

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"
UPDATE
January 17, 2012

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT CHRIST CHURCH
9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship with the new worship team.
10:00 – FaithXpress, Soul Strength, youth Sunday school and AOL
11:00 – Traditional Style Worship with Choir.
Bring a Friend this week and share the Love and Grace of God!

www.Christchurchamherst.org

716-839-2460

Dr. B.J.'s blog is www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com

Hi Everyone:

How is everyone doing with their readings through the New Testament? I read Mark 12 today and notice that we will begin Paul's epistle to the Romans next Tuesday. I have also noticed that I am getting 40 to 50 hits a day on my blog . . . which means that many of you are reading my daily commentary and observations and several of you have made comments and asked some good questions. I will be posting my introduction to Romans over the weekend and hope to have daily postings for Romans ready for you before I leave on vacation next Tuesday. It has been exciting for me to engage so many of you about various points and sections and stories from the Gospel according to Mark. It is never too late to join us – just pick up with today's reading and start from there. We can always go back and pick up what we missed or just cycle what you missed into next January. Either way, join us at whatever level you can. There has a lot of research in the past few years about keys to personal spiritual growth. Every one of them emphasizes the centrality of Bible study and Bible reading. The more we understand the core stories of our faith the easier it is for us to live deeper into that faith.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 125 – not too bad for the coldest morning of the year and a long holiday weekend. Thanks to all of you who work so hard to help us engage in meaningful worship and fellowship.
2. Special thanks for all who helped with Donald Parson's funeral on Monday. Jan Hill and Peggy Bermudez and all who helped with the luncheon, Elizabeth Holt Curtis and all of the Choir members who were able to join us, Sally Pollard, Dave Wolf, Rachel Vaughan (who put the bulletin and the power point presentation together), Scott Smith (on the sound board), Ted Beachley and Geoff Hill (ushers). Donald's family was profoundly grateful to all of you for making a difficult day a celebration of a life and the grace filled comfort of a Christian community.

3. This Sunday I am continuing to work through Mark. I am focusing on Mark 14:26-31 and Mark 14:66-72 this week. This is the prediction and the story of Peter's denial of Jesus. I often wonder of the subtle and not so subtle ways that I deny that I am a Christ follower. How can I become more "bold"? How can I become more faithful?

There is a Confirmation Orientation Meeting this Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the gathering space in Krafts hall.

4. Through the New Testament in 2012: this week's readings: January 17 – Mark 12; January 18 – Mark 13; January 19 – Mark 14; January 20 – Mark 15; January 23 – Mark 16; January 24 – Romans 1; January 25 – Romans 2; January 26 – Romans 3; January 27 – Romans 4; January 30 – Romans 5; January 31 – Romans 6. Read the chapter, ponder its meaning and join us in Bible Study or on line discussion: drbjthoughts.blogspot.com.

5. In our Prayers: family of Donald Parsons; Carmen Ticconi; Barb McCray; Sandy Cummings; Nicky Sebastiano; Mary Emens; Erik Schmitz; Drew Heitzenrater (had hip replacement last week and is now home); Ed Maker; Louise Barber (now home from the hospital) those looking for work; families in crisis; those who are living in fear and violence and in harm's way around the world.

6. Church Meetings this week:

January 17 – Christian Education and the Membership team are meeting at 7:00

January 19 – Trustees meet at 7:30

7. Financial Planning Workshops continue this week: Below is the remaining schedule. You may sign up for any individual session or all of them by calling Rachel in the Church Office at 839-2460.

January 18 – Basic Budgeting – Cash Flow Strategies (3:00 and 7:00)

January 23 – Accumulation Strategies (3:00 and 7:00)

January 25 – Distribution Strategies (how not to run out of money before you run out of life in retirement) (3:00 and 7:00)

January 29 – Charitable Gifting (1:00)

January 30 – Retirement Planning (3:00 and 7:00)

All workshops are free of charge and open to the public. Our thanks to Patrick and Keith, local businessmen in the Harlem-Kensington-Cleveland Community, for partnering with Christ Church to make these workshops possible.

8. Happy Birthday this week:

January 17 – Kimberly Gabel; Joel Jackson; Bob Snyder; Carol Teresi

January 20 – Nicole Sciolino; Jasen Wilson

January 22 – Marian Steve

January 24 – Jamie Jackson

9. We have no anniversaries listed for this week.

10. Mission News:

1. We have sponsored 11 of the 14 orphans at Pastor Grace's school in Kirimandagi. \$100-110 sends a child to school for the year. If you are interested in sponsoring one of these children contact Rachel in the church office.

2. DVD's of the Hope for Africa Children's choir are available in the café on Sunday mornings. You may have one of the DVDs for a free will offering (you decide how much to give). Proceeds will be used for scholarships for our African friends.

3. Hands for New York – this week's collection (January 22) is **CANNED MEAT** (tuna, spam, chicken, etc.) and next week (Jan 29 -- Pasta and sauce).

4. FAMILY PROMISE: We are helping Crossroads Lutheran Church to host families on January 27. We need help preparing and serving dinner from 4:30 to 7:30 and/or to be present at Crossroads Lutheran from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. If you can help contact Lee Watson or Peggy Bermudez

5. UGANDA PROJECTS UPDATE:

A. Dr BJ will be travelling to Uganda to continue his work with the Nexus Seminary this fall (tentatively September 23-October 9). Is God calling you to journey with us? See me asap for more information.

B. I have three DVD's from last year's Uganda journey. I would be glad to lend them to you.

a. is me teaching a series of lectures on Palestine of Jesus time

b. is Kikyusa graduation

c. is the well project at Kirimandagi

11. The Christ Church Youth Group is offering its services for house cleaning or other 3 hour projects – 3 youth one adult for 3 hours for \$100. Need the basement or garage cleaned? Funds are being raised for future youth projects and journeys. See Tim Reed for details.

12. COMING IN FEBRUARY:

1. I am planning a "Newcomer Orientation" will be February 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. Are you new to Christ Church? Would you like to know more about who we are, what we believe God is calling us to be about and how to become a member and/or to become more involved? Let Rachel or I know and watch for announcement information.

2. February 22 is ASH WEDNESDAY. We will begin our Lenten Suppers and Study at 5:30 on February 22 with an Ash Wednesday service. The service will include the imposition of ashes as a symbol of our repentance and commitment to live more faithful lives in Christ. Watch for details.

13. The Sunday evening (6:00) Bible Study has been indefinitely suspended –watch for future opportunities.

14. Celebration of Discipline is an excellent handbook by Richard Foster on the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life. This book explores everything from fasting and meditation to the disciplines of confession and celebration. Over my years of ministry I have walked through this book with several groups in a combination book study/spiritual laboratory/covenant group format that takes 12 to 14 weeks to complete. This will be something for early spring/summer/fall but am wondering who might be interested. Interested? Drop me a note.

15. I will be taking an 8 day winter break January 24 through the 31. Karen and I are heading to central Florida to hang out with my parents, my brother and my oldest sister (all of whom live in the Lakeland, Florida area). We'll play a little golf (ok, dad and I will play a little golf) walk a beach or two and take some restful down time. Contact the Church Office in case of pastoral emergency and Rachel will connect you to the Pastor who is covering in my absence. Worship on January 29 will be led by the UMW.

I am celebrating, along with most of our country, the contributions and life of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. My wife and I share some odd connections with Dr. King. Karen graduated from seminary from Colgate Rochester Divinity, the same school Dr. King earned his seminary degree. I graduated from seminary from Boston University School of Theology, where Dr. King earned his Doctorate. I am amazed and moved by leaders of his magnitude who can see what no one else can see and who can understand the dynamics of a situation and begin a process of change. It is a process that continues to this very day. His dream of racial equality in our great country is not yet a reality but the path of non violence and progressive change is making a difference. There is a primal fear of those who are different (or appear to be different) from us. The only solution is to build relationships, friendships and covenants across all of the boundaries that divide us. St. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. The reign of God and the Church of Jesus Christ is to be a place where the things that divide cultures and societies can no longer be recognized. Those differences of race (Jew nor Greek) economics (slave nor free) nor gender (male nor female) do not apply in the Church and the Church must be committed to dropping those barriers throughout the cultures and societies in which we find ourselves. Dr. King's dream was not just an American (nor an African American) dream. It was and remains part of the core vision of the in breaking reign of God!

Have a great week and I'll see you when the Church gathers,

BJ Norrix, dreamer, missionary, lead servant

(This e-mail is a communication ministry of the Christ United Methodist Church, Snyder, New York. If you do not wish to receive this e-mail please reply: remove and I will do so).