

**Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"
UPDATE
November 21, 2011**

**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!**

**Christchurchamherst.org
716-839-2460**

Hi Everyone:

I am deeply blessed by the generosity of the Christ Church family. You have demonstrated this generosity in many ways but I have seen it in special and significant ways these past two weeks. First, hosting the Hope for Africa Children's Choir – many of you opened your homes, many of you helped with the meals at church, with transportation and Christ Church collected the largest offering this choir received on its two week journey to New York State: We received an offering of \$1573 for the HUMBLE school last Wednesday evening. THANK YOU. Special appreciation to Rev. Jim Pollard who helped me drive the Choir from Syracuse and back again; to Julie Wrisley who coordinated the housing; to Sally Pollard who coordinated the meals at the church; to Peggy Bermudez who provided lunch at Niagara Falls; to our friends at St. James UMC who hosted the concert last Tuesday evening and to the over 100 of you who came out to support the kids and attend the concert. It was a great event all around!

Secondly, we have been receiving pledges to replace the boilers. As of Sunday we have collected \$29,670 in new pledges for the boilers – this combined with the \$10,000 pledge we had already received puts us only \$330 from matching the \$40,000 matching gift. Just another \$330 and we can order the first of the new boilers and have all of the boilers replaced in the next 18 months. You have responded well and faithfully and, on behalf of the Trustees, again, THANK YOU. Any money that comes in over and above what we need will be used to make our building more energy efficient (there is some insulation that needs to be taken care of, a door that needs replacing, etc.). This will make our facilities more energy efficient, greener, and will save us some costs into the future.

Generosity comes in many forms. We have been generous with our homes, our time, and our resources. I have seen a generosity of spirit and "heart" that is profoundly encouraging as well.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We were 172 in worship this past Sunday. Special appreciation to our co-lay leader, Dick Mugel, for his most excellent Stewardship Moment "Why I give to the church". Thank you also to the 9:00 worship team and the 11:00 choir for their gifts of music in worship.

We welcomed 4 new members to the Christ Church family

At 9:00: Marg and Bill Bauza

At 11:00: Erin and Chris Johnson (and Abby, of course)

2. This Sunday, November 27, is the First Sunday in Advent. Advent was a season invented by the early Church as a time of preparation for the coming celebration of the Birth of Jesus at Christmas. The word Advent means "Arrival" or "Coming" and is meant to remind us of the first coming of Jesus with his birth in Bethlehem. Tradition has the First Sunday of Advent looking at the "Second Advent" that is the Second coming of Christ. My message is from Mark 13:24-37 and the Sermon is titled "You'd Better Watch Out". Jesus is coming . . . best to keep an eye out for him.

3. In our Prayers: Our sympathies and prayers go out to Ron Corsaro and family on the death of his brother Raymond. Ray's funeral was Friday (11/18/2011); Pray for Barbara McCray; Jane Darling (now home from the hospital); Sandy Cummings; Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Erik Schmitz, Carol Terisi and former Pastor Drew Heitzenrater (recovering from back surgery). Remember those who are traveling this week; remember our College students who are nearing final exams; remember our military personnel overseas; remember those looking for work and all families in crisis.

4. I am celebrating the birth of my Grand Nephew, Caleb Michael Aitken, born 11/15/2011 9 pounds 2 ounces and 22 inches to my niece Malinda and her husband Michael Aitken.

5. ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE: Monday, November 28, 2011 at 8:30 p.m. Rev. K. Wayne Butler, District Superintendent will be here to preside. Our evening begins with a meeting of the SPRC at 8:00 and the Church Conference at 8:30. On the agenda, electing Trustees and other officers; reception of a bequest, and other matters pertinent to Annual Church Conference. Everyone is welcome to attend, all members of Christ Church has voice and vote.

6. We are 7 weeks from the end of 2011. I am challenging every Christ Church member and friend to join me in **reading the New Testament** one chapter a day in 2012. Schedule will be printed in the Caller and will be available for your use. I will be posting daily comments on our readings through my blog (www.drjthoughts.blogspot.com) and there will be times to discuss what we are reading through the week. I am also planning to preach from the readings. My hope is that this will help us journey together as Christ followers.

7. Some Christmas giving opportunities:

Operation Christmas Child collection is completed – Thank You for all who participated.

THE GIVING TREE – is up in Crafts Hall – Take as many tags as you wish from the tree and return your **unwrapped** gifts to the tree by December 11. Thank you for making Christmas brighter for families in our community.

CHRISTMAS WISHES to Sgt. Jasen Wilson, write a Christmas card for Jasen and leave it in the box next to the giving tree. The box of cards will be out until December 8.

8. Poinsettias: Worship/Altar Team is selling red and white poinsettias beginning this Sunday (November 27). They will be used to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and cost \$8.00 each. They can be taken home after the Christmas celebrations.

9. Happy Birthday this week:

November 21 – Evelyn Cole

November 22 – Reid Lesswing; Andrea Kearney

November 23 – Jean Kaysser; George Voskerchian

November 24 – Wyatt Hannon

November 26 – Peter Johnston
November 27 – Anne Reed
November 28 – Mary Jo Evans; Elaine Fuller; Barbara Weaver
November 29 – Alicia Bermudez; Sean Johnson

10. Happy Anniversary this week:

November 21 – Geoff and Janet Hill
November 22 – Jim and Laurie Hannon
November 24 – Guy and Sharon Ferrelli; Al and Julie Wrisley
November 28 – Jim and Sally Pollard (30!)

11. **December Special Events on the Calendar**

Sunday **December 4 at 4:00: Valerian Ruminski** will be performing Opera, Jazz and Broadway music for the Christmas season. Tickets are \$10 and are available through Carol Teresi on Sunday morning or through the Church Office. Proceeds benefit the Nickel City Opera and Christ Church Outreach.

Friday, December 9 – “**Christmas Dinner at Mount Vernon and Traditional Carol Sing**” at 5:30. Dinner (Virginia Baked Ham and Roast Turkey; baked sweet potatoes; spiced cranberries, plantation green beans, plum pudding, cherry pie and coffee and tea) and an evening of music from the Amherst High school “the Sweet Sixteens and the Varsity Singers. Tickets are \$18 and proceeds will benefit the CUMC Youth Group.

Saturday, December 10 – “**Angels Aware!**” and “Carols, Cookies and Cocoa!” will be presented by the Amherst Players at Christ Church. Tickets are available through the Amherst Players web site www.amherstplayers.org or calling 791-7529. All are invited to bring canned goods or other nonperishable items for the Youth Group’s food drive.

Sunday December 18 – “**If It Happened Today**” a Christmas Pageant. We will share the story of Christmas with humor and song. Rehearsals are underway – there is a part just for you. See Sally or Lynn Ramsey for more information. Performance will be at 11:00 Sunday morning.

12. Christmas Eve/Day schedule determined

Saturday, December 24 – Traditional Celebration at 10:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 24 – Celebration of Communion at 11:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 25 – Christmas Day – ONE Worship at 10:30 a.m. (carols, stories, worship!)

13. Pastor’s Bible Studies changes coming in January:

- A. The Monday Night Class is moving to Sunday evenings at 6:00 beginning January 8
- B. A New Wednesday morning Class will begin January 4 at 11:00 a.m.

14. Mission/Education Travel Opportunities . . .

- A. I will be returning to Uganda in October 2012. Feel the call of God leading you in this direction? See me
- B. I am considering leading a group to tour the Holy Land in 2013 (February near school break week). Interested? See me.

15. Have you checked out our web site lately? Christchurchamherst.org? Rachel Vaughan has been doing a great job of updating and improving our web presence!. Thank you Rachel.

Advent is the season of anticipation. This is difficult in our instant gratification, gotta have it when I want it, world. We don't want to wait to celebrate the arrival of the Christ child, we want to be into all of the traditions, cookies, celebrations, music, etc. NOW! We are like the daughter in the movie "Post cards from the edge" who when told all she wanted was instant gratification replied: "Instant is not fast enough". The Spiritual life has its high energy moments, and there are seasons on this journey when we are required to go like crazy people. However, most of the Spiritual disciplines and most of the great spiritual teachers of the past help us to focus on the opposite. That is, to experience "slowing". Somehow the crazy pace of December serves more as a distraction from the birth of Jesus than its celebration. My annual challenge to myself (and now to all of you) is to try to slow down. Walk slowly through the month, make spaces and times for calm and quiet reflection. Yes, enjoy the gatherings, yes, enjoy the family times, yes, enjoy the music and foods and events that only happen this time of year. BUT, choose wisely, choose well and walk slowly. Make space to pray, to read the Bible, to have long conversations with friends and, most of all, to worship. We will do our best to slow down . . . anticipate . . . and, when we come to the miracle of the incarnation on Christmas morning . . . we can pause, wonder, adore and worship. I'm looking forward to our Advent Adventure.

See you when the Church gathers:

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, slowiologist

(this e-mail is a communication ministry of the Christ United Methodist Church. If you do not wish to receive this e-mail please reply: remove).