

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York

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

UPDATE December 5, 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.drjithoughts.blogspot.com

Hi Everyone:

We are one Sunday into our Advent adventure. Are you preparing for the coming of Christ? What are you doing to get ready? We have hung lights, we have strung garland, we have put on a festive air on the outside but what is touching us on the inside? Have you found a quiet place for prayer and reflection? When I am getting ready for the celebration of the Feast of the Incarnation (aka Christmas) I like to be reminded of the story so I read Luke 1 and 2, Matthew 1 and 2, John 1 and Colossians 1. These passages remind me that God is becoming a human being and is dwelling among us. John 1 says “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”. It is vital for our journey to not just dress up the outside we need to dress up our hearts and minds and redress our souls to know the coming of Christ!

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was about 170 in our two morning gatherings. Thank you to Tammy Mugel and her Worship/Altar Guild team for the beautiful decorations in the sanctuary. The two flanking trees in the Chancel are beautiful.

2. This Sunday is the 2nd Sunday of Advent. I will be preaching a message titled “Can you hear me now?” from Luke 3:1-6. John the Baptist has arrived to prepare the way for Jesus. He is an uncivilized barbarian sent to stir the hearts of people to come back to God. It often takes those living on the fringe to get the rest of us to look at the realities of our spiritual lives.

Remember at 10:00 the AOL group is studying “Christmas is not Your Birthday” by Mike Slaughter. Copies are available. This Advent study is about seeking a different kind of Christmas.

At 12:30 (following the 11:00 worship) the Israel travel group is meeting in the Wesley room.

3. In our prayers: Don Munson, Nicky Sebastiano, Barbara McCray, Juliana Sabol, Bim Rowlands, Ed Maker, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, all those grieving, those looking for work, families in crisis.

4. I was privileged to attend the dedication of the Habit for Humanity Women Build house on Guilford street this past Sunday. It was a great joy to see the new family moving into their home and to rejoice with the Women of Christ church who invested many hours of sweat equity into helping build this home. Bill and Marg Bouza provided music for this event (including an original song by Marg). We are proud of all of you!

5. **MYM (Mid Years & Ministry) Christmas Party** – Friday December 7 at 5:30 in Crafts Hall. Dinner is open for **EVERYONE** (not just MYMers). Appetizers and Punch at 5:30 with Dinner at 6:00. It is *Christmas in Italy – “Buon Natale!”* Tickets are \$18 and are on sale in Crafts Hall this Sunday. All proceeds will benefit the Youth Group. Special music will be provided by the Amherst Male Glee Club performing holiday classics, sing along carols and original songs. Tickets are still available but must be reserved in advance.

6. **LET’S REMEMBER TOGETHER** – Do you have a special Christmas memory from a church gathering or including your church family? Maybe it’s from your childhood? Maybe it was last year? The timing doesn’t matter! The memory does. This year Christ Church is inviting you to remember Christmas past and the joys that your church has brought to your celebrations. Submit your story to Rachel in the church office or to CUMC350@gmail.com.

7. 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.

B. The Giving Tree has appeared in Crafts Hall There are still tags available for the Three Kings Day celebration at Primera Iglesia UMC (in Hispanic cultures the celebration of Epiphany (Three Kings Day) is a greater celebration than Christmas). Take a tag (or more) fulfill the wish and bring it back to church **unwrapped** by December 9. **That is we need these back by THIS SUNDAY!! (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!

E. **Youth Group** – The Christ Church Youth group is providing a special dinner for the Seneca Street Church on December 16. They are looking for donations for HAMS and apple sauce. Contact Viki Smith at 839-1989 for more information.

8. On the Church Schedule this week:

Wednesday, December 5 – Choir Rehearsal at 7:30

Thursday, December 6 – Bible Study at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Room

Friday, December 7 – Books Loved at 10:00 a.m.

9. Through the New Testament in 2012 – we are coming down the “home stretch”. This week's reading: December 5 – Luke 10; December 6 – Luke 11; December 7 – Luke 12; December 10 – Luke 13; December 11 – Luke 14; December 12 – Luke 15. Remember to follow BJ's blog at www.drjbithoughts.blogspot.com.

A new reading schedule will begin on January 1.

10. HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK:

December 5 – Jean Ericson

December 6 – Christian Kennedy, Diane Klenk

December 7 – Matt LaVigne, Alicia Ticconi

December 8 – Michael Keller, Rachel Wenner

December 11 – Ed Fisher, Gavin Gabel, Geoff Hill

11. There are no anniversaries listed for this week.

12. **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!

13. Upcoming worship schedule:

Sunday, December 9 – 2nd Sunday of Advent “Can You Hear Me Now?”

Sunday, December 16 – 3rd Sunday of Advent “Belief we can Change in!”

Sunday, December 23 – 4th Sunday of Advent and Annual Children’s Christmas Program

Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve – Worship Celebrations at 9:00 (with choir and special music) and 11:00 with carols and communion

Sunday, December 30 – 1st Sunday of Christmas “Out with the Old, In with the New!”

14. A number of you have asked already so here is my answer: ***YES I am planning to return to Uganda in 2013.*** At this point I am planning to travel in the first 2+ weeks of November, 2013. If you feel the pull and call of God to travel with us you would be more than welcome – come see me and we’ll talk and pray and see what God has in mind. The work that my team does has to do with who is on the team. We had nurses this year so we did medicine. In previous years I have traveled with teachers (who worked with schools) musicians who worked with musicians and others. If God is calling you to serve in this way I want to help you realize that calling.

15. **Israel Update – I’ve just learned that my friend Rev. Davis Matovu** has been cleared by the Israeli government to join us on our Israel journey (now to figure out how I am going to pay for it). 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.

Parting Thought:

What will it take to get ready? How many times have we heard this? The call comes in the night and there is a crisis that needs our attention. We know we are heading out to whatever the crisis might be but in our minds the mental calculations are going on (do I have time for a shower? Can I make a cup of coffee?) – how long will it take to get ready? We are preparing for a major change in our lives and there is some lead time necessary, some preparations are necessary and we ask: how long will it take to get ready? Advent features John the Baptist. John came preaching a baptism for starting over. John is God’s advance man. His job is pretty simple. His job is to call people out of the comfort and luxury and security of their homes and into the wilderness. His job is to announce that Christ is coming and it is time to get ready. He never says how long it will take he just says get ready. What will it take for me to be ready for the coming of Christ this year? What will it take for me to get ready? We trim the hearth and set the table but will be ready for the Christmas miracle. I believe we can only find what we are looking for. If we seek what we have always sought we stand a good chance of getting

what we always got. Why not get ready for a fresh renewal, why not get ready for the Christmas miracle – the Creator of the universe became one of us and lived among us.

I'll see you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, missionary, lead servant, seeker of miracles

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