

Christ United Methodist Church

UPDATE

August 5, 2014

Harlem Road at Saratoga Road

Amherst, New York

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

EVERYONE is WELCOME

SUNDAY AT CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship

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.Christchuramherst.org

Or call us at: [716-839-2460](tel:716-839-2460)

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

Like us on Facebook!

Hi Everyone:

I am saddened by the news of the death of Robin Williams. He was (is) one of my favorite entertainers. In our celebrity culture the media is in full frenzy mode. We will see clips and photos and will hear stories in full court press for the next few days. What we will not likely hear is an open and honest conversation about mental illness in general and, more specifically, depression. Depression, untreated, is no less a fatal disease than cancer or heart disease. That death from depression is often at one's own doing (suicide) does not change the fact that Mr. Williams died of an illness called depression. There is no stigma attached to this - it is (as I said on Sunday) what it is. The church has historically placed a severe prohibition on suicide. This prohibition was born of people thinking that suicide was born of despair (that could have been controlled if we only been stronger or held on longer or prayed more or had more faith or . . .) or that the suicide had somehow taken God's prerogative away. In many places suicides are not permitted to be buried in the "hallowed ground" of church cemeteries because of these understandings. These theological understandings of suicide were born in a time and place where we did not recognize or understand mental illness. However, as we learn and grow, they are being revised. Lifestyle issues aside, I once heard Rev. Bob Russell talk about suicide in this way: in the Olympics when a gymnast performs a flawless routine but slips or trips or falls on the dismount, the judges do not discount the entire routine because of the blown dismount. Yes, points are deducted from the routine for the blown dismount. The overall routine is rated on the overall performance, not just the end. I would like to believe Rev. Russell's application and remember that all of us are moving toward or away from grace every moment of our lives. Eternity is not a prize to be earned or won; it is the consequence of relationship with Jesus Christ. One moment in time does not forever define any relationship (especially one with our Creator). Mr. Williams had children . . . remember to pray for them. There are many people who battle with mental illness – including depression – remember to pray for them. Many of us have been touched by suicides in our family, among our friends, co-workers, etc. Remember to pray for them as well.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the upper 80's (must still be summer). Special appreciation to Kevin Durkin for the special music this past week. We learned to not be envious!

2. This Sunday is part 6 in the “Seven attitudes that kill the soul” sermon series. We will talk about Gluttony. Gluttony is not just about food – it is about overindulgence in all of its forms. It is consumerism run amok. The Gilligan’s Island character that represents Gluttony is the Skipper – rotund and always eating. What if he were a drunk? What if he was intemperate about any number of allowable indulgences?

3. **DID YOU KNOW . . .** that every Sunday message (By Pastor BJ or others) is recorded and is available for listening through our church website? Go to <http://www.christchurchamherst.org> - at the top right of the home page is the word “Worship”. Move the cursor there and a drop screen labeled “Sermons” will appear. Click on “Sermons” and a screen will appear that lists every sermon of this year by date and title and preacher. Click and listen to any and all.

****Congratulations to Keith and Becky Suffoletto who were married on August 8!**

4. This Thursday and Friday (August 14/15) Sally Pollard, Janelle Martin, Sandy Cumming and I will be attending the Global Leadership Summit. The GLS is an annual two day event sponsored by the Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. It is two days of teaching on leadership by some of the world’s foremost teachers, preachers, and practitioners. We will hear from academicians, entertainers, business leaders, government leaders and church leaders. Pray for us as we go to learn and, most of all, learn to become better leaders for Jesus Christ. **NOTE: The church office will be closed Thursday or Friday this week. If there is an emergency call or text my cell 839-3260.**

5. In our Prayers: Lois Lewis, Barbara Clinton, Mac Sabol, Dave Mitchell, Brian Martin (his bone marrow transplant is scheduled for September 17 – **here’s another way to help: Brian is in need of platelets people can donate through Roswell – it is a lot like giving blood only it takes a little longer**); Donna Hammond, 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, and Diane Lovejoy. Remember those who are serving in the armed forces (especially Alex Dunbar and Ian Johnson). Pray for the citizens of the Ukraine and Gaza and Israel. Pray for the West African nations that are battling the Ebola virus. Pray for the ongoing situation in Iraq.

6. We are hoping to paint the Choir Room this Thursday (August 14). Can you help? Contact the church office or Kevin Durkin.

7. TREASURER NEEDED – We've been praying for someone to come forward to fill the vital position of church treasurer. Familiarity with Quick Books would be helpful. Most of the "clerking" work is done by the Office Manager (entering bills, printing checks, and mailing payments, calling in pay roll). The treasurer needs to sign checks, oversee the accounts, and report to appropriate groups. If you are feeling a calling to this work please contact pastor BJ (839-3260) as soon as possible.

8. UGANDA SILENT BASKET AUCTION – Fundraiser theme Baskets: Donations of Theme baskets or individual items are needed for the Spaghetti Dinner scheduled for **September 26**. Theme suggestions include: Movie night, Kid's crafts, snack attack, pet, book club, holiday, etc. Gift cards are also welcome. Leave theme baskets or other items in Pastor BJ's Office. **THANK YOU FOR THE DONATIONS SO FAR!!!**

9. SUMMER FILM FEST – Sunday's at 10:00 in the Wesley Room. This Sunday: **Bullhorn** by Rob Bell. Sometimes we strongly disagree with other people's political views, religious beliefs, behaviors, or something else, and it makes it hard to love them. Can we really love God without loving others? All are welcome to join the conversation.

10. UMW Women's Retreat – is September 19-21 at Camp Asbury. We will be studying The Cup of Our Life with Dee Finch. Cost is \$165 and the deadline to sign up is **THIS FRIDAY (August 15)**. Call Beth Sweet (210-8966) or Peggy Bermudez (626-4897) if you have questions. All Women are welcome.

11. CALLER DEADLINE IS Tomorrow – August 13 for the September issue. Submit all articles and information to caller350@yahoo.com.

12. This Week at Christ Church:

August 12 – 6:00 Christian Education Team at Pollard Home

7:00 Stewardship and Finance Team in Library

August 13 – Caller deadline

August 14 – 10:00 Bible Study in Wesley Room

Painting project (see above)

August 14-15 – Global Leadership Summit in Rochester

13. Happy Birthday this week

August 12 – Susan Terranova

August 14 – Ron Corsaro

August 15 – Molly Butler

August 18 – Beverly Hurst

14. Happy Anniversary this week:

August 15 – Robert and Patricia Loesch (50 years)

August 15 – Ross and Grace Markello (61 years)

August 15 – Bim and Marion Rowlands (50 years)

August 16 – Larry and Ann Burdett (56 years)

August 17 – Ron and Carol Corsaro (55 years)

15. Bible Through the Year – this week's readings

August 12 – Psalm 84-86 and 1 Peter 2

August 13 – Psalm 87-88 and 1 Peter 3

August 14 – Psalm 89-90 and 1 Peter 4

August 15 – Psalm 91-93 and 1 Peter 5

August 16 – Psalm 94-96 and Galatians 1

August 17 – Psalm 97-99 and Galatians 2

August 18 – Psalm 100-102 and Galatians 3

August 19 – Psalm 103-104 and Galatians 4

August 20 – Psalm 105-106 and Galatians 5

16. ON THE MISSION FRONT:

1. **UGANDA 2014:** Pastor BJ Norrix and Joe Fort are under 8 weeks away (on Monday) from their mission journey to Uganda and Kenya (depart October 5 return October 23). Please keep them and our Ugandan partners in your prayers as they prepare. They will be teaching and preaching in multiple sites, presiding at a Nexus Graduation, opening a new teaching location and reconnecting with our friends there. They will be travelling to Mombasa, Kenya (on the Indian Ocean) to work with a group of Anglicans. A **Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction** in support of this journey will be held in late September. Do you have items for the auction? Please leave them in the Pastor's office.

2. **Uganda 2015 youth experience** (June 28 through July 10, 2015). Deadline for declaring interest in this journey was **August 1, 2014 – but I'm holding out for a few more applications**. Pastor BJ has application forms available. This journey will have at least 5 persons under 20 (possibly more) and some parents travelling to Uganda to work with our projects there. For more information contact Pastor BJ.

17. Coming this Fall:

September 3 – Choir Rehearsal resumes at 7:30

September 7 – FaithXpress/Soul Strength launch at 10:00

September 7 – Disciple Bible Study resumes

September 13 – Mission Youth at 6:00 (**NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**)

September 14 – FaithXpress/Soul Strength classes resume

September 19-21 – Women’s Retreat at Camp Asbury

September 26 – Uganda Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction

Parting Thought:

Violence permeates our planet: Random shootings and murders at home; Kidnapped school kids in West Africa; Destruction of churches and homes and villages in Iraq; Ground war in the Ukraine; Israel and Hamas fighting it out in Gaza. We are a violent breed driven by Greed, Anger, Lust, Pride, Envy, Gluttony and Acedia. The evidence of human brokenness has always been violence and the willingness to do physical harm to others to have our way. This brokenness is seen in the nursery when one kid bonks another to get the preferred toy; it is seen in bullying in our schools; it is seen in road rage and domestic abuse; it plays out in 7 billion ways 365 days a year. The cure? One school of thought is to attempt to create a just society that is ruled by laws and impartial judges. Unfortunately, as soon as real human beings inhabit said just society it degenerates into the same grasping, greedy, and violent society we have always known. What is the cure? Jesus came with the cure. It was not a new set of laws. It was not a new form of law enforcement. The cure was to be transformed from the inside out by Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Grace. Jesus came that we might have life – real life! But like the treatment for most inborn illnesses, the cure is not to apply once and then walk away. The cure is daily doses of Jesus. The cure requires us to every day place ourselves in His presence and to strive to walk in that relationship moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, week by week. That new life begins with an acknowledgement that we are in fact broken and to enter into this new life-forming, life-transforming, life-breathing, life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ. New life is emerging all around us. But we won’t see it on our TV or computer screens. We will see it in the acts of mercy, generosity, grace and love by people all around us. Before you leave the house in the morning, remember to take your daily dose and take Jesus with you.

Have a blessed week!

BJ Norrix, lead servant, coach, missionary