

UPDATE

Christ United Methodist Church

Harlem at Saratoga

Amherst, New York

“Living Christ’s ways and exploding with love and service”

April 24, 2014

EVERYONE is WELCOME

EVERY SUNDAY AT CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship

10:00 – FaithXpress/Soul Strength/AOL (Adult Opportunities for Learning)

11:00 – Traditional Style Worship

Bring a Friend this week and share the Love and Grace of God!

Visit us on the World Wide Web at: www.Christchurchamherst.org

716-839-2460

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

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Hi Everyone:

I’m back after a few days of R&R following Easter. Actually, we didn’t rest much. I took the train early Monday morning to Syracuse to visit with my friend Davis Matovu – he is well and looking forward to reconnecting with all of us at Christ Church. I then drove back to Buffalo with my wife. Karen and I then ran up to Toronto for Tuesday/Wednesday. We spent the better part of 2 days tromping around the downtown area and generally having a great time eating odd food, passing through diverse neighborhoods and hanging out. After a couple of 20,000 plus step days (according to my pedometer) I am ready to get back to the slower pace of my office (lol).

I was deeply blessed by our Easter celebrations! Thank you to all of our musicians (The worship team at 9:00; Kevin, the Choir, and Juliana at 11:00); our flower arrangers (Beth Brown and her team); the Trustees cleanup crew on Saturday (Tom, Greg, Karen, Jordan, Phyllis, Ben, et al). Thank you Sally Pollard,

who walked with me through all of the week's special observances and who put together the extraordinary "Mediation Stations" around the Sanctuary for Holy Week! It is a week that involves a lot of extra effort by the Church ministry team (Sally, Janelle, Dave, Doris, Kevin). They did their ministry with grace and excellence! It was wonderful to see children and grandchildren home for the celebration. Thank you to kind friends who made a space for me at their family table Sunday afternoon.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We topped 205 in worship this past Sunday. There were 24 of us on Holy Thursday and a combined 35 on Good Friday. We had a good and holy "Holy Week".
2. This Sunday I am looking at the story of the Apostle Thomas in John 20:19-31. Thomas, who is known to us as the doubter, is having difficulty reconciling a dead rabbi and the stories of a resurrected Jesus. He wants to touch and see and quantify the "facts" before he will believe. Although most of us know him as "doubting Thomas" and, no doubt, use the expression "doubting Thomas" for anyone who is not quick to accept what others believe or have experienced, in the Orthodox tradition he is known as "Believing Thomas". After all the point of the story is not that he doubted but that he came to believe. May it be so for all of us.
3. In our Prayers: Sue Cataudella and family on the death of Sue's father; Tom Davis; Caroline Hess, Fred Painton, Guy Castellino, Mitch Mooney, Bim Rowlands, Glenn Hurst, Nicky Sebastiano, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, Diane Lovejoy, Bob and Betty Kreib and Paula Kreib's niece Sandy in Colorado. Remember those who are serving overseas; remember those looking for work; remember families in crisis.
4. **FOOD PANTRY** – We are collecting Cereal/cereal Bars this week. Put all donations in the grocery baskets near the main entrances.
5. **Make a Difference Day: Sign ups** are now up in the back of the Sanctuary. There are a variety of projects. Take a moment, sign up for a team and let us make a difference together!!
6. This Week at Christ Church:
Thursday, April 24 – 9:30 Caller Team Collation
10:00 Bible Study

Friday, April 25 – 12:15 p.m. MYM Executive Board

7:30 p.m. GAME NIGHT

Tuesday, April 29 – DISCUSSION ACTION GROUP at 7:00 (everyone welcome)

7. Rev. Richard Davis Matovu's VISIT schedule

Davis will be here in Amherst from Monday, May 5 through Monday May 12

Tuesday May 6 – Davis meets with Hand2Plow group at Camp Asbury
Dinner with the Weaver family

Wednesday May 7 – Rest Day and Dinner with Millers

Thursday May 8 – Meeting with Pastors in East Aurora

Open House at ??? (want to host this gathering – let me know).

Friday May 9 – Meeting with Mission Youth at Christ Church

Saturday May 10 – attending a graduation

Sunday May 11 – Davis will be preaching both morning services

Monday May 12—TBA

Tuesday May 13 – Return to Syracuse

If you would like time with Davis please let me know. We are trying to set up something for our friends at Asbury Pointe. If you can help please let me know.

8. The Finance Team would like to thank everyone for their quick and generous response to our “**Interim**” **Pledge** campaign. If you have not yet returned your response please do so at your earliest convenience. Christ Church is “Living Christ’s ways and exploding with love and service!” Your support enables us to live out our mission together. **Offering Envelops** are now available in the Parlor.

9. **WE WANT YOUR SHOES – Waiting for the other Shoe to drop: SHOE**

UPDATE: Shoe collection is underway. Pick up a collection bag (instructions are on the bag) and gather as many pairs of shoes as possible to support developing countries AND the ministry of Christ church. Shoes may be dropped off at the main entrance of Christ Church now through Make a Difference Day (May 18). Any style, any size, any condition! *Why not recruit your family, friends and co workers to help out?* As of April 13 we are over 60 bags (63 as of this morning) of shoes (25 pairs per bag makes 1575 pairs already collected). We are on our way to 300 bags (or 7500 pairs of shoes!).

10. MYM Dinner in the Country

Sunday May 4, 2014 at the White Inn, Fredonia NY 2 PM

Choices are Stuffed chicken breast or Sliced sirloin of beef or Whitefish polonaise with rice. Full course meal with salad, desert, coffee or tea. Price is \$18 including tip Purchase tickets after 1st or 2nd service in Crafts Hall. Rides are available along with easy directions to the White Inn.

11. Happy Birthday this week:

April 26 – Doris Schanzlin

April 30 – Karen Bellimer; Benjamin Weaver

12. Happy Anniversary

April 26 – Andrew and Jamie Rapini

13. Through the Bible: this week's readings:

April 24 – Ecclesiastes 4-6 and Revelation 11

April 25 – Ecclesiastes 7-9 and Revelation 12

April 26 – Ecclesiastes 10-12 and Revelation 13

April 27 – Numbers 1-2 and Revelation 14

April 28 – Numbers 3-4 and Revelation 15

April 29 – Numbers 5-6 and Revelation 16

April 30 – Numbers 7-8 and Revelation 17

May 1 – Numbers 9-11 and Revelation 18

14. DRESS OUR PEOPLE: Will begin sewing clothing for the Ugandan children on Make a Difference Day, Sunday May 18. **Donations of Cotton fabric or cotton/polyester blends no less than 1 yard in length, thread, bias tape, and trim are needed.** Donations may be placed in or near the Dress our People mailbox outside the church office. Thank you.

15. Men's pre-work breakfast group is now meeting at the **Sheridan Family Restaurant** on Sheridan near Harlem Road. We will next meet on May 1 at 7:00 a.m. at the Sheridan Family Restaurant. All men are welcome to join us.

16. **MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES (ministry is what we do for the existing church community)**

Opportunity 1: Hospitality Team is being formed – want to join us? See BJ

Opportunity 2: We are putting together a **worship “creative” team**. Want to be a part of this group? Let BJ know.

Opportunity 3: A **New small group for singles is being formed**. Want to join us? **Let me know**.

Opportunity 4: New “Senior Adult” ministries and groups are being discussed: want to be a part of the discussion? Let me know.

17. Mission Opportunities: (Mission is what we do for those who are not yet part of the church community)

Opportunity 1: Rev. Davis Matovu (our Uganda Mission partner) will be in the US in April and May and will be preaching at Christ Church on the 2nd Sunday of May. He will be meeting with our Uganda travelers and supporters as well as the new Mission Youth group

Opportunity 2: MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY is only **3 Weeks** from this Sunday. Team leaders have been recruited and Sign ups are UP!

OPPORTUNITY 3: We have begun collecting items for the September Uganda Fund raiser “Silent Auction” baskets. If you have something to donate please bring it to Pastor BJ’s office.

18. Christ Church is blessed with excellent gathering and fellowship space. One of the most popular is the **Café on Sunday morning**. The café provides hot and cold beverages and tasty snacks before and following our Sunday worship gatherings. What makes this work is a lot of volunteers who “Host” the café by preparing coffee/tea, etc. and putting the snacks out and then cleaning up afterwards. Would you like to help in this vital hospitality ministry of our Church? Contact Sally Pollard at 839-2460 or by signing up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Café.

19. COMING EVENTS

May 4 – Dinner in the Country – MYM at the White Inn in Fredonia – tickets available in the café between services

May 5 through May 12 – Rev. Davis Matovu of Soul Fishing Ministries and President of Nexus Seminary, Uganda will be with us.

May 9 – Davis Matovu meets with Mission Youth

May 11 – Rev. Richard Davis Matovu guest preacher

May 16 – Church-Wide Variety Show (sponsored by UMW) – appropriate comedy acts needed see the UMW for details

May 18 – Make a Difference Day **SIGN UP NOW!**

May 19 – Carl Ericson Memorial Service

May 28 through 31 UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE --
Syracuse

June 8 – Confirmation Sunday

20. CHANGE TO CHANGE THE WORLD: Save up your loose change for the Family Justice Center! We will be collecting change on Make a Difference Day (May 18) to make a positive transformation in the lives of those affected by domestic violence.

Parting Thought:

I'm really glad that Easter is not limited to a day but to a 50 day season. The church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from Easter morning right through to Pentecost (and, frankly, ought we to be celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ EVERY moment and every day of our lives?). The Sundays of Easter will go right through to the first week in June. I was deeply blessed by the spirit of worship this past Sunday. From the opening of the praise and celebration at 9:00 through the Vierge postlude at 11:00 gathering, Easter was a marvelous and hope-filled day at Christ Church. But there is so much more. We walked through the lonesome valley with Jesus as he endured the necessary horrors of Holy Thursday and Good Friday. We walked together and experienced the depths and heights of God's amazing love and the central story of our faith. Now we get to walk through the next 50 days with joy and gladness, remember the doubter, refocusing communion and all the other Easter season themes. This was our third Easter together and the best is yet to come.

Have a blessed week,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, celebrant

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