

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York
"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"
UPDATE
March 19, 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.drjthoughts.blogspot.com

Hi Everyone:

We had the non-winter winter and now we have skipped spring and gone straight to summer. I'm blessed by the warmth, encouraged by the sunshine and appreciating any day that does not require shoveling, heavy coats or warm gloves. I hope you are also getting out and enjoying the early Spring. When I moved to Buffalo 8 months ago I told folks I wanted to be someplace that got less snow than Syracuse. At this time I would like to thank the Weather subcommittee of the Christ Church Snyder hospitality team. They have out done themselves (insert goofy grin here).

Here is what is going on at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 160. Special appreciation to Sue and Katy who sang our prelude and to Peggy Bermudez who did an excellent job with our mission moment (too am moved by the people I work alongside of and the people I work with in ministry).

We had a great reception and celebration of Nicky Sebastiano 's 100th birthday. Her actual birthday is Wednesday, March 21.

2. This Sunday is Consecration Sunday. My message will be "Extravagant Generosity is a matter of the Heart". The message will include texts from John 3 and 2 Corinthians 8. The core of the message is simple: you can give without loving . . . you cannot love without giving. It is the very nature of love to give.

Mr. Bradley Lolinger will be our stewardship moment this week.

3. THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR: We are currently reading through the Gospel according to John. Read one chapter a day on week days read the whole New Testament in a year. To view Pastor BJ's comments on today's chapter visit his blog at <http://www.drjthoughts.blogspot.com>. This week's readings: March 20 – John 6; March 21 – John 7; March 22 – John 8; March 23 – John 9; March 26 – John 10; March 27 – John 11.

4. Happy Birthday this week:

March 19 – Karen Arrison; Marjory Gibson; Florence Stengel
March 21 – NICKY SEBASTIANO – 100 years old; Barry Wood
March 24 – Al Sillato (97); Pat Noyes
March 25 – Peggy Bermudez
March 26 – Ashley Miller
March 27 – Matthew Webb

5. In our Prayers Mary Parsons (surgery today); Carol Gundlach, Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Barbara McCray; Barbara Carier; Carmen Ticconi; Alicia Ticconi; Ed Maker.

6. THANK YOU to all who responded to the need at Primera Iglesia and their food pantry. We delivered a van load on Monday morning!!

7. CONFIRMATION CLASS meets this Sunday following the 11:00 worship celebration.

8. The Lion's Club is having a Pancake Breakfast in Crafts Hall from 8:00 to 1:00 this Saturday, March 24.

9. THANK YOU: We raised over \$600 for One Great Hour of Sharing this past Sunday. These funds will help cover the overhead expenses for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in the year to come. Well done everyone.

10. Friday, March 23 is the Amherst Players Season Closer from 6-8 in Crafts Hall – why not stop by and take a peek?

11. Church Council meets this Thursday at 7:00

The "Make a Difference" Team is meeting at 6:00

12. Niagara Frontier District: "Eighth Annual Laity Banquet" will be held at Samuel's Grande Manor on Main Street in Williamsville. Sunday April 29 – registration at 4:15 and dinner at 5:00. We have chosen to honor Richard Mestler, Caller newsletter editor and Christ Church photographer. Cost is \$25 per person and reservations (checks payable to UNY Annual Conference) are due by April 10.

13. Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice – all women are invited to an evening of sweet and savory morsels, relaxation and conversation on Monday March 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. Please RSVP Peggy Bermudez at 626-4897 or Beth Sweet at 210-8966.

14. The Billy Graham Crusade is coming to Buffalo. Preacher Franklin Graham will be the visiting Evangelist. The event will be September 22 and 23, 2012.

In preparation there are several things Christ Church can connect to:

1. Christian Life and Witness Course: May 7 through 26, 2012. One class per week for three weeks. Watch for registration and location information.

2. A Concert of Prayer with Jim Cymbala will be held March 27 at 7:00 p.m at Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church.

Watch for more information . . .

15. **HOLY LAND (ISRAEL) 2013 INFORMATION MEETING APRIL 1 at 12:15 in Wesley Room – Several of you have indicated an interest in making this journey. If you are interested see me for brochure. I am**

planning a journey to the **Holy Land (10 day tour) leaving January 28, 2013**. I now have brochures with the essential information. See me for more. Watch for an information/travel meeting in the near future. Questions? See me. 10 day trip includes air travel (from New York's JFK); hotel, two meals a day, ground transportation, etc. I am estimating cost to be about \$3000 (2700 for trip plus incidentals).

16. MISSION NEWS AND NOTES:

1. Hands for New York – this week's collection: **March 25 – Juice and Powdered Drinks**

We have provided nearly 5000 meals since July 1!!!!

The goal is to feed 1million people in 1 year (July to June). If each congregation in Upper New York Conference fed 1050 people We would reach our goal. Christ church will well exceed that goal knowing that some congregations will not be able to feed 1050!

2. UGANDA PROJECTS UPDATE:

A. Dr BJ will be travelling to Uganda to continue his work with the Nexus Seminary this fall (October 1-October 17). Uganda 2012 team: Rev. B.J. Norrix, Rev. William Mudge (Adirondack District Superintendent), Kathy Weaver (Christ Church), Esther Keeney (of Pulaski) and Rev. Clair Mosher (Erieville and Ononativia United Methodist Churches in Onondaga County) – and **Mr. John Miller** of Christ Church

PLEASE KEEP us all in your prayers.

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 graduation in the village of Kikyusa.

c. is of the well project at Kirimandagi

3. **Habitat for Humanity**: Christ Church was one of the original Habitat Sponsors in Erie County. We continue our participation in several ways:

a. We contribute \$1000 annually to Habitat

b. We have several women who participate in the WOMEN BUILD

Friday March 23 at 6:00 in the Main Ballroom of Statler City there will be a

Women Build Roof Raiser.

Event is \$30 (tickets purchased before March 16) and \$35 at the door. It includes: beverages, appetizers, desserts, wine tasting, silent auction, live auction and a raffle for a Smokey Mountain Vacation. Business casual for the event. See Marg Bauza or Peggy Bermudez or the Sunday bulletin or web site for more information.

17. ***A Biblical and Theological Primer***, written by Dr. B.J. Norrix is in the translation phase of its publication. This book was written for the Nexus Seminary students in Uganda and will be printed in English and Lugandan. ***I have just learned that I may have a sponsor who will underwrite the entire cost of this project. Watch for more information. AND PRAY! In the mean time . . . there are other projects to sponsor and support!.*** The total cost to publish the first 2000 copies of this book will be around 5-6,000 US dollars. Rev. Davis Matovu has also written a commentary on the Book of Revelation that we will be publishing as well. Total Cost of both projects is 8-10,000.

Biblical Resources in Lugandan are nonexistent. There is a Lugandan translation of the Bible that we provide for our graduates but actual Bible study materials do not exist. This produced the need for more materials. Rev. Matovu and Dr. BJ wrote their documents to respond to this need. We are hoping that these will be the first of many resources developed for the rural pastor in Uganda.

18. Coming Later in Lent:

Palm Sunday is April 1 – we will have a procession with palms and a reading of the Passion narrative.

Holy Thursday is April 5 – we will gather at 7:00 for an observance of the Last Supper (no Seder this year).

Good Friday is April 6 – we will have the Stations of the Cross at Noon and again at 7:00 p.m.
Easter festival celebrations at 9:00 and 11:00 on April

I did not grow up in a protestant church and the concept of tithing was foreign to me. In the Roman Catholic parish I grew up in we talked about giving and we talked about sacrificial giving but the Biblical concept of the tithe was not taught. Later, after college and Seminary and I was serving as pastor of a local church for the first time I was not a tither. I gave a little per week and did my best to help out at other times when I could. In my second appointment this did not change and when I reached my third pastoral appointment I realized that something had to change. I needed to teach about faithful giving and I wasn't a faithful giver. I had learned a key leadership principle: you cannot lead where you had never been. If I was going to challenge my congregation to step up their giving that step forward had to begin with me. It was then that I made the effort to study what the bible actually says about tithing and became convinced that God expected me to return 10% of the produce of my life for the ministry and support of my local church. In 1989, when God first convicted me of this, I did the math and discovered that I was giving about 2% annually. I looked at my debts and I looked at my expectations and decided that I could not jump to that 10% figure in one year. What I did was to increase it by an additional 3% over 3 years. In 1990 I gave 5% in 1991 I gave 8% and in 1992 I committed and gave a full tithe for the first time in my life. The change in me and the change in my ministry was immediate and profound. I have never looked back. I don't keep track of how much OVER that tithe I give each year . . . but I know that I cannot out give God. I love doing this and believe that God has blessed me with abundant grace, abundant resources and many more opportunities to give myself and my resources away. What I have discovered over the years is this: giving away that first 10% to God has freed me from the tyrannical hold money has on too many of us. When I started tithing there were two of us in the congregation doing so. In 10 years nearly half of the pledging families in that congregation were giving the full tithe (another leadership lesson learned).

This is my challenge to my Christ Church family: make a choice to step up. Do it incrementally with that 10% goal in mind. The promise in Malachi 3:10 is that God will bless us and that God expects us to test that promise. Do the best you can!

I am praying for each of us this week. God has great plans for Christ Church. God has already provided the resources to do what God intends to do in and through our Church. Those resources are not out there in the community; they are not out there in the Annual Conference; they are not out there in the government . . . they are right here in my pocket and yours. I want you to know that dollar amount on my pledge card is 10% of my base salary (off the top!).

Have a blessed week -- see you when the church gathers.

BJ Norrix, missionary, coach (and yes, happy tither!)