

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York

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

UPDATE

December 19, 2012

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship

10:00 – FaithXpress and Soul Strength and AOL

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

Hi Everyone:

We are 6 days from the celebration of the Feast of the Incarnation. At Christ Church we will be taking time both Sunday (23rd) and Monday (24th) to tell the story of Jesus birth, to remember the events of his nativity, and to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have been preparing ourselves: We have looked to the second coming of Jesus; we have looked at the life of that barbarian John the Baptizer; we have considered the impact of John’s message “Change for the Kingdom of God has arrived.” Now that our hearts and homes are prepared we can pause, reflect, and rejoice that the Son of God is born into the world. Not only that, we can rejoice that the Son of God is born into our hearts and lives as well. Now is the time to gather with other Christ followers and sing, rejoice and be glad!. Venite Adoramus! (O Come Let us Adore Him!)

Here is what is happening at Church

1. Attendance last Sunday was 211. We rejoiced with Jamie and Brian Carney and the baptism of their son Evan Michael Carney. We rejoiced to welcome into membership of Christ Church Jamie and Brian Carney and back into the fellowship of Christ church our own Paula Kreib. We had an extraordinary day. Welcome new members and congratulations to the Carney family!

2. This Sunday is the 4th Sunday of Advent:

9:00 – we will have our praise and worship celebration and a message on the “Small Beginnings”

11:00 – we will have the Christmas Pagaent: “Tell Me The Story of Christmas” featuring our youth and children!

3. **MONDAY IS CHRISTMAS EVE** – Two opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus

9:00 p.m. – Lessons, Candles and Carols – featuring special choral music and a message from Pastor BJ

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

4. Remember to pick up your copy of “Let’s Remember Together” a collection of Christmas stories from the Christ Church family.

5. In our prayers: Jan Beckwith at Suburban after a fall; Don Munson, Nicky Sebastiano, Barbara McCray, Bim Rowlands, Ed Maker, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson; remember all of those in Newtown Connecticut (and the rest of us as well); remember those families in crisis and all who are looking for work.

6. Thursday, December 20 at 1:00 we will have a memorial service celebrating the life of Marion Swenson. Marion died last Thursday. She was 94 years old.

7. On behalf of the Christ Church Staff I want to thank all of our Christ Church family for their generosity and kindness in this Christmas season. The generosity of the gifts for the staff as well as the other kind remembrances throughout this season are deeply and greatly appreciated. So from Dave and Doris Elizabeth and Rachel and Sally and BJ THANK YOU and Merry Christmas.

8. Please add to your prayers one of my Nexus Seminary Uganda students who was seriously injured in a vehicle accident on Saturday. His name is Pastor Samuel Mwesigwa from Kikyusa Christian Centre. Mwesigwa, by the way, means “Faithful” in Lugandan.

9. Shirley Downey's daughter, Debbie Petri, called hoping we might be able to help her find someone to help with her mother. She is looking for someone in our community from about 40-60 who would be interested in working M-F 9a-2p. This would include being with her mother, picking up medicine, grocery shopping, and preparing lunch along with other light jobs around the house. She is looking for someone trustworthy, honest, and dependable and she would like to meet with whomever is interested as soon as possible. Position begins in January. This is a paid job, but I'm not sure what they are offering. If you are interested contact Debbie Petri at 374-0457

10. Happy Birthday this week:

December 19 – Harold Ortman; Alexander Wilson

December 21 – Nicholas Terranova
December 23 – Lois Lewis, Jocelyn Reagan
December 25 – Tim Reed; Jesus barjoseph of Nazareth (observed)
December 26 – Allen Dengler
December 27 – Laurie Hannon, Emily Scaringi

11. Happy Anniversary this week:

Peter and Patricia Zaleski – December 23, 1960 (52 years)
James and Rosemary Leas – December 25, 1951 (61 years)
Joseph and Carolyn Day – December 27, 1951 (61 years)

12. . MISSION REPORTS

A. **Disaster Relief:** we have collected over \$2000 for Hurricane Sandy relief. If you would like to contribute to the clean up and rebuilding mark your checks “3021787 for Hurricane Sandy Relief” and put it in the collection plate or send to the church office. Questions? Call the church office 839-2460. We are also still collecting Flood Bucket and Health Kit materials – see list on Web site christchurchamherst.org.

B. The Giving Tree **is now empty of tags and the tree has been surrounded with gifts for various children around the Buffalo area – THANK YOU.**

C. Remember to save Campbell’s labels, box tops for education, cancelled stamps (tear off envelop corner from cards) and Dash’s register tapes. Put in the containers on top of the microwave in the kitchen – Gateway-Longview benefits from this collection.

D. **Ugandan Orphans:** if you sponsored a Ugandan Orphan last year and would like to continue that sponsorship for 2013 please be sure to give your \$125 sponsor fee to the church office. Thanks!

13. This week at Christ Church

Wednesday, December 19 – 7:30 Church Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 20 1:00 – Marion Swenson memorial service
7:30 – Trustees

Saturday, December 22 – 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

Monday December 24 – 9:00 p.m. – Christmas lessons and candles and carols
11:00 p.m. – Christmas candles, carols and communion

14. Through the New Testament in 2012 see my commentary at

www.drbjthoughts.blogspot.com. Readings for this week: December 19 – Luke 20; December 20 – Luke 21; December 21 – Luke 22; December 24 – Luke 1; December 25 – Luke 2; December 26 – Luke 23; December 27 – Luke 24 and we are finished. Congratulations to all who answered the challenge and have been faithfully reading through the New Testament this year!!

In 2013 the challenge is to read the entire Bible. This will require three to four Bible chapters a day – schedule is in the caller and I will print it here as well.

15. **Israel Update – My friend Rev. Davis Matovu** has been cleared by the Israeli government to join us on our Israel journey. As of now we are still on for our late January 2013 journey to the Holy Land. Obviously, if it becomes unsafe we will postpone our journey but at this time we are good and ready to go. Keep the peace of the middle east in our prayers (and we travelers as well. Making this journey: Ed and Cindy Fisher, Don and Barb Critoph, Barbara Carrier, Marion Rowlands and Pastor BJ from Christ Church, we are being joined by 7 from Syracuse and now Rev. Davis Matovu. We leave January 28 and return February 6 (except Ed and Cindy who are going on an extension to see Petra in Jordan and will return on the 9th).

16. LOST COAT – 44L light Tan London Fog Raincoat – contact the church for more information

17. **Seneca Street Church After-School Program needs YOU!!!** During part of December and during the month of January we are without the college students that help our program survive. In addition, this year we will be without our Director during this time because she will be out on maternity leave enjoying her newborn baby girl!

The After-School Program runs Monday-Thursday from 2:30-5:30. Any help during the week would be greatly appreciated. The dates that we will need help include: Dec. 10-13, Jan 3&4, Jan 7-10, Jan 14-17 and Jan 22-24. If you are interested in any day please contact Cheryl Bird at [716-491-2200](tel:716-491-2200) or cbird@daemen.edu OR Jamie Ryder at [215-219-8765](tel:215-219-8765) or ryder.jamie@gmail.com. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

18. Christ Church will be participating in a church revitalization training experience in 2013 called “Hand to the Plow”. The training has been developed by Upper New York Conference Director of Congregational Revitalization, Rev. Aaron Bouwens. The training will involve 9 sessions for clergy and 4 sessions for clergy and laity teams from participating congregations. I am looking for 10 to 12 Christ Church members who would be willing to participate in this event. All four sessions will be in 2013 and will be scheduled to accommodate normal work routines. If God is calling you to be a part of this training please see me. I have 5 on my list already. I believe this will help us to move toward our goal of 500 in worship and 100 in Christian Education by 2015.

Parting Thought:

With the nation still reeling from the events in Newtown I am encouraging all of us to hold the victims’ families in our prayers as we move toward the celebration of Christmas. Please pray for our teachers who could see themselves in similar situations. Please pray for the parents and siblings and grandparents etc. of those killed as they grieve. Take a moment and light a candle. We are about to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. We are about to celebrate the birth of the Savior of the World. We are preparing for the Feast of the Incarnation – the day God took human form and dwelt among us. How can I best show the world that I am a Christ follower? I can do so by working for peace and justice. I can do so by caring for the “least of these my brothers and sisters.” I can do so by allowing the Christ life within me to

mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. How would Jesus respond to these situations? I suspect we would see two things: one is compassion, deep soul healing compassion for those who are grieving; the other would be a raising of awareness of our profound brokenness that leads to violence and destruction. I might add a third in our democratic society: we recognize a primary purpose of the law is to protect those who cannot protect themselves (the Bill of Rights is designed to protect the rights of the few from the tyranny of the majority). What boundaries on access to assault weapons should be put in place to protect the innocent? What access to mental health care should be put in place to help those who are so emotionally and psychologically broken that they resort to violent acts like this? We were taught to pray "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." I have come to believe that when I pray that I am also committing myself to doing all I can to make the coming kingdom of Christ a reality in my life, in my home, and in our world.

Have a blessed celebration of the Feast of the Incarnation (aka Christmas)!

BJ Norrix, missionary, coach, celebrant!

This e-mail is a communication ministry of the Christ United Methodist Church, Snyder, New York. If you do not wish to receive this e-mail please respond: remove. Feel free to share this with friends and family.