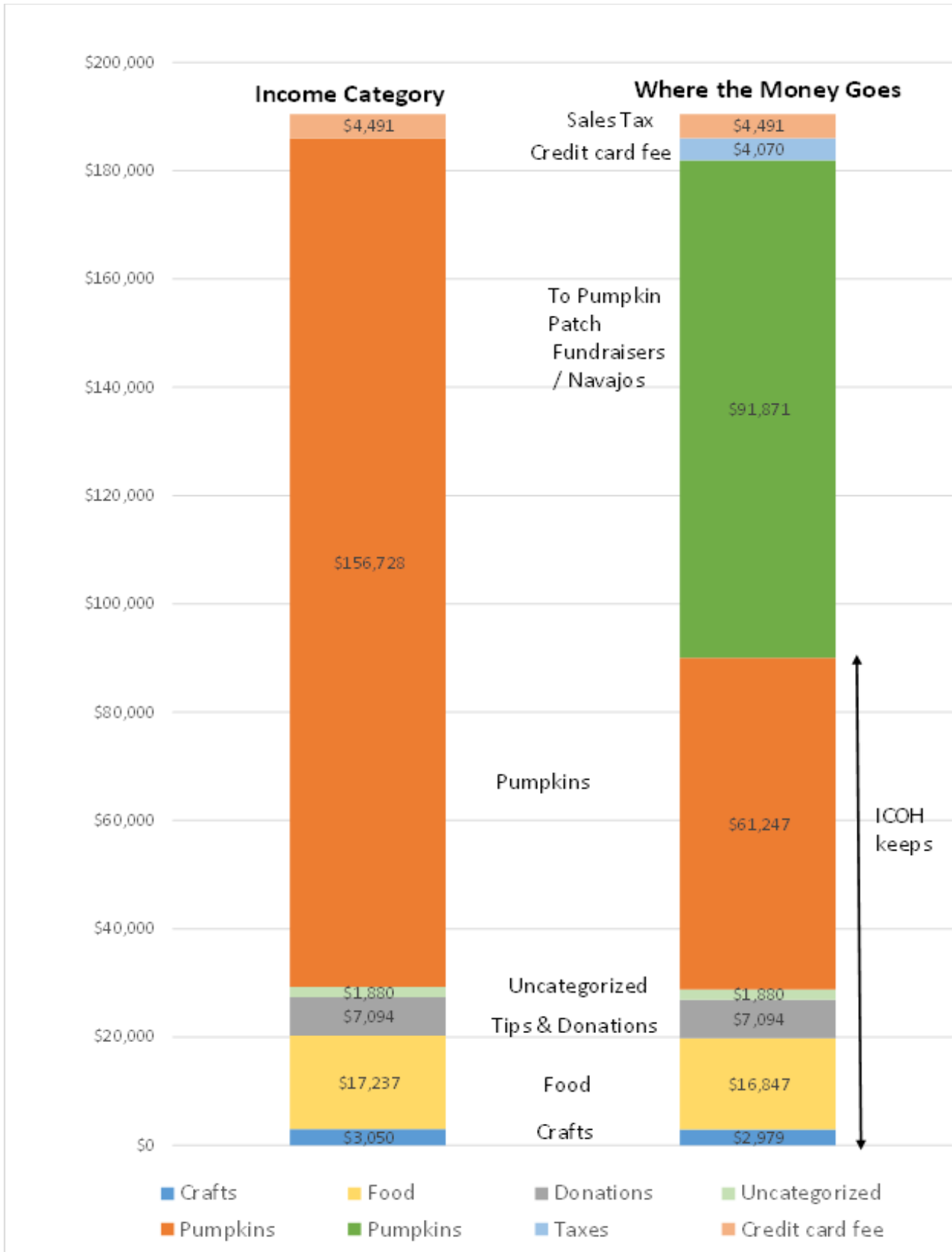
The bottom line figure of \$90,048 does not reflect pumpkin patch expenses, such as publicity, fork lift operation, lawn restoration, apple purchases, plexiglass shields, etc. As bills for these expenses arrive, they must be subtracted from the total income to arrive at a net profit. Nonetheless, we expect the resulting net to be our best ever, helping us to meet the unprecedented needs of this pandemic time.

We have already heard from the pumpkin growers that, while their income was reduced by 30% this year, the efforts of Immanuel and a few other customers will enable them to stay in business – and be a supply of pumpkins in future years.

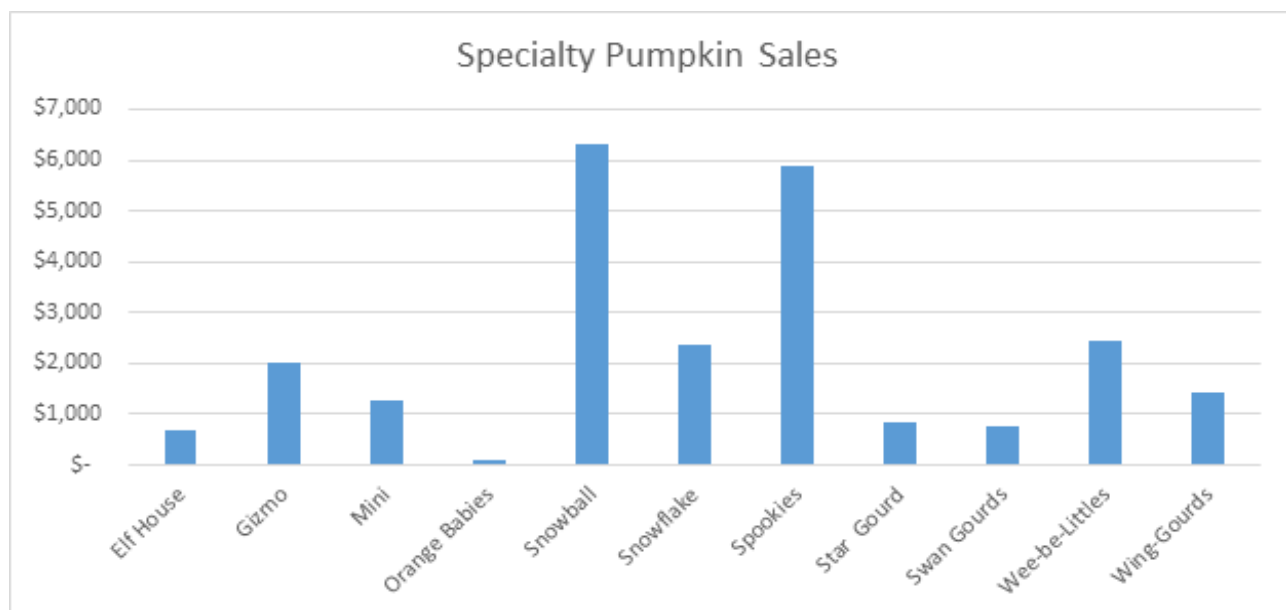
Our heartfelt thanks to the great many of you who stepped up in so many ways to make it possible.

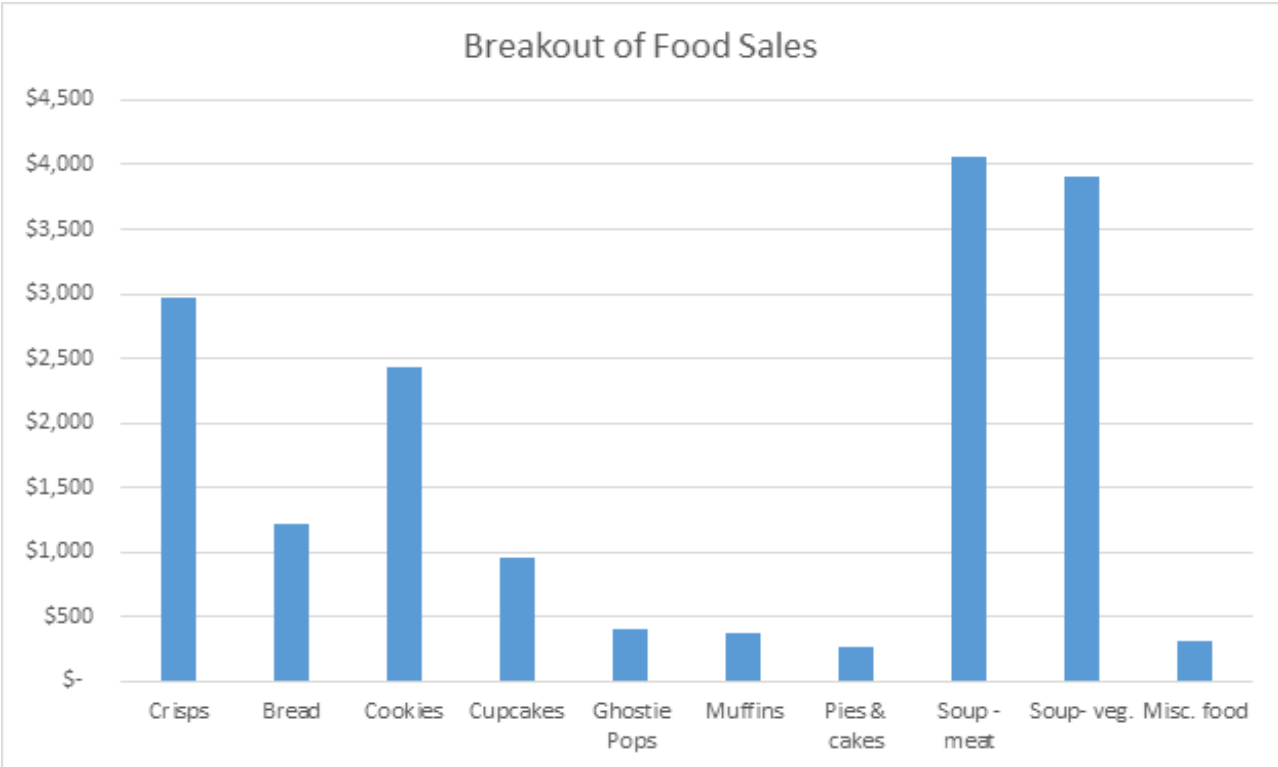
And thanks be to God!

	Income Category	Where the \$\$ go
Craft sales	\$ 3,050	\$ 2,979
Food sales	\$ 17,237	\$ 16,847
Donations & tips	\$ 7,094	\$ 7,094
Non-categorized cash	\$ 1,880	\$ 1,880
Pumpkin sales	\$ 156,728	\$ 61,247
To Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers		\$ 91,871
Credit card fee		\$ 4,070
Sales tax	\$ 4,491	\$ 4,491
Total	\$ 190,480	\$ 190,480
Total ICOH profit		\$ 90,048



Elf House	176	\$	686
Gizmo	410	\$	1,997
Mini	1,754	\$	1,282
Orange Babies	35	\$	102
Snowball	1,701	\$	6,333
Snowflake	826	\$	2,353
Spookies	2,017	\$	5,903
Star Gourd	800	\$	823
Swan Gourds	98	\$	759
Wee-be-Little	2,504	\$	2,445
Wing-Gourds	926	\$	1,434
	11,247	\$	24,117





	# sold	\$
Crisps	218	\$ 2,978
Bread	200	\$ 1,217
Cookies	1,255	\$ 2,433
Cupcakes	974	\$ 951
Ghostie Pops	421	\$ 411
Muffins	189	\$ 368
Pies & cakes	14	\$ 273
Soup - meat	261	\$ 4,068
Soup- veg.	287	\$ 3,904
Misc. food	52	\$ 313
Total	3,871	\$ 16,916

The Pumpkin Patch Page

on
Immanuel's Website
www.Immanuel-on-the-Hill.org/Pumpkin-Patch

IMMANUEL
CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

WELCOME ABOUT US WORSHIP GIVE SERVE LEARN MORE...



Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill's 27th Annual Pumpkin Patch

October 4-31, 2020; 3606 Seminary Rd, Alexandria, VA
HOURS: Mon-Fri 12:00 Noon-6 pm; Weekends 10 am-6 pm
No admission fee

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill hosts its 27th annual Pumpkin Patch fundraiser for charity.

The pumpkin patch offers all sizes of pumpkins from small hand-held "spookies" to very large pumpkins for jack-o-lanterns; prices start at \$8 and go up based on size. Also for sale are homemade soups (including a vegetarian variety), baked goods, and knit wear.

All net profits from the pumpkin patch support the church's outreach activities at the community, regional and international levels. Last year, over 25 charities received support ranging from Alexandria charities working with homelessness and education, to regional anti-poverty programs, to international work including a children's ministry in Haiti, nurses training in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a hospital in Gaza.

"The pumpkin patch is a wonderful ministry for many reasons," says the Rev. Randy Alexander, Rector of Immanuel. "The entire parish is involved. It's our welcoming door to the community, and it gives us the resource to do God's charitable work. It's truly faith in action."

The church works with Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers in North Carolina, a small company which consigns pumpkins to churches and non-profit organizations throughout the country. The pumpkins are sustainably grown on the Navajo Indian Reservation near Farmington, New Mexico, and are shipped

Pumpkin Patch Volunteers

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

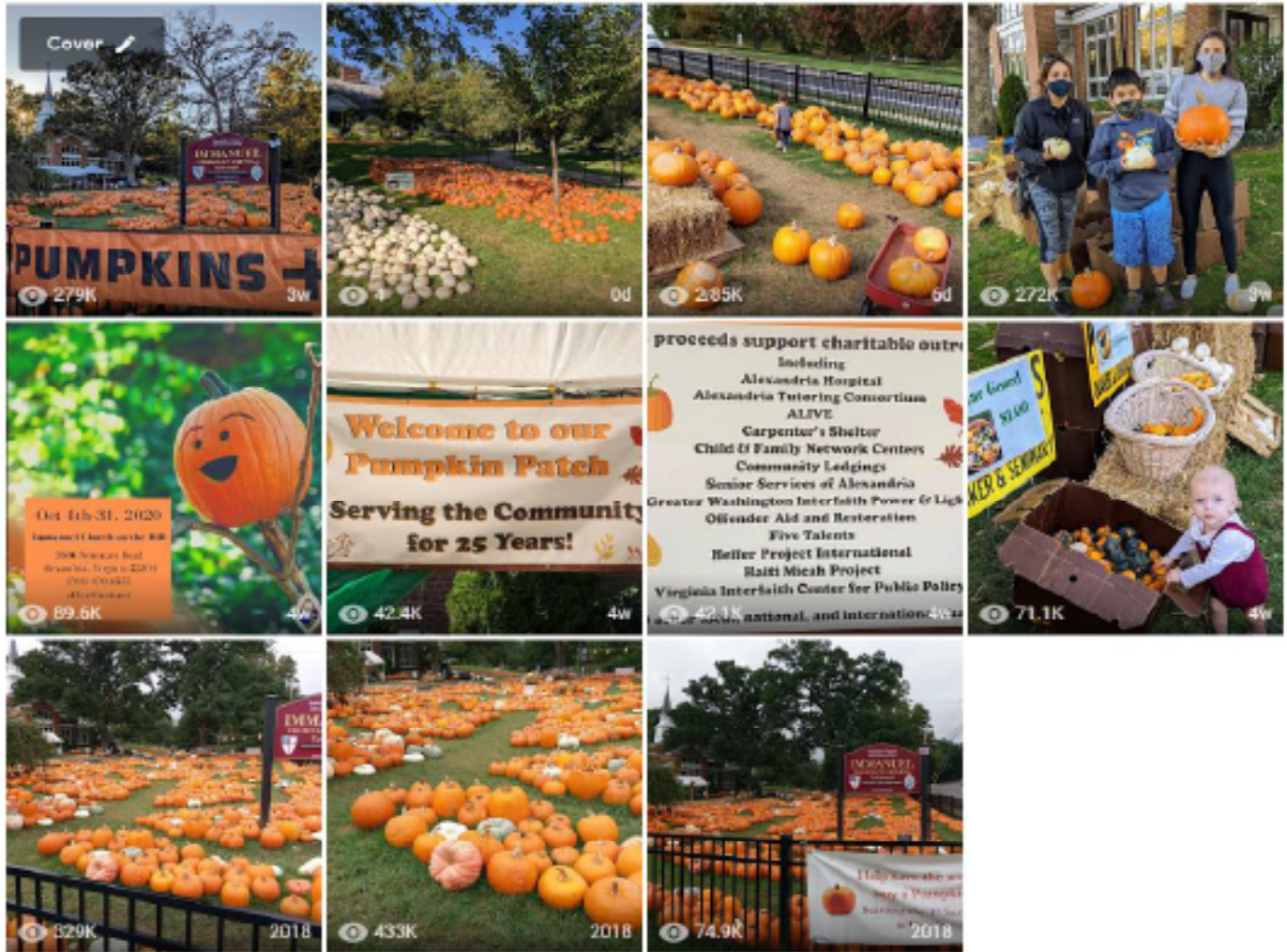


Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill is committed to protecting the health and safety of all visitors to our Pumpkin Patch. To that end, we are following Alexandria Health Department recommendations:

- All visitors and volunteers to the Pumpkin Patch will wear masks at all

Google Business Page Activity

Zabriskie Chapel- Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill Pumpkin Patch





“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Romans 15:13

GIVING BACK TO GOD

THANK YOU to all who have made your 2021 pledge to support the ministry and mission of Immanuel Church-on-the Hill! We are grateful for your generosity and commitment to our community.


As of November 24, 2020, we have received 90 pledges for a pledged amount of \$428,363. More than half of all pledges have increased. We give thanks for the nine new pledges so far this year. By comparison, last year we received a total of 160 pledges representing \$675,000.

We are thankful for all faithful members and pledgers who give back to God and Immanuel in support of its community and ministries. We know you value Immanuel and we give thanks for your thoughtful generosity and dedication.

If you haven't pledged yet, you can return your pledge card through the mail or pledge online.

NOTE: If you have a print copy of this magazine, please find a pledge form and return envelope attached to the back of this page. Thank you.


Would you prefer to mail in your pledge? Print copies of this magazine have a pledge card and self-addressed envelope on the back of this page and page 29. Thank you.

[Login / Sign Up](#)

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill



Alexandria, VA 22304


Amount:	Ex: 100	Give to:	Pledge
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 Card number	MM / YY CVC
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Email	First Name	Last Name
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Note / memo (optional)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover fees? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Setup automated giving? 	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Remember me 

Give \$0.00 

 Credit/Debit  Bank Account

To Mail in your pledge, please remove the attached pledge card and envelope by gently tearing-off at the folded seam of each wafer seal. Thank you for your financial support.

Additional Information

There are many ways to pay your pledge to support the mission and ministry of this parish. Parishioners who want the convenience of automatic payments from their bank account or credit card can arrange that on Immanuel's [Online Giving](#) webpage. Complete the secure Tithely Online Giving form.

Request information

- I/We would like information about using a Donor Advised Fund to fulfill this pledge.
- I/We have planned a future gift for Immanuel through my/our will or estate plan.
- I/We would like information or to speak with someone about making a future, planned estate gift.

Remember, you can submit your confidential pledge at www.icoh.net. Click the "Pledge Now" button on Immanuel's Home Page.



2021 Pledge Card

Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
3606 Seminary Road | Alexandria, VA 22304-5200 | 703-370-6555

We are called by God to respond through joy, faith, and hope to give back to God from the abundance we have been given. We generously support the mission and ministry of this parish and make the following pledge:

Total annual amount of 2021 pledge \$ _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

____ Yes, I would like envelopes. PHONE Mobile _____ Work _____

Would you like your name listed showing those who have pledged a financial commitment? Amounts are never disclosed.

____ Yes, list my/our name as _____

____ No, I/we wish to remain anonymous _____

Use the enclosed addressed envelope to return this pledge card to the church by November 22, 2020.

You can also submit your confidential pledge at www.icoh.net. Click the "Pledge Now" button on Immanuel's Home Page.

Please turn over for additional information

*Gently fold
back and
tear here*

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



WILL HAP

Special Parish Events

December 2nd	7:00 p.m.	Joshua in 3D Bible Study Series	Zoom online
December 5th	5:00 p.m.	Outdoor Reading: How the Grinch Stole Christmas with Homemade Whoville Hat-wearing Sing-a-long Finale	Zabriskie Chapel Grounds
December 6th	10:30 a.m.	Virtual Holy Eucharist followed by Coffee Hour*	Zoom online
December 12th	4-5:30 p.m.	Drive-by Living Nativity	The Grove at VTS
	5:30 - 7p.m.	Christmas Walk to View Living Nativity	The Grove at VTS
December 13th	10:30 a.m.	Lessons and Carols with Virtual Choir followed by Coffee Hour*	Zoom online
December 19th	8:00 a.m.	Breakfast Bible Study	Zoom online
December 20th	10:30 a.m.	Virtual Holy Eucharist followed by Coffee Hour*	Zoom online
December 24th	5:00 p.m.	Sunset Christmas Eve Service <i>(Weather permitting in person and online via Immanuel's Youtube channel)</i>	Immanuel Chapel Patio and Parking Lot
December 25th	11:00 a.m.	Christmas Day Holy Eucharist	Youtube Channel online
December 27th	10:30 a.m.	First Sunday After Christmas Virtual Holy Eucharist followed by Coffee Hour*	Zoom online

* Forum Hours held on select Sundays; please check your weekly e-mail for topics and dates.

penings

JOSHUA IN 3D: A New Social Justice-Oriented Bible Book Study

As our parish begins the work of opening programs and lines of dialogue about Social Justice, one of our beginning steps has been teased in the Old Testament Bible Study which was taking place Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings. We'll continue with the Saturday version of OT Bible study, but Wednesday night is going to be devoted to the book of Joshua—the most violent and problematic book in scripture. How does this relate to Social Justice?!

Well, Fr Sam will follow along L Daniel Hawk's Joshua in 3D, which looks at a dimension of the biblical story that trumpets ancient Israel's nationalism, a further dimension which undercuts that dominant narrative of racial and ethnic superiority, and a third in-depth analysis of how European settlers to North America, early Americans, and Americans today imagine ourselves with this story as our backdrop. We'll flit through race, religion, 14th-19th century politics, and a whole host of other things we all worked very hard not to talk about with our families over Thanksgiving.

Hawk is arguably the English-speaking world's premiere student of Joshua and offers superb exegesis of the biblical text and analysis of the land as divine gift and promise, mass killing, Israel's distinctive attributes, the construction of the Indigenous Other, and sets them within their broader biblical context. He then contrasts those elements with America's narrative of westward expansion, the conviction of America's unique character and destiny, total war and ethnic cleansing, the dehumanization of Native peoples, patriotism and homeland, the idea of the American Dream. As a whole, this book offers Joshua as a biblical resource for reading the American experience, challenging readers to reflect on how conquest shaped America's identity and how it continues to influence American attitudes and actions.

Please join us on Wednesday night at 7pm where we'll give a proper introduction to the fascinating (and horrifying) book of Joshua. We'll discuss, in general, the hard themes of the following weeks so everyone knows what they're getting into AND we'll go over how and when Fr Sam will release some photocopied snippets so that everyone who is interested doesn't have to buy this book until/unless they're really into it. ☐

Join Joshua in 3D Bible/Book Study Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 832 5461 5188 Passcode: 687580



Outdoor Reading of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*



THIS Saturday,

December 5, 2020
@ 5 p.m.

Zabriskie Chapel
Grounds

**Outdoor Reading of The Grinch Who Stole
Christmas**

**Saturday, December 5th 5:00pm - 6:00pm
Zabriskie Chapel Grounds, 3606 Seminary Rd,
Alexandria, VA 22304, USA**

Saturday, December 5th @ 5p.m: The Grinch Who Stole Christmas — Immanuel’s fun activity for everyone!

Bring friends and family, dress warm, have a flashlight, and wear your own Who Hat!

Mr. and Mrs. Grinch will come to Zabriskie’s own Whoville to read the story we know and love. As with the Grinch, this year’s pandemic cannot hold back the story of God’s love for us through Jesus’ birth. Advent and Christmas will go on!

An outdoors, mask-wearing, socially distanced activity on the Zabriskie grounds, Whoville residents will gather in a wide circle with our own Grinch in the center.

December 5th, 5:00 p.m. -- this will last about 45 minutes. Raindate will be announced if needed.

You can make your own Whoville Hat. Click here for [Martha Shimkin’s how-to video!](#)

You can also click here to learn the melody to “[Welcome Christmas](#)” which all will sing at the end of the storytelling. The lyrics are printed at right.

Please come! This is purely fun to get into the Christmas spirit. And please feel free to invite friends, kids, and kids at heart.

Welcome Christmas Song

*Welcome Christmas come this way
Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome Christmas, Christmas day*

*Welcome, welcome fahoo ramus
Welcome, welcome dahoo damus
Christmas day is in our grasp
So long as we have hands to clasp*

*Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome Christmas bring your cheer
Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome all Whos far and near*

*Welcome Christmas, fahoo ramus
Welcome Christmas, dahoo damus
Christmas day will always be
Just so long as we have we*

*Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome Christmas bring your light
Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome Christmas, Christmas day*

*Welcome Christmas, fahoo ramus
Welcome Christmas, dahoo damus
Welcome Christmas while we stand
Heart to heart and hand in hand*

*Fahoo fores dahoo does
Welcome welcome Christmas day
Welcome, welcome Christmas day*

Source: LyricFind



Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill's
*Christmas Walk and
Living Nativity*

Saturday, December 12, 2020
The Grove at Virginia Theological Seminary
3737 Seminary Road (Post Office entrance)

4:30 - 5:30 p.m: visitors in vehicles

5:30 - 7:00 pm: visitors on foot (park in the lot by the Post Office)

Make your family's Christmas merry and bright this year: walk or drive through a dazzling display of sound and light, and herald the long awaited birth of the Christ Child, our Savior.

Mask up, join the celebration and let's bring Joy to the World!

Those who arrive between 4 and 5:30 will enter at the post office in their cars, drive to Wilmer Lane and enter the loop. They will go around the loop in their cars and exit where they entered.

Those who arrive between 5:30 and 7 pm will park in the lot near the Post Office and walk to the courtyard in front of Scott Lounge. They will walk the loop and exit where they entered to get their cars.

We will have volunteers stationed at key points to guide folks.





Lessons and Carols

All are invited to join us online via Immanuel's Youtube channel for a special service of

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 13, 2020 @ 10:30a.m.

To log-in on your computer: Visit our website www.icoh.net, at the top menu select "More", then "**The Almond Tree Quarterly and In Brief**" from the pull-down menu. Click on this bulletin, then click the blue text: [Lessons and Carols NOW](#) to go directly to Immanuel's Youtube channel.



Spiritual Holy Eucharist
at

Sundays @ 10:30 a.m.

LIVE via Zoom online
Posted on [Immanuel's Youtube channel](#)

Immanuel and Zabriskie Chapels

Welcome

VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR
sundays via Zoom
Immediately After the 10:30 a.m. Service
Look for details in each week's E-Blast

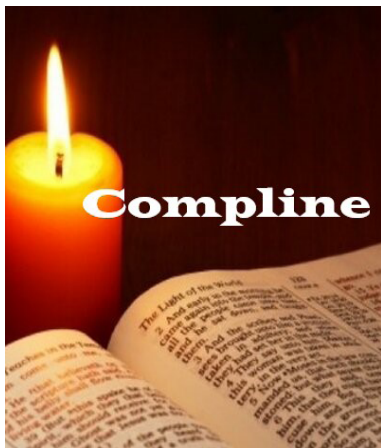
WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYER SERVICE: Please join us for the service of Evening Prayer via Zoom at 5p.m. — for the moment; time may change in the future based on participation. We'll continue the service until the beginning of Advent. Look for a zoom link in your weekly eblast, then join Mother Susan in the middle of the week, just when we need some restoration and renewal.

GALATIANS

Bible Study on Thursdays and Saturdays : Please join the clergy for Bible study each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom. The link for this class will appear in our weekly email and on Immanuel's Facebook page. If you're interested in joining us for the first time — or the first time in a while — you're welcome to do so without any reading or preparing.

If you are unable to attend class on Thursdays, join Father Sam on Saturdays at 10 a.m. for another Bible study via Zoom.

No previous experience or attendance necessary, just bring your questions and your Bible -- or an online version of the Bible, such as Bible Gateway here. Zoom call contact information will be sent out on each Wednesday -- watch for your email!



COMPLINE SERVICE ON FRIDAYS

Join us for Compline on Fridays at 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. Compline is an offering of late evening prayer, sometimes referred to as the “Goodnight Prayer of the Church.”

To participate, look for the “reminder” e-mail each week, containing a clickable link with details on how to join the live broadcast via Zoom or simply listen-in by telephone.

Immanuel's Caregivers and Grief Support Group

Saturdays @ 10:00 AM

Join the Immanuel Caregivers and Grief Support Group, a support group for members and friends who are caring for ailing or elderly loved ones or grieving those who have died. After an organizational meeting, the group decided to continue on Saturdays, 10:00-11:00a.m. through January 30th. The group will be led by clergy or invited and trained leaders who will make space for sharing experiences, offering prayerful and moral support, and sharing resources. We will be looking for signs of new life and God's presence. If you wish to join, please contact Father Randy (ralexander@icoh.net) or Mother Susan (sparsons@icoh.net) for an invitation to join the Zoom-based gathering.

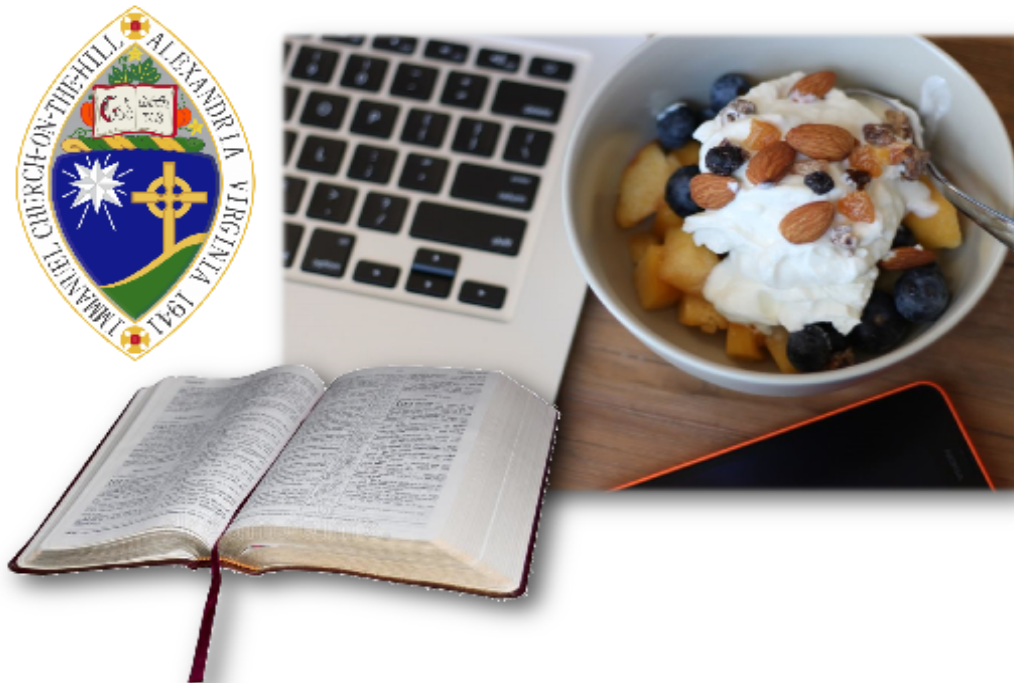


CAN'T FIND SOMETHING AT HOME? If you visited Immanuel's Pumpkin Patch, you may find it in our Lost&Found box. Leave a message with Aleta at (703) 370-6555 and she'll let you know if we have an item with a matching description.

Next week we will donate all unclaimed items to Goodwill so that your unclaimed items have time to make a nice holiday gift for those less fortunate. Thank you.



Breakfast Bible Study via Zoom



BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY on ZOOM: Join us online for Immanuel’s monthly Saturday morning Breakfast Bible Study on Saturday, December 19th — we meet the third Saturday of each month. We meet via Zoom (link and info below) beginning at 8 a.m. Our new theme is **God’s Loving Concern**; we will read a bible passage using the African Model of Reflection. For more information, please contact Chrissie Crosby No prior knowledge or experience in bible study is necessary! We will guide you through the process.

For more information, please visit our website [HERE](#).

Chrissie Crosby is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Breakfast Bible Study Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

Time: This is a recurring meeting 3rd Saturday of month¹

Join Zoom Meeting by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Meeting ID: 959 5450 6553

Password: 027913

follow the prompts.

1 (929) 205-6099,,95954506553#,,#027913# US (New York)

1 (312) 626-6799,,95954506553#,,#027913# US (Chicago)

CHRISTMAS EVE SUNSET HOLY EUCHARIST

December 24, 2020 5:00 p.m., Immanuel Chapel Patio at Virginia Theological Seminary



Photo courtesy of Virginia Theological Seminary's Facebook page



Weather permitting, please join us for a special outdoor Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist at Sunset, 5:00 p.m. broadcast live online from the Immanuel Chapel patio and parking lot. Feel free to bring a flashlight for reading your bulletin and a comfortable lawn chair.

Should the weather prove a challenge, the service will be moved to an online service.

Look for the most up-to-date details in your weekly email.

*Supporting our
neighboring parish...*

THE CHURCH OF SAINT CLEMENT'S

Christmas Tree Stand

November 28th until sold out

Fridays 5 pm - 8 pm

Saturdays 10 am - 6 pm

Sundays 12 pm - 6 pm

1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria

**Masks Required
Credit Cards
Preferred**

REPORT ON CHRISTMAS FAMILIES IN AUGUST 2020 AND A HEADS-UP ON CHRISTMAS FAMILIES 2020



The special collection for Christmas Families in August was held on August 16. Thank you to everyone who responded. Contributions responded to the call emphasizing special needs; they totaled \$7,000, distributed as follows:

- \$4,000 to Human Services (\$3,000 more than last year)
- \$1,000 to Community Lodgings (same as last year)
- \$2,000 to the Micah project to take care of needs when schools start up in Haiti (same as last year)

We gave more to Human Services because giving backpacks filled with school supplies was not feasible this year, and the needs are even greater. Online-only education puts even more stress on the poor than on the well-to-do. Creating the conditions that support children's learning requires not only school supplies, but also the technical infrastructure needed to use the school-supplied laptops, arranging for a quiet place to study in cramped quarters, and picking up free lunch at distribution sites, all while the parents still need to go to work (cleaning cannot be done from home) or lost their job. The thank-you note from Human Services speaks more to these needs.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, many of the families we serve are struggling to make ends meet, and with the generous donation and support of Immanuel on the Hill we have been able to continue saying yes. With many families experiencing a loss or change of income this year due

to the pandemic, we have received an influx of referrals. Specifically, referrals to assist with online learning as the school year began. With the generous contribution from Immanuel we were able to provide gift cards to several families so that their children who were in need of laptops/tablets and other technology were able to begin the school year with materials for a successful start. Families like the Brooks where two brothers, both with autism, were in need of tablets so they could be better homeschooled by their grandmother who lost her job (and her work laptop) due to covid-19. Thank you for helping us fill this need and so many others.

Christmas Families will also be different. This year Human Services will not distribute bags filled with Christmas gifts and books nor can they get bicycles to children. Instead they provide gift cards to the families to brighten the holiday season in these otherwise dark times. Human Services has asked that contributions to their gift card fund be made by Nov. 13, so we did draw on a reserve fund to send a check for \$5,000. We hope that donations from the parish will exceed this amount significantly, so we can re-establish the reserve and send another check to Human Services. Please send your donations at any time between now and December 13 (which would be the day of the special collection in normal times).

Neither things present, nor things to come shall be able to keep us from helping Christ's light to shine more brightly in the world. (With acknowledgments to Romans 8: 38 - 39)

*Dagobert and Lissa Soergel,
and Linda Serabian*

Is Your Photo Current? Let's Update Before It's Printed January 20th



For the first time, we will include a photo directory in the back of the print version of our annual report.



In anticipation of expected high demand, we ask that everyone please review your listing in our online directory to make sure that your data -- and photo -- is current.



Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
3606 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304-5200
www.icoh.net

STORY CALL- LET'S ALL PRAY: *Share a subject, theme, or person that you'd like for us to pray for this coming Lenten season -- specifically, those that don't normally make it into the weekly prayer list. We'll feature a full list in the **March 1st issue** of The Almond Tree Quarterly, allowing all of us to lift your specific concerns in prayer. [Deadline for submissions is February 15th.](#) Send to office@icoh.net or Apowell@icoh.net with "My Easter prayer" in the subject line. You may remain completely anonymous.*

Upcoming quarterly issue 2021:

- MARCH 1ST** -- Immanuel's Ministries and History
-- Debut of new trivia feature "***Did You Know***"
-- Lenten Book Series announced

Submission
Deadline for
March issue is
February 15th