

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

**UPDATE
April 2, 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:

We have entered the week that is the central pivot of our Christian Faith. From Palm Sunday through Resurrection Day, the heart of our story is told, retold and relived by Millions of Christians throughout the world. All of the teaching, all of the events of the Gospel, all the rest of our Christian faith is held together by the fabric of these events. My prayer for all of us is that we will make space this week to remember, retell, relive and experience the horrible, terrible, extraordinary, transformational events of the week. I am praying that each of us will make space to read, reflect and journey through special worship, prayer and other acts of devotion this week.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Sunday attendance was 177. Special appreciation to Dick and Tammy Mugal (9:00 readers) and Brad Loliger and Josh Reagan (11:00 readers) for their contributions in helping us hear the Holy Week story. Thank you, also, to Sheila Manginelli for her offertory solo and the entire choir of Christ Church (Elizabeth Holt Curtis, director) for the great music of the day.

2. Here are the notes on this week's worship experiences:

Holy Thursday: April 5. Worship is at 7:00. We will remember the acts of service Jesus demonstrated for us at the Last Supper and we will observe Holy Communion using the old (1964) ritual.

Good Friday: April 6. Worship is at NOON and 7:00 p.m. The Biblical Stations of the Cross: join us as we journey with Jesus through his last hours.

SUNDAY: RESURRECTION DAY (aka Easter) April 8, 2012: We have special music and a celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Regular Worship hours of 9:00 and 11:00. Message is from Matthew 28:1-12 and is titled: "A Rock-breaking, Stone-Rolling, kind of day!"

There is no Faith Express this week.

The Special Easter Offering this year will support: AFRICA UNIVERSITY. Africa University is located in Mutare, Zimbabwe and trains leaders from the entire African Continent in multiple disciplines including Nursing, Education, Leadership and Theology. Bishop Marcus Matthews has challenged us in the Upper New York Annual Conference to raise \$1Million to fund an endowment fund for the school. (Dr. BJ notes: I visited AU when I was in Zimbabwe in 2006 and was greatly impressed with the facility and the students there.)

3. In our Prayers: The Covert family, Carol Gundlach, Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Barbara McCray, Carmen Ticconi, Alicia Ticconi, Helen Peacock, Ed Maker, Marg Flacklam (at Buffalo General and moving to the Presbyterian Home in Lockport); those looking for work those in harm's way and families in crisis.

4. Stewardship Report: We are now over \$200,000 in total pledges in our 2012 Stewardship campaign. Please return your cards at your earliest convenience.

New Offering Envelops are available on the table in the parlor. If you would like envelops please sign up on the table.

5. At Christ Church this week:

Monday, April 2 – SPRC Meeting at 7:00

No Outreach Meeting on 4/3

Thursday, April 5, Holy Thursday worship at 7:00

Friday, April 6 – books loved at 10:00 a.m.

Friday, April 6, Good Friday worship at Noon and at 7:00

6. HOLY LAND TOUR 2013: A dozen of us gathered to explore traveling to the Holy Land January 28, 2013. There will be a group going. If you would like to join us see the Church office or Pastor BJ for brochure and more information. Basic cost is \$2698.

7. . Eighth Annual Laity Banquet: April 29, 2012 at Samuel's Grande Manor in Williamsville. We will be honoring Richard Mestler, Caller newsletter editor and Christ Church photographer. Cost is \$25 per person. Reserve through the office and make checks payable to UNY Annual Conference. Reservations need to be in by April 10.

8. Happy Birthday this week:

April 5 – Kathy Weaver

April 6 – Charles Gilbert; Stephen Mugel

April 10 – Larry Burdette; Don Critoph

9. THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT in a year: follow the blog at www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com. This week's readings: April 3 – John 16; April 4 – John 17; April 5 – John 18; April 6 – John 19; April 9 – John 20; April 10 – John 21; April 11 – Revelation 1

10. MAY 20 – **Make a Difference – Be the Church** Imagine, every Christ Church member being on mission for God all at the same time! Watch for details.

We have many projects, with many levels of engagement and ability. Sign up clip boards will be available starting April 15.

11. **Talk to the Expert – workshop series returns April 24**

These workshops will feature “end of life issues” and will have experts from Finance, Funeral Homes, Medicaid, Values and thinking about how to honor and remember those who have departed. 5 Tuesdays beginning April 24.

April 24 – Financial Legacy Planning with Patrick Allaire

May 1 – Planning Ahead for all the Right Reasons – with Michael Pignatora, Manager of Dengler Roberts Perna Funeral Home

And Jeff Reed, VP, Mt. Calvary Cemetery.

May 8 – Honoring Memories, Celebrating Lives – with Rev. Dr. B.J. Norrix, Christ UMC

May 15 – Overcoming Medicaid Myths with Patrick Allaire and Keith Schottman

May 22 – Values Workshop with a Financial Twist with Patrick Allaire and Keith Schottman

Each workshop will begin at 3:00 p.m. – contact the Church office to register.

12. COMING APRIL 13 – FISH DINNER Fund raiser led by the CUMC Youth Group! (watch for details).

13. 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 . . .

14. MISSION NEWS AND NOTES:

1. Hands for New York – this week’s collection: **April 8 – crackers; April 15 – tuna/canned meats.**

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). The 2012 Uganda team: Rev. B.J. Norrix, Rev. William Mudge (Adirondack District Superintendent), Kathy Weaver and John Miller of Christ Church, Esther Keeney (of Pulaski) and Rev. Clair Mosher (Erieville and Ononativia United Methodist Churches in Onondaga County) **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

c. We will be helping with the Restore on “Make a Difference – Be the Church Sunday” on May 20.

15. ***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. We are planning to distribute the first copies of this book in October 2012. 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. There is a deep need for more and better materials in the native language (Lugandan). 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.

There can be no pinnacle of joy without the depth of sorrow and despair. To put it another way, we only truly appreciate the pinnacle of joy when we have been immersed in the depths of sorrow. Holy Week is a roller coaster ride. We soar with the crowds on Palm Sunday with cries of “Hosanna and Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” Then comes Wednesday and Judas sells Jesus for 30 pieces of silver and we sink a bit. Thursday arrives and we rise to the great blessing of the first Last Supper but the dinner turns funny, somehow, and the conversation is scattered around “who’s the greatest” and who will or won’t betray Jesus and the dire prediction of Peter’s denial. John succinctly records the state of Judas soul in John 13:30 “So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.” There is the evening of not being able to stay awake in the garden with Jesus and all the while Jesus is agonizing, painfully pouring his heart out to his Father in prayer but always returning to: not my will but thy will be done. The betrayer betrays Jesus with a kiss and we sink. There is the mock trial at Caiaphas’ home. The beating, mockery and the trip to Pilate’s office and the fear grows and our hearts sink even lower. Jesus is condemned, he is nailed to the Roman torture stake known as the cross (it was such a painful way to die the Romans invented a new word to describe it – excruciating (pain as from the cross). Jesus dies. Jesus is buried in a borrowed tomb with a big stone rolled in front. This is the pit of sorrow, the depth of frustration, the lowest of the low. There is Saturday that comes and goes (not all of the roller coaster ride is up and down). Then comes Sunday, the first day of the week. Matthew tells us “an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and **sat on it!** (Matt. 28:2). Then hope rises, confusion ensues . . . and new life becomes possible. Imagine all of the stones of all of the tombs of all of our lives being rolled back and sat upon . . .

Walk with me this week,

See you when the church gathers,

B.J. Norrix, missionary, holy week walker, lead servant