

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"
UPDATE
November 8, 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
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Hi Everyone:

In the days following the All Saints celebration, I often find myself remembering the Saints of my life. Those people who challenged, encouraged and nurtured me as a Christ follower. My father and his mother (my grandmother) are the memories of faith in my childhood. Dad, who tried to read the Bible to us kids when we were young and grandma Norrix who, though a very conservative Baptist, was quite expansive and strove to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ as an example to us all. My sister Cheryl, who was responsible for me becoming a Christian. Rev. Earl Sharp who helped me define my call to ministry. College professors, Dr. Farrah, Dr. Chappell, Dr. Williams; Seminary professors: Dr. Brown, Dr. Bettenhausen, Dr. Beck; and all of the writers who have influenced me through the years (C.S. Lewis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Henri Nouwen, John Maxwell, Edwin Freidman, Erwin McManus, Rob Bell, etc.) are listed in my hall of Saints. There were many pastors along the way: Rev. Hollis Hayward who helped me in a confusing time; Rev. Stanley Brown who encouraged me early in my ministry; and all of my covenant partners (Betsy, Garrie, Dave up north; Todd, Mark and Everett; and, my current group, Alan, Aaron and Bill) who have pushed me along the way I have been blessed to be surrounded by many faithful Saints of God in every church I have been blessed to lead as Pastor. The names and locations are way too many to list, but I have been profoundly touched by every day servants of Jesus. My life has been formed and shaped by countless saints, faithful servants of Jesus Christ. Who are the people that shaped your faith? Who are the Saints you have remembered this week? Take time to remember and, if they are still alive, make time this week to say "thank you".

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance this past Sunday was 163 and we remembered our friends and family who have died in the past year. Special appreciation to the candle lighters, the communion stewards and our musicians for a great morning of worship.
2. This Sunday I will be talking about Stewardship in a sermon titled "Living life with open hands". The text is 2 Corinthians 9. Here's the short form: I believe the primary gods (idols) of American culture are Money, Sex, Power and Self. In the ancient world these were often formed into actual idols and worshipped. In the United States we don't worship the god Mammon, or any of Money's former

incarnations, but we serve the “Almighty Dollar” and make the earning and accumulation of wealth as a primary focus of human lives. The sacrifices we make to god “money” often include our sanity, our children and our integrity. The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to have the Lord God Creator of the Universe at the center of our lives – displacing all other rivals. I believe that when we choose to follow Jesus we are encouraged (challenged, dare I say commanded?) to live our lives with open hands. The only way to break the hold of “Almighty Dollar” on our lives is to choose to live lives of gracious generosity . . . that is to live with open hands. When I choose to give and to give in such a way that money’s enticements are diminished, I am living free from slavery to money’s power. There is nothing wrong with having financial resources and there is nothing wrong with the “financial rewards” that come with success – it becomes wrong when our stuff controls us instead of us controlling our stuff. Generosity is the key to breaking that control.

We will be having our Annual Stewardship Campaign in the Spring of 2012.

This is also “**HARVEST SUNDAY**” – bring non perishable food items to church. Food got to food pantries at University Presbyterian Church and Primera Iglesia UMC.

3. We are now receiving pledges for the **NEW BOILER SYSTEM** for the Church. During the 60th anniversary celebration we received a Matching gift of \$40,000. This gift was to be the beginning of a drive to raise \$80,000 to install new, modern, high efficiency boilers – this would provide some savings over time on our utilities (the largest non personnel church budget items are gas and electricity), be much more efficient and should help the building be warmer. The current boilers are 50 years old or older.

The Trustees (and I) would like to see this completed in the near future. We have the \$40,000 in the bank from the Matching Gift Donor. This cash can be put to work as soon as we match that \$40,000. We have some pledges already in hand toward this. We have also learned that the National Fuel Gas is offering rebates for the purchase and installation of new boilers. This could mean an additional \$7,500 on the systems we are considering installing. But we need to hit the \$40,000 pledged to move forward and to get the systems installed.

This Sunday we are kicking off this Boiler Campaign. Pledge cards (for 2 year pledges) will be in the bulletin.

I am planning to commit \$1000 over the next two years to help with this project – that is roughly \$10 a week over 2 years.

What can you do?

Watch for more information. But help us become more green, more efficient and, I suspect, more warm!

4. In our Prayers: Jane Darling (Suburban Hospital); Barbara Burr is now home; Mitch Mooney had cataract surgery on Monday; Barbara McCray waiting test results; Nicky Sabastiano, Mary Emens, Erick Schmidt, Tom McCaffrey and Drew Heitzenrater. Remember those who are in harm’s way; remember those looking for work; remember families in crisis and **today’s local elections**.

5. THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH

TONIGHT: TUESDAY **November 8**: Gifts and Graces Team meets at 6:00 and Worship meets at 7:00

Wednesday **November 9** – Worship Band at 6:00; Choir at 7:30

Thursday **November 10** – Stewardship

Saturday **November 12 – MEDIA SALE** by the Outreach Team – Music, books, movies, games – start your holiday shopping early. Gently used family friendly and priced to sell. Proceeds support the Outreach Ministries of Christ Church.

6. HOPE FOR AFRICA CHILDREN'S CHOIR – On **November 15 and 16** we are hosting the Hope for Africa Children's Choir from the HUMBLE School in the Mukono District in Uganda (east of the capital of Kampala). They are singing two concerts in our area

Tuesday, November 15 – St. James UMC in Niagara Falls at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 16 – Christ UMC Snyder (that's us!) at 7:00

The Concert is free – a "Love Offering" will be taken for the Choir.

The children are between ages 8 and 14 and come from around Uganda.

7. Happy Birthday this week:

November 8 – Joyce Moser; Tammy Mugel

November 10 – Ian Johnson, Dave Mitchell

November 11 – Jeanette Tackett

November 12 – Grace Markello

November 13 – Carol Corsaro, Ian Webber

November 14 – Justin Kennedy

November 15 – Leah Groh

8. Happy Anniversary this week: I have none listed.

9. The Giving Tree – coming November 20 – the tree will be in Crafts Hall next to the café'. Please take as many tags as you wish from the tree, fulfill the wish (es) and return your unwrapped gift(s) to the tree by December 11 to insure delivery for Christmas.

10. More on the Uganda Trip:

A. I have begun to post my Uganda Journal on my Blog – go to www.drjbthoughts.blogspot.com and read of our mission and experiences.

B. I have small drum key chains that I picked up in Kampala, Uganda as a small thank you to all who made donations or agreed to be prayer partners for me on this journey. If I did not catch you Sunday morning, please see me. I am deeply grateful to all who helped to make this mission possible. (If you gave anonymously, I won't tell but come and get a drum too!). :)

C. I am scheduling a time to show pictures and tell stories of this mission trip. Watch for more information. I am leaning toward a Sunday afternoon so that our members who don't drive at night will be able to participate.

D. I have begun to make arrangements for next October's mission. Is God calling you to join me? See me for more information.

11. December Special Events on the Calendar

Sunday December 4 at 4:30: **Valerian Ruminski** will be performing Opera, Jazz and Broadway music for the Christmas season. Tickets are \$15 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. Annual Church Conference: November 28 at 8:30 p.m.

This is Christ Church’s Annual Meeting. All members of Christ Church have voice and vote. Our new District Superintendent Rev. K. Wayne Butler will be presiding. We will elect officers, approve the pastoral support line in the church budget, receive a bequest and other business that the Superintendent brings to us. Watch for more information. The SPRC will be meeting with Rev. Butler at 8:00.

13. . I have begun initial inquiries into visiting Israel in February of 2013. This would be a 10 day journey (roughly 8 days in Israel) and would visit the Galilee, Jerusalem and other points of biblical interest. Is this something you would be interested in doing? Cost is roughly \$2500 (still waiting on figures) with some additional money needed if you need a passport and to purchase gifts and other things. I have made this journey 4 times in the past and am hoping to make arrangements for my friend Rev. Davis Matovu from Uganda to join us as well. If you are interested let me know by calling the church office or by responding to this e-mail.

14. Looking to 2012. . .

. . . I am challenging the Christ Church congregation to **read the New Testament together in 2012**. The plan will be to read one chapter a day on week days (taking the weekend off). This will take us through all 261 chapters of the New Testament by the end of the year. I plan to set up some discussion times and will be commenting on the chapter of the day in my blog (drbjthoughts.blogspot.com) and other places. We will have the schedule available after the first of December. The challenge is to choose to do this and to choose to do this together. The more familiar we are with the core story of our faith (the New Testament) the deeper we can go in that faith and in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

15. a unique Mission Opportunity:

One item from my recent journey to Uganda. The Blessed School in Kirimandagi, Uganda, is where the new water well bore hole was dug. The school is run by Pastor Grace and her husband Warren Naphtal. They started this school with the intent of providing primary education for the poorest of the children in their community. They have well over 100 children at the school. Because these are the poorest of the children in the community many of them (28 to be exact) are orphans. Grace and Warren Naphtal have been carrying the school fees for these 28 orphan children so that they can go to school. The school fees for the Blessed Primary school are a modest 100,000 shillings per term – there are three terms per year so roughly 300,000 shillings a year. That is slightly over \$100 US to guarantee an orphan in Kirimandagi the right to attend school.

I split the 28 with my friends from Syracuse so I am looking for 14 of us who would be willing to give \$100 a year to help these kids continue in school. If you are interested . . . see me. I have photos and more information.

Blessings come in many forms. I am constantly amazed at the variety and power of God's blessings and grace in our lives. When I travel (and at other times as well) I keep a journal. The reason is do this is that my memory is faulty and if I can take time every morning and evening to write what I saw, what I did, who I met and what we discussed it helps me remember and to re-experience the journey. I am often surprised when I read my journal because I wrote about things that have completely slipped my mind. These are little blessings of remembering that help to deepen the power of the journey now completed. When I was in Mbale I would rise with the sun (6:45 every morning) and, after my morning prayer and Bible reading, go down the hotel dining room and drink coffee and write in my journal. There were often other people there (politely ignoring me) and occasionally there were other non Africans (aka white people) who were having breakfast and were often staying in the same accommodations. I would look up from my journal and see the other white person – we were not too hard to find or pick out – smile, nod and then wonder what brought them to this part of the world. Where they on business? On mission? Tourists? . . .

Have a great week, everyone,

Bjnorrix, lead servant, missionary, Christ follower

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