

**Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
“Living Christ’s ways and exploding with love and service”**

UPDATE

February 15, 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

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Dr. B.J.’s blog is www.drjbthoughts.blogspot.com

Hi Everyone:

I hope everyone had a good Valentine’s Day. Karen and I spent our day on the road to Liverpool and back. Our Siamese cat, Perpetua, has developed kidney failure and we needed take her to her vet. A long journey. On the positive side we got to spend the day together, take a long walk and have lunch at our favorite Indian place. We were able to spend a nice quiet evening at home here in Snyder. Valentine’s day is kind of overrun by the marketers and the hallmark card people. It is the celebration of the martyrdom of Valentine. Best tradition holds that Valentine was arrested and beheaded for performing Christian marriages in the latter days of the Roman empire (an activity that was illegal). I kind of like that connection over the contemporary hearts and flowers approach. Valentine’s day could be a marvelous celebration of human love and attraction that leads to commitment and stability. I hope a lot of people get engaged on Valentine’s day and that we would celebrate all of the healthy relationships around us.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We finally had a snowy Sunday and attendance was in the upper 130’s. We had a good day with worship and then celebrating the Mature Years Ministry’s (MYM) 30th anniversary. The MYM is planning some more events and is bringing one of its great ministry of helps ideas back on line. Watch for more information.

Special appreciation to the Habitat “Women Build” leaders Lynn Ramsey and Peggy Bermudez for their presentation.

Next meeting for Women Build is Thursday February 16 at 7:00 p.m. at North Presbyterian. All Women interested in helping with the project in any way are encouraged to attend.

Save Friday March 23 for Women Build Roof Raiser Fund raising event. See Peggy Bermudez or Marg Bauza for details.

Or, there are chocolate bars for sale in the café following worship. \$1 each and funds go to our Annual Partnership gift.

2. This Sunday I am looking at the “Transfiguration of our Lord”. This is the last Sunday before the season of Lent and tradition is to look at the Transfiguration Story in the Gospels. It is a wild and interesting event in the life and ministry of Jesus. My message is from Luke 9:26-38 and is titled “From Glory to Mundane”.

The UMW will be having their annual MISSION PIN meeting following the 11:00 worship this Sunday, February 19, in the library.

The Senior High Youth is serving a pancake breakfast at 10:00 and again at Noon on Sunday as a fund raiser. Let’s support our Youth and their mission projects.

3. Through the New Testament in 2012: We are reading one New Testament chapter a day on week days. See my commentary on my blog: drbjthoughts.blogspot.com or feel free to contact me with questions and observations. We finished the Epistle to the Romans yesterday and begin the two letters to the Thessalonians today (February 15). Here is the schedule: February 15: 1 Thessalonians 1; February 16: 1 Thessalonians 2; February 17: 1 Thessalonians 3; February 20: 1 Thessalonians 4; February 21: 1 Thessalonians 5; February 22: 2 Thessalonians 1

4. We had a great time at New Comer Orientation on Monday, February 13. There were a dozen persons in attendance along with much of the senior staff. We got better acquainted, we shared some of Christ Church’s story and we invited one and all to consider becoming members of the Christ Church family.

We will be receiving new members at both morning worship celebrations on February 26. If you are not a member and would like to join us please contact me (or Rachel in the church office) as soon as possible.

5. In our Prayers: Nicky Sebastiano. Pam Lopez (recovering from surgery); Joe Day (had cataract surgery on Monday – saw him at the gym this morning and is doing great!); Mary Emens, Barbara McCray, Erik Schmitz, Carmen Ticconi and Ed Maker. Remember to pray for families in crisis; those who are in harm’s way around the world; those looking for work.

6. **ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 22** We begin our Lenten Suppers and study with a gathering on February 22 from 5:30 to 7:00. The first gathering will be a light supper followed by our Ash Wednesday observance. During Lent (February 29; March 7, 14, 21, 28) we will be discussing Ruben Job’s “Three Simple Questions” come and join us as we prepare for the great celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter (April 8).

7. Happy Birthday this week:

February 15 – Donna Yungbluth
February 17 – Dale Grobe; Marilyn Welker
February 20 – Ben Bermudez
February 21 – Matthew Ronan

8. there are no Anniversaries listed for this week

9. Christ Church will host this year’s “**World Day of Prayer.**” The Theme is: Let Justice Prevail. The event is Friday, March 2 at 1:00 p.m. Contact Janet Hill at 839-3052 for more information.

10. THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH

Thursday, February 16 – Trustees meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 17 – Books Loved at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Room.
Wednesday, February 22 – ASH WEDNESDAY

11. Mission News:

1. **THANK YOU for helping sponsor 14 orphans** at Pastor Grace's school in Kirimandagi. If there are more opportunities we will let you know. \$100-110 sends a child to school for the year.

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: **is Tuna and February 26 is peanut butter!**)

4. UGANDA PROJECTS UPDATE:

A. Dr BJ will be travelling to Uganda to continue his work with the Nexus Seminary this fall (September 30-October 16).

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

C. **An UNUSUAL opportunity:** as many of you may know I have written a book for my Ugandan friends. It is a biblical and theological primer that will be translated into Lugandan and will be published in English and Lugandan. My friend, Rev Davis Matovu has written an excellent commentary on the book of Revelation. It is my hope to be able to publish and distribute these books to our Nexus Seminary students for free. However, to publish and print 2000 copies of both volumes is going to cost between \$5000 and \$6000. I am looking for partners. . . . see me if you'd like to help.

12. **Parking spots** on Sunday morning are filling up. If you are here both morning celebrations feel free to park in the parsonage driveway (we can probably fit 5 or 6 more cars over there!). We also have permission to park at the Spa on the corner of Harlem and Saratoga.

13. Interest has rekindled regarding a possible **Holy Land** tour in 2013. Several of you have asked me about it recently. The 10 day trip (7.5 in Israel/Palestine) would be in early/mid February 2013 and initial costs are around \$2000. I will have brochures out very soon and will be scheduling a presentation on the trip during Lent. Watch for more information. Seeing the land and countryside of Israel helps us read and understand our Bible's better and can be a spiritually renewing experience.

14. Coming Worship events:

March 4/11/18/25 – focus on Stewardship – Extravagant Generosity is the theme

April 1 – Palm/Passion Sunday

April 5 – HOLY THURSDAY – Worship at 7:00

April 6 – GOOD FRIDAY – Biblical Stations of the Cross at Noon and 7:00

April 8 – EASTER – Festival Celebration of the Resurrection at 9:00 and 11:00

The events leading up to the season of lent always intrigue me. On the one side is the "Mardi Gras" aka "Fat Tuesday" event. Since Lent is a season of fasting and abstinence there is that human tendency to have "one last party, one last fling" before the season. Hence the New Orleans (and others) over indulgence and conspicuous consumption leading up to Ash Wednesday. There is another tradition that refers to the day before Ash Wednesday as "Shrove Tuesday". This tradition looks at the coming fast and abstinence season and steps back a day to prepare. The Shrove Tuesday tradition would feature a

meatless (often pancake) dinner before Ash Wednesday as a day to prepare for the coming fast. I find that kind of “event focus” somewhat wide of the mark. If we choose to enter a time of self denial as a means of focusing our spiritual lives and deepening our relationship with Jesus, just do it. All of the Last Suppers, parties, or pancakes become another way of missing the point. We don’t do these things out of obligation. We do these things out of anticipation. The fasting has no spiritual value in and of itself. It only has value as a means to an end. The goal of fasting is not fasting, nor is it earning favor with God (as if that were possible). The goal of fasting to help to focus our spiritual lives and help us focus beyond our own personal needs and desires. Fasting fosters self control and, as a spiritual discipline, can help us draw nearer to God. My prayer for the Christ Church family is that we will observe a holy Lent and find ways to deepen our life in Christ.

I’ll see you when the church gathers,

B.J. Norrix, lead servant, coach, missionary