

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
“Living Christ’s ways and exploding with love and service”
UPDATE
December 6, 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!

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Hi Everyone:

We are half way through the Advent Sundays and less than three weeks from our celebration of the Feast of the Incarnation (aka Christmas). I get a kick out of all the energy and excitement people have around the observance of Christmas. In our society there are a wide variety of celebrations going on this time of year. Our Jewish friends and neighbors are observing Hanukkah a minor observance celebrating the miracle of the oil during the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem during the time of the Maccabees (circa 167 BC). There are many “pagan” celebrations (pagan from the Latin *paganos* meaning country rural – is a reference to some of the older pre Christian religions that were practiced in Europe. Christianity was an urban movement and the older religious practices survived in the country side: hence pagan.) that note the arrival of the Winter Solstice. In recent years we have added the African American celebration of Kwanza. On top of this diversity, different Christian cultures and groups observe different parts of the Nativity story (many Hispanic cultures, for example, focus on the arrival of the “Three Kings” making January 6 – Epiphany – the bigger celebration than December 25). We could, I suppose, join the now dated Seinfeld craze and celebrate “Festivus” and just admit it is all just one big party to the end of the year anyway. In our “melting pot” American culture, much of this just gets blended together into a “Happy hanakwansolsfestimas”. Unfortunately, some Christians’ discomfort with these other celebrations often gets expressed in an exclusive “keep Christ in Christmas” – which sounds good but relegates to unimportant status all of the other observances going on around us. There is the group that gets excited and upset when Christmas gets shortened to X-mas – not knowing that the X in Greek is the letter Chi and represents Christ. I find no reason to be upset with Greek shorthand (and it is really fun to point it out to those who don’t know this). However, there is a uniqueness to the Feast of the Incarnation. Maybe the best solution is this: rather than getting worried about what other groups, cultures, and religions are or are not doing we would proceed to celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation like Christians – that is living after the manner and example of Jesus (and doing a little exploding in love and service might help too!). I don’t even mind hearing “Happy Holidays” since I know that the word “Holiday” is simply another form of “Holy Day”. Wishing me a “Happy Holy Day” works just fine. It is Advent . . . are you slowing down? Are you getting ready? The Feast of the Incarnation is nearly upon us! Jesus is coming (nay, is already here!).

Here is what is going on at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 173. Special appreciation to our candle lighters, musicians, communion setter uppers and servers, and all who made the 2nd Sunday of Advent a great time together.

2. This Sunday, December 11, is the 3rd Sunday in Advent. My message is titled "You'd better not cry!" I will be preaching from Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11. This is the passage that Jesus chose to cite in his first (and only Sermon) in Nazareth. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor . . ."

Coming at 11:00 on December 18 "If it Happened Today" a Christmas Pageant brought to us by CUMC's children and youth!

3. We had a great time with Valarian Raminski and friends this past Sunday afternoon. Over 100 turned out for a time of Christmas music.

4. "Angels Aware!" and "Carols, Cookies and Cocoa!" this Saturday, December 10 at 1:00 p.m. at Christ Church. The Amherst Players proudly present their family musical, "Angels Aware." Join the characters as they explain to the heavenly host what will happen that first Christmas and why. The show will be followed by "Carols, Cookies, and Cocoa!" All CUMC children who participate receive free admission to "Angels Aware" and a free ticket to bring an adult. Please bring canned or packaged food items for the Youth Group's food drive. For ticket information visit www.amherstplayers.org or call 791-7529.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Poinsettias: Worship/Altar Team is selling red and white poinsettias: **this Sunday, December 11, is the last Sunday to purchase them.** They will be used to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and cost \$8.00 each. They can be taken home after the Christmas celebrations.

8. **In our Prayers:** Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Barbara McCray, Erik Schmitz, Jane Darling (good to see Jane back in worship this past Sunday), and Drew Heitzenrater. Remember to pray for those serving overseas, for families in crisis, and for all those in need.

9. **FREE ZUMBA:** this Thursday, December 8. Toni will be holding a FREE zumba class for anyone who brings a new or gently used, clean toy for donation to the St. James food pantry in Buffalo.

10. Happy Birthday:

December 6 – Christian Kennedy; Diane Klenk

December 7 – Matt LaVigne, Alicia Ticconi
December 8 – Michael Keller, Rachel Wenner
December 11 – Ed Fisher; Gavin Gabel
December 13 – Betty Kreib; Marcia Rhinehart

11. Happy Anniversary – I have no anniversaries listed for this week.

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. BOILER PROJECT UPDATE: As of Sunday we have received \$40,550 in new pledges for the boiler project. This, combined with the \$10,000 pledge we received previously more than exceeds the \$40,000 matching grant we had in hand. The Trustees are getting "Bids" on the new system and will be making a decision on these bids (hopefully) at their December meeting. We are expecting that over the next several months all of the boilers will be replaced and we will have some resources to tackle some of the other projects that were part of the 60th anniversary capital campaign. **THANK YOU** everyone for doing what you can . . . we were blessed with gifts and pledges large and small – all of us together make a difference.

15. **UGANDA PROJECTS UPDATE**

A. 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. **See the new bulletin board in the Café or contact Rachel for more information.**

B. 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.

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

D. My friend, Rev. Davis Matovu, has mailed the DVD showing the completion of the Well project in Kirimandagi. I will show it when I have it!

16. DID YOU KNOW?

The Sunday Morning A.O.L. class "Where Heaven Touches Earth" is being taught by Rev. Jim Pollard at 10:00 Sunday's in the Wesley Room?

We are going to read the New Testament together in 2012 (one chapter a day on week days) I'll be printing the schedule for January soon or see the schedule printed in the Caller?

The Sunday music with Valerian Raminski raised over \$400 for Christ Church and the same for Nickel City Opera?

17. HANDS FOR NEW YORK: we are trying to feed \$1 million this conference year. Christ Church we are gathering specific food items

This Sunday, December 11 – **Bring Cereals! December 18 – TUNA and Christmas day – Peanut butter.**

Pastoral Confession Time: I am missing the snow. In Central New York, where I have lived for the past 27 years, it is tradition and kind of expected that people complain about the weather. They talk about it like old soldiers talk about the battles they survived: a combination of horror and pride. I had been promised less snow in the Buffalo area (especially up here in the North Towns) but, come on – it is December 6 already and nary a covering, nary a meaningful snow fall? I love watching the flakes, I love walking in it, I love the way it softens the land scape and the great adventure it makes of trying to drive (OK ignore that last one). The change of season hasn't come until the white stuff begins to fall, so, come on Buffalo area weather. . . .

Have a great week, everyone,

I'll see you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, weather watcher

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