

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

**UPDATE  
April 24, 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](http://www.Christchurchamherst.org)  
716-839-2460**

**Dr. B.J.’s blog is [www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com](http://www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com)**

Hi Everyone:

I’m having some great conversations around the church about the book of Revelation. I am learning that it is not a part of the Bible many of us have read or have been encouraged to read. Most of us get lost in the symbolic language and, what could be best called, “fantastic imagery” that dominates the book. Revelation was written in the apocalyptic style of writing. This style of writing was popular in the 250 or so years that bracketed the birth of Jesus. The apocalyptic style was developed to write words of comfort and hope to people who were suffering great persecution and tribulation. Apocalyptic writing was developed so that the oppressor government or people would have difficulty understanding the images and references. Not all of them are difficult for the modern reader to understand. Most of the images are rooted in the Old Testament and many of them were contemporary symbols of the first century. For example: we know that the city of Rome was built on seven hills and that there were 10 Caesars by the end of the first century – a reference to a seven headed monster with ten horns is easily identifiable as Rome. Remember the Roman Empire is the great oppressor of this time. Christianity is illegal and practice of the faith was punishable by death. There were several brutal crack downs on the Christians during the 1<sup>st</sup> century – one under the Emperor Domitian around AD 90 would be concurrent to the writing of this book. Because the oppressed could not directly criticize the government they resorted to using old imagery and language. Hence the writer never mentions Rome but calls the evil empire “Babylon” because the Babylonian empire was the great oppressor of the Old Testament. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and carried the Hebrews into exile. In my blog I am attempting to call attention to some of the symbolic uses. I am grateful that many of you are making the effort to read and struggle with Revelation – I think it is worth the effort and will enhance our understanding of the early Christ followers and how they lived and died. For those of us who are having a hard time, just hang on we will be back to the letters of Paul around Mother’s Day and then begin a journey through the book of Acts in time for Pentecost.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 149. Once again we are seeing many new faces and many repeat guests every Sunday. Remember to invite your friends and family, neighbors, coworkers and anyone else looking for a great Church home.

We dedicated the new kneeling pads in memory of Lucille Cook, Verna (Mickey) Duke, and Paul Nachbar.

I want to express my appreciation to Kathy Weaver who has been our worship leader these past two Sundays (in Sally's absence). Kathy did a great job! Thank you. I also wanted to offer a word of thanks to Mary Ball who led the children's moment this past Sunday – she was tremendous!

Thank you Bob Snyder for his presentation on the MYM's project on Make a Difference Sunday!

2. This Sunday is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. I will be preaching from Revelation 12 "The Wilderness!" Biblically, the Wilderness is a place where God nurtures, cares for, and forms his people.

3. Our Condolences go to our church Custodian, Dave Wolf following the death of his mother, Bernice, late last week. A Memorial Service will be scheduled at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at a later date.

4. Stewardship Report: We now have 110 pledges for \$224,085 in total commitments. The total is greater than last year's 112/\$221,275. If you have not yet returned your commitment card please do so at your earliest convenience. **New pledges begin May 1, 2012.** Thank you for your faithfulness and all your hard work.

The Easter Offering for Africa University topped \$1500.

5. Boilers are being replaced: By the end of this week the office wing boiler and the water heater will have been replaced. The Sanctuary wing boilers have been purchased and will be installed sometime this Summer. Once again, thank you for your contributions that are making this happen. We expect to realize a significant savings on our gas bills in the years ahead which is good stewardship and frees up more funds for mission and ministry!

**6. TALK TO THE EXPERT: begins Tuesday, April 24 at 3:00:** the first workshop is "**Financial Legacy Planning**". Led by Patrick Allaire, CEO and Keith Shottman, VP, Allaire Financial Strategies. This workshop will cover an in depth discussion of the purpose of Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney and Health Care Proxies as the foundation for the rest of the workshop series. What is does legacy mean outside of the legal documents?

TALK TO THE EXPERT will meet every Tuesday through May 22 at 3:00

**Sessions are free and open to the public: you can register by calling the church office or walk in (but the call would help us know how to set up).**

Future Sessions include:

May 1 – Planning Ahead for all the Right Reasons – preplanning funerals, etc.

May 8 – Honoring Memories, Celebrating Lives – led by Dr. BJ Norrix, elements of a vital funeral/memorial celebration

May 15 – Overcoming Medicaid Myths

May 22 – Values Workshop with a Financial Twist

7. This week at Christ Church:

April 25 – Wednesday – Pastor's Bible Study at 11:00

Church Choir at 7:30

April 26 – Thursday – Make a Difference at 6:00

Church Council at 7:00

8. Friday, April 27, there will be a funeral for **Carol Metcalf**. Carol was 89 years old and a member of Christ Church since 1955. The Funeral is at 10:00 a.m.

9. Pastor away next week: This Sunday following worship: Dr. B.J. Norrix will be travelling to Syracuse (along with Kathy Weaver and John Miller) to meet with the Uganda 2012 team. Following that meeting he will be on Retreat near Plattsburgh, New York with his covenant group. He will be home Friday, May 4 in the early evening.

10. This Sunday, April 29, Christ Church will honor Richard Mestler at the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Laity Banquet. Registration is at 4:15 and the dinner is at 5:00 at Samuel's Grande Manor in Williamsville. Richard is the man behind the camera and editor of The Caller, Christ Church's monthly newsletter. Congratulations Richard, and thank you for all you do to support the ministry of Christ Church Snyder.

11. Happy Birthday this week:

April 26 – Doris Schanzlin

April 30 – Benjamin Weaver; Rev. Karen Bellimer

May 1 – Tom McCray

May 2 – Roger Johnson; Ruth Kitson

May 3 – Margaret Mugal

May 4 – Ruth Swenson

12. Happy Anniversary this week:

April 26 – Andrew and Jamie Rapini

May 4 – Greg and Lynn Ramsey

13. In our Prayers this week: Mary Parsons (following surgery); Diane Lovejoy (following surgery); the family and friends of Carol Metcalf; Nicky Sebastiano, Mary Emens, Barbara McCray, Carmen Ticconi; Ed Maker and Alicia Ticconi; pray for families in crisis, pray for those looking for work. Pray for **Sally and Jim Pollard** as they return from their vacation in Scotland and France.

Remember to pray for the United Methodist General Conference which begins Tuesday, April 24 in Tampa Florida. General Conference is the only body in the United Methodist church that may speak and make decisions for the whole church. There are many critical issues on the agenda for the next 10 days. Pray for the Upper New York delegation as they join 1000 delegates from around the world to provide leadership for our church.

14. Coming May 5 – The founder of “**Dress Our People**” **Debbie Underwood** of Cortland UMC, Cortland, New York will be speaking to the UMW at 10:00 a.m.. A continental breakfast will be served (\$5.00 donation). Come and meet Debbie and hear how God has used her little dream to do great things.

15. HANDS 4 NEW YORK – April 29 collection is powdered milk (and any other non perishable food item we can bring).

16. Do you need a new Bible or know someone who needs one? Alicia Ticconi, in celebration of the renewal of her faith, has purchased a case of Bible's to be given away. They are available in the parlor, the cafe' and in the sanctuary.

17. There are now 5 of us officially signed up for the Israel 2013 journey. The tour is 10 days: we spend 3 days in the Galilee in and around the sea; we spend four days in and around Jerusalem, Bethlehem, etc. We will visit Jericho and the Dead Sea and walk the via Dolorosa. **We depart on January 28, 2013.** If you would like to join us see the Church office or Pastor BJ for brochure and more information. All Inclusive cost is \$2598 (transportation from New York; deluxe hotel accommodations; breakfast and dinner ground transportation, guide, deluxe motor coach and all entrance fees).

This will be my 5<sup>th</sup> journey to the Holy Land. Each trip I discover something new to illuminate my understanding of the Bible (Old and New) and the background needed for understanding.

If you know anyone who would be interested in joining us there is room for more.

18. THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT: follow my comments on [www.drjthoughts.blogspot.com](http://www.drjthoughts.blogspot.com). **This week's readings:** April 24 – Revelation 10; April 25 – Revelation 11; April 26 – Revelation 12; April 27 – Revelation 13; April 30 – Revelation 14; May 1 – Revelation 15; May 2 – Revelation 16; May 3 – Revelation 17; May 4 – Revelation 18.

19. MISSION NEWS AND NOTES:

1. Hands for New York – this week's collection: **is powdered milk.**

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. The team will be travelling to all of our previous graduation sites to distribute Dr. B.J.'s book to the Nexus graduates. Each location will be teaching day. The nurses (Esther and Kathy) will be providing health and wellness clinics at all of these locations. This year's itinerary will require a lot of day to day travel.**

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.

20. **Make a Difference: Be the Church:** Christ Church's day in mission is May 20, 2012. We have over a dozen different projects available for the Christ Church family. We have projects to clean and build and gather and sew and cook and encourage, etc. There should be something for everyone! Join the over 50 who have already signed up! Sign up on the clipboards in the back of the Sanctuary.

21. MYM (Mid Years Ministry) is having "Dinner in the Country" on May 6 at 1:30 p.m. they will be traveling to Tillman's Village Inn in Albion NY. Tickets are \$18 and are on sale in Crafts Hall.

22 . ***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.

23. Copies of Sinnathamby Thevanesan's latest book are available for sale in the Café'.

Parting Shots: I am challenged to find sermons appropriate for today from our readings in the book of Revelation. Having said that, I am enjoying the challenge and really appreciate your encouragement, feedback, comments and questions. I believe Sunday worship, and especially the sermon, is more of a conversation or dialogue than a lecture. Sometimes the dialogue is direct (people ask questions, offer suggestions, etc. in the preaching of the message). Most of the time that dialogue comes out of our week to week before and after worship conversations, bible studies, e-mails, and the like. Your questions give me ideas, your suggestions challenge me to think and pray and study, your encouragement drives me to do better – that is all part of the dialogue. I am planning to do a series of sermons this summer on either American Idols or the Seven Deadly Sins (what do you think might be most helpful?). What would you like to hear a sermon on? What are the spiritual issues and questions that you would like to see addressed? Feel free to drop me a line or chat with me around the church and we'll see what the Holy Spirit is saying to the people at Christ Church.

Have a great week and I'll see you when the community gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, coach, missionary