

**Christ United Methodist Church**  
**Snyder, New York**  
***"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"***  
**UPDATE**  
**November 29, 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!**

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

Hi Everyone:

We are now in the season of Advent and preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Unlike Lent, which is a season of penance and sacrifice, Advent is a season of joyful anticipation. It is not a time of doom and gloom but a time to rejoice in the coming of Emmanuel. This is a time to remember, re-experience and relive the profound joy of the coming of the Savior, Jesus, into our lives. Advent is a time to consider the profound truth that is at the heart of Christmas – the mystery and wonder of the Incarnation. I saw a poster when I was a teen that said "for God so loved the world he did not send a sub-committee". When creation was in peril and in need of redemption, God chose to come, be born human and live among us. It is the great mystery and the essential truth of the Christian faith. God became a human being and lived among us. I challenge all of us to make some space this week to ponder the incarnation. One of my mentors once said "All Christian mission, preaching and activity is Incarnational". The Church is collectively called "the Body of Christ." God is incarnate in each of us but was uniquely incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 164. It was great to see many of our college age members back for the Thanksgiving weekend (pray for them as most of them head back to the end of a Semester and Final Exams). We launched the season of advent and lit the first Advent candle. Special appreciation to the praise team at 9:00 and the Choir at 11:00 and to all who participated.

2. Last night we held our Annual Church Conference. Rev. K. Wayne Butler, Niagara Frontier District Superintendent was present and presiding. There were several orders of business. We heard from our Lay Leaders (Peggy Bermudez and Dick Mugel). We approved the Pastoral Support package for 2012. We elected Trustees, SPRC members and other church leaders. We received a bequest from the estate of Mary Louise Coffin (Lou) for \$102,721 for the Christ UMC Endowment Fund. We heard concerns and news from the Annual Conference. It was announced that Ed Fisher has stepped down as the chair of the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (but will remain on the team) and that Roger Johnson will assume the role of chair beginning January 1, 2012. There were 23 present for this gathering.

3. This Sunday is the Second Sunday in Advent. The message is titled "You'd Better Not Pout" and will be taken from Isaiah 40 and Mark 1:1-8. This is also a Communion Sunday.

This 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. There will be holiday snacks and a reception following the concert. Contact Carol Teresi at 839-4373 if you can help out with the event.

4. The Amherst Nursery School is sponsoring a pancake breakfast at Christ Church this Saturday from 7:00 to Noon. Proceeds to benefit the school.

5. In our Prayers: Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Barbara McCray (begins chemotherapy Thursday); Erik Schmitz, Jane Darling (now recovering well at home), Carol Teresi and Drew Heitzenrater (following back surgery); remember those who are serving overseas, those families in crisis, those who face this time of year with sorrow rather than hope.

6. We are 4 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.drbjthoughts.blogspot.com](http://www.drbjthoughts.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:

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. December Special Events on the Calendar

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 now on sale and are available through the Amherst Players web site [www.amherstplayers.org](http://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.

10. Happy Birthday this week:

November 29 – Alicia Bermudez and Sean Johnson  
December 3 – Amy Johnson, Robert Paddock, Hailey Wilsman  
December 4 – Mary Parsons  
December 5 – Jean Ericson  
December 6 – Christian Kennedy, Diane Klenk

11. Happy Anniversary this week

December 2 – Clem and Karen Arrison

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:

The Monday Class has been discontinued effective November 21 and will resume on Sunday evenings as outlined below:

- A. The Monday Night Bible Conversations 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. Karen and I were privileged to have dinner with Malar and Sinnathamby Thevanason this past Sunday evening. They send their greetings and report that they are both well and learning to be retired.

15. The boiler project topped the \$30,000 pledge goal this past week and we stand at nearly \$34,000 in new pledges. This, coupled with the \$10,000 pledge we had exceeds the \$40,000 matching gift we had in hand. The Trustees are hoping that the oldest of the boilers will be replaced as soon as possible (by year's end?) and, as the additional pledged money comes in the other boilers will be replaced. **THANK YOU for exceeding the goal.** We are still receiving pledges as there were other projects on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary drive we would like to have done. For example we would like to paint Crafts Hall and the Café'. There are also some other tightening projects (windows, doors) that will help our facility become more efficient. Thank you, Christ Church, for your great response.

16. FREE ZUMBA – one time only, Thursday, December 8. Bring a new or gently used clean toy for a donation to the St. James food pantry in Buffalo and your Zumba is free!

17. Several of you have asked about sponsoring the orphans at the Blessed Primary School in Kirimandagi, Uganda (Pastor Grace's school). We are putting together a display. Sponsors will get a photo of the orphan they have sponsored. \$100 sends a child to school for a year. Watch for more (and thank you to all who asked about this).

18. UGANDA PHOTO'S and STORIES – Sunday January 8 at 12:30. Come for a soup and bread light lunch. Dr. B.J. will be showing photographs and sharing stories of his October journey to Uganda. Program should take about an hour.

I will be returning to Uganda in October 2012. Feel the call of God leading you in this direction?  
See me

I have been writing a book for the Nexus Seminary graduates. One of the frustrations of working in Uganda is the lack of Bible study materials in the native languages. The predominant language in Uganda is Lugandan. However, most Ugandans have some of three languages: English, Lugandan and their tribal language (there are many dozens of these). There is a Bible translation in Lugandan but it is not very good and was a translation of the King James Bible into Lugandan back in the 1890's. The Uganda Bible Society is working on a new Lugandan translation (from the original Hebrew and Greek) but this project is moving very slowly. Because of this lack my friends at Nexus Seminary are beginning to develop their own materials. All of our course materials are available in English and Lugandan. Rev. Davis Matovu has written some excellent Bible study material that will be available in English and Lugandan and I am writing a Bible Handbook/Theological Sampler that will be printed in English and Lugandan in parallel. A Bible handbook looks at all 66 books of the Bible and attempts to answer some basic background questions: who wrote it, when was it written, what other circumstances may be relevant to its writing, an outline of the book and a brief statement on a key learning from the book. The Theological Sampler is a small dictionary (400+ words) of commonly used words and phrases in Bible and theological study. Our goal is to provide better biblical resources for the rural pastor in Uganda to help them become more effective pastors and leaders and thereby build up the Christian church in Uganda. It is my hope that this book will be translated and published before my return to Uganda in October 2012.

I am praying that all of us are finding ways to "slow" down the season and pause and reflect on God's amazing gift . . . .

See you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, Senior Pastor at Christ Church Snyder

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