

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York

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

UPDATE

February 11, 2014

EVERYONE is WELCOME

EVERY SUNDAY AT CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship

10:00 – FaithXpress/soul Strength/AOL (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
716-839-2460

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

Hi Everyone:

I have not been watching the Olympics. I know it probably makes me un-American or un-sportsmanlike or maybe just un-involved. The truth is I’m just un-interested. Every ski jump looks like the others and they just don’t crash enough to make it really interesting (does anyone else remember the UK skier Eddie - I can’t remember his last name – who called himself a ski plunger?). I know some of Christ Church folks engage in Curling, but it is certainly not exactly a “made for TV” kind of sport. I’m sure it is much more fun to play than to watch. Over the years I have been a big fan of Olympic competition but somehow or another it just hasn’t gotten my attention this time around. There is a lot in life that comes and goes like that. Moments of intense interest that fades and wanes over time. All too often we allow this to happen to our spiritual lives. We have intense moments of great connection to God and we walk in that relationship for a season or two but

lose interest when the initial connection seems to fade or other bright shiny objects clamor for our attention. That fading interest is nothing new. Moses met with God “as a man meets with his friend (Exodus 33:11).” The bible says that after Moses had met with God his face shone with the reflected glory of God (sounds pretty intense). Moses put a veil over his face so that the reflected glory would not scare anyone. But, and here’s the kicker, the glory faded over time. The longer Moses was out of the presence of God the less glory remained. Maybe that is the key for many of us. We are trying to live with unveiled faces while holding on to former glory. The solution is pretty simple: rekindle the first love; reignite the relationship; take the next step on the spiritual journey and do this every day!

Here is what is happening at Christ Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 120. Wouldn’t it be nice if just once this calendar year we could have a Sunday morning and it wasn’t snowing? Special appreciation to Mac Sabol for his gift of music this past week. We learned to “be good!”

We also celebrated Dorothy Brown’s 99th birthday.

We had a great time with the MYM’s soup and sandwich luncheon and special guest Susanna Wesley (aka Denise Reichard).

2. This Sunday is part 7 of the “Fruit of the Spirit” series. We will be talking about faithfulness. That seems appropriate this close to Valentine’s Day – faithfulness. What does it mean to be faithful? How can we be more faithful in all our living?

3. In our prayers: Sean Brown, still hospitalized in West Virginia; Mary Jo Evans is now home after an overnight at Suburban; family of Ruth Anderson; family of Carl Ericson (memorial planned for Palm Sunday weekend); Peggy Bermudez (recovering from Surgery); 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 military (especially Alex and Ian). Remember those who are looking for work. Remember families in crisis. Remember your church and our leaders.

4. Ruth Anderson’s funeral will be Thursday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Dietrich Funeral Home on Kensington Avenue. Friends may call on the family from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Interment will be Friday morning at St. Matthews Cemetery in West Seneca.

5. The Men’s Club had a great time at the Car Show and Chef’s for lunch. Thank you Tom Nye and others for organizing this outing.

The “Pre-work” breakfast group met last Friday and will meet again on Thursday, February 27th at 7:00 a.m. at the Original Pancake House on Main Street in Williamsville. All Men are invited.

6. This Week at Christ Church:

Tuesday, February 11 – Stewardship and Finance Team at 7:00

Wednesday, February 12 – Choir Practice at 7:30

Thursday, February 13 – Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.

7. The Food Pantry is collecting toiletry Items this week – any size any item. Place in the grocery carts at the church.

8. The Discussion/Action Group held its first meeting last night. Our conversation focused on how we got here and the urgency of the need to move forward.

Worship attendance at Christ Church was in the low 700’s in the mid 1970’s and has fallen to 137 in 2013. We are smaller and older. If we don’t begin to move forward with the vitality we have now we will not be able to move forward later.

We discussed how we can be a Community Center of Faith and how we can more effectively build community as a Christian congregation so that we can more effectively connect with the wider community around us. As we go deeper in our relationship with God and one another we go wider in our connection to the world around us – as we grow wider in our relationships with the world around us we are driven deeper in our relationship with God. The next OPEN meeting will be held on Monday March 10th at 7:00 in the Wesley Room. We will be discussing and beginning action on small groups, fellowships, classes Everyone needs a place to grow deeper in their relationship with God with themselves and with others.

9. The new Church Directories are now available. If you were photographed for the directory your new book is available through the church office or they are on at a table in the parlor on Sunday mornings. If you were not photographed and would like a directory see Janelle, she has extras.

Online Church Directory is now available. A new tool to enable us all to stay in touch. If you wish to access the church directory from our website, please contact Janelle (839-2460) in the church office for your unique username and password.

10. Happy Birthday this week:

February 11 – Jayne Kremzier

February 12 – Beth Sweet

February 13 – Diane Lovejoy
February 14 – Peter Shanley; Olivia Smith
February 15 – Donna Yungbluth
February 17 – Marilyn Welker

11. LENTEN SUPPER AND STUDY

Will run from March 5 (Ash Wednesday) through April 9 from 5:30 to 7:30. Everyone is invited to use the Lenten season to create a space in your life that will enable you to grow deeper in your faith. Following a shared meal we will participate in a mini retreat reflecting on season Bible readings and personal stories that will help us apply them to our own lives. Using the book, God's Gift of Life, by Larry Beman, we'll be guided to experience the blessings of life given to us through the life, suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Rev. Beman served as an Associate Pastor at Christ Church. Books are available through Sally Pollard – suggested donation of \$5.

MARCH 5 is Ash Wednesday worship with the imposition of ashes will be at 7:00

12. Through the Bible in 2014

February 11 – Isaiah 50-52 and Mark 12
February 12 – Isaiah 53-55 and Mark 13
February 13 – Isaiah 56-58
February 14 – Isaiah 59-61
February 15 – Isaiah 62-64
February 16 – Isaiah 65-66 and Mark 14
February 17 – Exodus 1-3; Mark 15
February 18 – Exodus 4-6
February 19 – Exodus 7-8 and Mark 16

13. . **MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunity 1: We need people to sign up to host morning coffee hour – sign up is outside the Kitchen.

Opportunity 2: A chart has been posted in Crafts Hall for those wishing to sign up to donate flowers for worship in 2014.

Opportunity 3: We are putting together a worship “creative” team. Want to be a part of this group? Let BJ know.

14. **Mission Opportunities:**

Opportunity 1: **UGANDA 2014**. I am planning to travel in early October this Fall to continue our work in Uganda. Is God Calling you to join me? This journey is 9 months away so I will need to know soon – Tickets will likely be purchased in March/April.

Opportunity 2: Rev. Davis Matovu (our Uganda Mission partner) will be in the US in April and May and will be preaching at Christ Church on the 2nd Sunday of May. Watch for more.

Opportunity 3: Uganda Orphans – it is time to re-sponsor our Kirimandagi orphans. The cost is \$125/year. Write the check to Christ Church and put in the memo line “Uganda Orphan”. See Janelle for more information. **We have a couple of unsponsored children . . . want in see Janelle.**

Opportunity 4: MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY is only 14 weeks from Sunday . . . many new projects are being planned.

15. MISSION YOUTH – FIRST MEETING February 28 at 6:30 at the Parsonage (aka BJ’s house) at 320 Saratoga.

What is Mission Youth? It is a monthly gathering of youth for fellowship, learning, prayer, fun, and mission engagement. Parents and youth have been invited but if you qualify and didn’t get an invite let me know. Please let Sally Pollard know if you are coming!

16. SHOES *Christ United Methodist Church Launches Shoe Drive to Support Microenterprise in Developing Nations, and Help the Environment*

The public is invited to Make A Difference by donating used shoes February 18 – May 18

Christ United Methodist Church is conducting a shoe collection drive on February 18 – May 18 to benefit small business ventures in developing nations and keeping old shoes out of local landfills. Individuals can help by donating used shoes at Christ Church.

In the US alone, approximately 630 million pairs of shoes are thrown away per year. The materials used to manufacture a pair of shoes are created from chemical compounds that create health hazards when left to disintegrate openly or in landfills. By donating your used shoes to the Shoe Drive, your shoes are given a second chance to make a difference. All donated shoes will be redistributed to microenterprise partners and used in developing nations for impoverished people to start, maintain, and grow a unique business opportunity to feed, clothe, and house their families. The additional advantage of this shoe collection is diverting shoes from the waste stream and landfills and creating commerce and sustainability in peoples’ lives.

The shoe drive is just one part of Christ Church's annual "Make A Difference" Day, which takes place on Sunday, May 18. On site will be trucks collecting kitchen appliances for Habitat for Humanity, household goods to benefit Journey's End refugee resettlement, clothing for Asbury Shalom Zone located on the west side of Buffalo and a Shred-It truck provided by our community partner, Allaire Financial Strategies. Bring your old files and papers to be shredded onsite in a safe secure manner.

Members of the community are invited to make a difference in the lives of others by donating items no longer needed or wanted. They may also help by joining us on May 18 anytime between 10am to 1pm to welcome neighbors, sort items and load the trucks. Contact Sally Pollard at Christ Church with your questions, 839-2460.

17. Christ Church is blessed with excellent gathering and fellowship space. One of the most popular is the **Café on Sunday morning**. The café provides hot and cold beverages and tasty snacks before and following our Sunday worship gatherings. What makes this work is a lot of volunteers who "Host" the café by preparing coffee/tea, etc. and putting the snacks out and then cleaning up afterwards. Would you like to help in this vital hospitality ministry of our Church? Contact Sally Pollard at 839-2460 or by signing up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Café.

Parting Thought:

Ah, Valentine's Day. Hearts and flowers and chocolates and dinner out; a modern American celebration of romance. The cultural pressure from all the advertising would seem indicate that unless you have someone you are romantically connected to you aren't worth bothering with. It would seem to indicate that the only way show love and affection is through expensive and/or perishable gifts. Even so, I am reminded that even in the romantic songs the desire to pledge faith and to make binding promises is very strong. Somehow Valentine's Day on the same weekend as we examine the fruit of the spirit called Faithfulness has to be the work of God. St. Valentine was not a celebrant of "romance." He was incarcerated and later martyred for assisting Christians enduring persecution and for performing marriages (when it was illegal to do so). It is widely believed that the association with romance began in the time of Chaucer and is linked to an early English belief that mid February was the time that the birds began their pairing. What would love look like if romance was paired with this week's fruit of faithfulness. Yes we would seek to rekindle our relationships and yes we would seek to "spice up" our marriages but the underlying value would be "keeping faith" with one another.

How would this look if we applied faithfulness to all of our relationships? How would this look for all of us (not just the “paired” or “married”)? What would it look like if every one of us chose to be truth keepers and truth tellers and were faithful in all our dealings? I believe the fruit of the spirit we call Love when paired with Faithfulness produces healthy, vital and transformational relationships.

I’ll see you when the Faith Community gathers,

BJ Norrix, missionary, lover, lead servant

This email is a communication ministry of the Christ UMC in Amherst, New York. If you do not wish to receive this email please let me know.