

Christ United Methodist Church
UPDATE

December 16, 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

10:00 FaithXpress, Soul Strength and 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

Or call us at: 716-839-2460

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

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Christ-United-Methodist-Church-Amherst/294709713921168?ref=hl>

Hi Everyone:

There are a number of churches that will be holding “Blue Christmas” observances in the next week to ten days. Blue Christmas is an acknowledgement that for many people, the celebration of Christmas carries painful memories or, in the more immediate sense, are observing the first Christmas without a significant member of their family and/or friends. Christmas is ramped up in our minds because of nostalgia and remembering the halcyon days of yore. We remember the excitement and wonder in the eyes and faces of family members now gone and, quite naturally, we grieve. This is not the time to say to the grieving “get over it” or even to “join the party.” This is a time when we who are Christ followers, without ever surrendering our joy, walk slowly and sit patiently with those who are hurting. Do you know someone who is having a hard time this year because of recent loss? A kind word, a short prayer, or a gesture of awareness can go a long way to helping them cope with their grief. Grief is the process of going through the firsts without the other. The first birthday, etc. but most especially the first holiday without the other. Be kind to one another in the days ahead.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was near 150. It was great to have Mac Sabol back in the choir and to see Ted Beachley back on his feet as well. We remembered that the “Anointed One” has anointed us to continue the process of changing the world!

2. This Sunday at 9:00am we will worship & remember the poem of Mary from Luke 1.

3. This Sunday at 11:00a.m. it is “**The Kings of Orient, AR**” presented by the children/youth and adults of Christ Church. The presentation of the Christmas story, as seen through the eyes of the lost and weary King family who have taken refuge in a church, will be interspersed with music from a variety of people and sources. A continued celebration will follow worship this week!.

4. Christmas Eve Celebrations WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 24

9:00 p.m. – Candles, Carols, Choir and a word from Pastor BJ

11:00 p.m. – Candles, Carols, Communion and a word from Pastor BJ

5. Dave Mitchell’s mother, Dorothy Mitchell died this morning (at about 7:00 a.m.). Dorothy lived in Minnesota and was 101 years old. A memorial service is being planned for January. I am sure you will join me in keeping Dave and his family in our prayers in this time of grief.

6. CANDY AND COOKIE SALE THIS Past SUNDAY!! Raised over \$500 for the Outreach Team.

DID YOU KNOW? That every Sunday sermon is recorded and is available for listening or down load through the Church’s web site: www.christchurchamherst.org. Click on worship then sermons. They are listed in chronological order and by title.

7. Those Pledge Cards continue to trickle in and it looks like this year’s pledges will be well over 10% above last year. THANK YOU for stepping up! If you haven’t yet turned in your card, please do so as soon as possible. Christ Church is living out its mission to ‘Live Christ’s Ways and Explode in Love and Service’.

YEAR END GIVING – Just a reminder that for gifts to be counted toward your 2014 giving we need them by the 31st of December.

8. SPEAKING OF SERVICE . . . Peggy Bermudez (and friends) has put together a couple of maps. One is Erie County and the other is the rest of the world. On the map is a representation of the agencies and ministries that the Christ Church community is engaged with around town and around the world. The display is in the parlor. Take a look and see that Christ Church people are in ministry in a multitude of places and ways!

9. In our prayers: Dave Mitchell and family as they grieve the passing of Dave’s mother Dorothy; Dr. Robert Nachbar is now at Wesley Rehab. Mail can be sent to: Room 710, Wesley Rehab at Beachwood Homes, 2235 Millersport Highway, Getzville, 14068;

Pastor Grace of Kirimandagi, Uganda was recently hospitalized for malaria; Mac Sabol (great to see Mac back in the choir this past Sunday); Dorothy Brown is home and appreciates your prayers and encouragement; Dona Dalton (Dona was my Administrative Assistant for 27 years in Syracuse. She is battling Lymphoma); Barb Critoph (recovering from knee surgery); Brian Martin (now home following bone marrow transplant); Glenn Hurst, Edmond Wrycza (Julianna Sabol's father in nursing home in Fort Erie); Lois Lewis, Barbara Clinton, Tom Davis, Fred Painton, Guy Castellino (and Guy's mother and father who are both dealing with major health matters); Mitch Mooney, Bim Rowlands, Nicky Sebastiano, Marion Steve, Ruth Kitson, Ruth Luss, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, Diane Lovejoy. Remember our service men and women and especially: Alex Dunbar, Ian Johnson and Lindsey Darling (all serving in the US Navy).

10. The next "pre work" men's breakfast will be on Thursday, December 18 at 7:00 a.m. at the Sheridan Family Restaurant.

11. This week at Christ Church:

Tuesday, December 16 – 7:30 Choir Rehearsal (NOTE CHANGE)

Thursday, December 18 – Men's breakfast at 7:00 a.m.

Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.

Worship Band rehearsal at 5:45p.m.

Friday, December 19 – Mission Youth at 6:30p.m.

Saturday, December 20 – Pageant Rehearsal at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 21 – "Kings of Orient, AR"

Monday, December 22 at 5:30p.m. – Final Disciple Class

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Celebrations at 9:00 p.m. and 11: 00

p.m.

12. Happy Birthday this week:

December 16 – Meaghan Ramsey; Ludwig Von Beethoven

December 17 – Gaetano Castellino

December 19 – Harold Ortman; Alexander Wilson

December 21 – Nicholas Terranova

December 23 – Lois Lewis; Jocelyn Reagan

December 25 – Tim Reed, Jesus of Nazareth (Observed)

13. Happy Anniversary this week:

December 23 – Peter and Patricia Zaleski (54)

December 25 – James and Rosemary Leas (63)

14. Through the Bible: This week's readings

December 16 – Joshua 16-18 and Luke 17

December 17 – Joshua 19-21

December 18 – Joshua 22-24 and Luke 18

December 19 – Nehemiah 1-3

December 20 – Nehemiah 4-6 and Luke 19

December 21 – Nehemiah 7-9
December 22 – Nehemiah 10-11 and Luke 20
December 23 – Nehemiah 12-13 and Luke 21
December 24 – Micah 1-3

15. MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

Uganda 2015 – Our team is nearly set. Dr. BJ Norrix will be leading a team of 8: John and Brandon Miller, Viki and Hannah Smith, Kathryn Weaver, Janelle Martin, and Erisawe Briere (and possibly ONE more). We will be travelling to Uganda for 2 weeks the end of June/July 2015. Your prayers are desired and appreciated. We will be visiting schools, presiding at Nexus graduations, dedicating water projects and a church, visiting an animal preserve, working in a health clinic and on a school and much, much more.

Food Pantry Collections: Just a reminder that we are always collecting!!

CANDY AND COOKIE SALE – raised over \$500 for our Outreach and Mission!!

Uganda Orphan sponsorships – we are trying to get the funds to the Blessed Junior School in Kirimandagi, Uganda (Luweero District) by the end of the year. If you are “sponsoring” the same child please let Janelle know as soon as possible. If you are not sponsoring this year let us know as soon as possible so we can arrange for other sponsors.

The Giving Tree – THANK YOU for all who gave to help brighten the lives of children across the Buffalo area!!

16. UGANDA TEAM raising funds:

1. WE are selling necklaces in Crafts Hall. These necklaces were made by a women’s ministry in Jinja, Uganda. This ministry is led by our friend Rev. Moses Wasige. The necklaces cost \$5 each and all proceeds go to support these women – most of whom are widows or single mothers. Thank you for your support.

2. Cowls, toys and Anderson Coupons – are also for sale to support the team (and members of the team). See our table in Crafts Hall. Handmade Cowls (by Kathryn Weaver) are \$25 each, the toys are a donation and the Anderson Coupon Books (over \$60 worth of coupons) are on sale for \$4 each.

17. Coming in January:

Action/Discussion Group resumes on Monday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. We came together to begin discussions of strengthening and building the ministries of Christ Church. The monitors, the 350 concert, and some new small groups have emerged from these discussions. These gatherings are open to all who wish to help build our community of faith.

Disciple Bible Study – information on the new class – Sunday, January 11 at 12:30 p.m. in the Wesley Room. Disciple is a 34 week in depth study of the Bible. If you are interested (and would like information in advance) see Pastor BJ

Current Disciple Group plans to continue with a new study – Want to join us? Let me know.

UMW and UMM are both meeting on Saturday, January 10 at 10:00 a.m. (The women are at the church the men are going to the HarborCenter).

Parting Thought

It is nine (9) days until Christmas and I am nowhere near ready. In fact, as I confessed this past Sunday, I've been feeling a little bit cranky. (Do you ever feel a little bit cranky this time of year?) I want to grumble at clerks and other drivers and all of the annoying noise. I have been trying to slow it down but I am sometimes overwhelmed by the drum beat, the commercials on radio and Television and the net; the incessant playing of "Christmas music" – some of which actually has something to do with the coming of our Savior; the rush, push, crush and general insanity of December in America. It makes me cranky and I know that this is a test of my faith. Will I be who I claim to be? Will I practice in very public ways my commitment to Jesus Christ? Will I grumble at the long lines and the harassed clerks and the overworked wait staff? Or will I be the agent of grace, peace and love that Jesus has called me to be. There are days when I want to sign on as a slap therapist (free sessions!!) and then I remember whose I am and who I represent. All that advice I've been giving about tuning out and turning it down and making quite space is not just a good idea – it is spiritual survival. Make space, make time, stop and smell the poinsettias . . . and above all else pray, read, listen and walk with God!

I'll see you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, missionary, lead servant, fellow struggler