

***Christ United Methodist Church
Harlem at Saratoga
Amherst, New York***

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

UPDATE

February 26, 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:

We are wrapping up our “Fruit that is Never Out of Season” series this Sunday. For the past nine Sundays, I have been discussing the produce of a life lived in Faith. The evidence of the transformation of our lives through our contact with the Holy Spirit are these vital characteristics: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and, finally, this Sunday we look at Self Control. Although these are character traits everyone should work toward, the point of the Bible is that God forms these in us through relationship and through life experience. They are evidence of progress. In my journey of faith I have become aware that there are some things I have to work at: attitudes that need adjusting; behaviors that need modifying; and practices that need to be adopted. I have also become aware that some characteristics of the spiritual life are not earned

(like merit badges) but are grown and formed and shaped within us through exposure to the source of the characteristics and life experience. In order to be more loving I need to draw close to the one who is called love; to be more joyful I need to walk with the source of all joy, etc. As we approach the beginning of the season of Lent I will be encouraging all of us to make space in our daily lives to draw closer to God so that the opportunity to bear fruit in our lives may increase.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the 130's – finally a Sunday without Snow. Special appreciation to Mac and Juliana Sabol for their extraordinary gift of music.

2. This Sunday, March 2, we will be looking at the 9th fruit of the spirit: Self Control. The older word is “temperance” which has come to mean “abstinence from alcohol” in our language. However, temperance had a much deeper meaning. It meant to go so far and no farther. It meant to live life in the balance. We can demonstrate intemperate behavior in our language, our hobbies, our work lives . . . somewhere in the midst of all of life's options there is a call to live life in the balance and that, above all, requires us to have formed in us self control.

This Sunday is also a Communion Sunday.

3. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5 is ASH WEDNESDAY – there will be a service of worship at 7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent was designed by the early Christians as a season of penance and fasting in preparation for the great feast and celebration of resurrection day! Those who had been separated from the church and those who were preparing for baptism used the Lenten season as a time of final experience and instruction. I invite all of us to observe a holy lent.

4. WEDNESDAY, March 5 is also the beginning of our Lenten suppers and study. We will gather at 5:30. We are invited to use Lent to create a space in our lives that will enable us to grow deeper in our faith. After a shared meal (at 5:30) we will have a mini retreat tie, reflecting on seasonal Bible readings and personal stories that will help us apply them our own lives. We will be using the book, God's Gift of Life by Larry Beman. Books are available through Sally Pollard (\$5 donation is suggested). At this first gathering we will break at 7:00 to join the Ash Wednesday observance.

5. In our Prayers: Mitch Mooney (now doing rehab at Beachwood) – he and Sissy are moving to Amberleigh the first of March; Sean Brown is now home in Amherst and recovering; Fred Painton, Guy Castellino, 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 Ian and Alex) pray for our college students (nearing Midterm); pray for those looking for work; remember our missionaries around the world.

6. We are remembering Alice Parsons who died on February 16. Alice and her husband Rev. Norm Parsons were a missionaries to Japan (and supported by the Christ church family). She was 89. The Japanese doll located in the parlor display case was a gift to Christ church from the Parsons.

7. We celebrate with Stuart and Jamilyn Woodside on the birth of their first child: Violet Carole on February 10. Proud grandparents are Stuart and Helen Woodside.

8. This Week at Christ Church:

Wednesday, February 26 – Choir Rehearsal at 7:30

Thursday, February 27 – Men’s pre-work breakfast at 7:00 at Original Pancake House in Williamsville

Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.

Friday, February 28 – Youth/Parent Pizza Party from 6:30 to 9:00 at Parsonage (BJ’s house)

7:00 – Game Night

Monday, March 3 – Band Rehearsal at 6:00

SPRC meeting at 7:00

Wednesday, March 5 – ASH WEDNESDAY

Lenten Supper and Study at 5:30

Ash Wednesday service at 7:00

9. MEN –

Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 a.m. some of us are gathering at the Original Pancake House on Main Street in Williamsville for conversation, community and, eventually, a little study. This is an open gathering for all men.

Saturday, March 8 – Vietnam presentation in the Wesley Room at 10:00 a.m.

10. WOMEN

General Meeting is March 8 at 10:00 a.m. in celebration of Women’s History month the speaker will be story teller Carol Ann Gleason. Breakfast is \$5.

11. MARCH 10 – Discussion Action Group will meet again at 7:00 in the Wesley Room. This is a group in the spirit of Nehemiah (rebuilding) and Joel (dreams and visions) it is open to all who are interested in helping revitalize the Christ Church community. Last month we discussed our small group life. After hearing reports and making plans for better group life, we will continue our prayer and exploration.

12. Mission of the Month for March is UMCOR – we will be making flood buckets – watch for more information. Our goal is to fill 25 5 gallon flood buckets. Each bucket has the following: Two (25 z) laundry detergent 12 –16 oz. liquid household cleaner 16 –20 oz. dish soap Aerosol air freshener 6 –14 oz. Insect repellent Scrub brush 18 cleaning wipes 7 sponges 5 scouring pads 50 clothes pins 100' clothes line 24 heavy duty trash bags 5 dust masks 2 pair rubber gloves 1 pair work gloves (cotton with leather palms). Most items can be purchased at the dollar store.

13. 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.

14. Happy Birthday this week:

February 26 – Caroline Hess; Linda Parete

February 27 – Janice Beckwith, Michele Sciolino

February 28 – Aston Hannon

March 1 – Marcia Snyder

March 2 – Gregory Yungbluth

March 4 – Kara Panasiewicz

March 5 – Clem Arrison

15. Through the Bible in a year: this week's readings

February 26 – Exodus 23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2

February 27 – Exodus 25-26; 2 Thessalonians 3

February 28 – Exodus 27-28; Philemon

March 1 – Exodus 29-30; James 1

March 2 – Exodus 31-33; James 2
March 3 – Exodus 34-35; James 3
March 4 – Exodus 36-38; James 4
March 5 – Exodus 39-40; James 5
March 6 – Job 1-2; 1 Corinthians 1

16. MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES (ministry is what we do for the existing church community)

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.

17. Mission Opportunities: (Mission is what we do for those who are not yet part of the church community)

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 12 weeks from Sunday . . . many new projects are being planned.

18. WE WANT YOUR SHOES!!!

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.

Shoe bags and rubber bands can be picked up at the church. 25 pairs to a bag!

19. 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.

20. MISSION YOUTH – launch event. Pizza Party at the Parsonage. Parents and youth will be gathering at 6:00 for fun, Bible study, mission conversation, dreams, fun, (did I mention Pizza), prayer, fun, and a look to the future. Tell Sally Pollard that you are coming.

21. COMING EVENTS

Holy Week is April 13 through 20 – watch for more
Palm Sunday – April 13 – Kevin Durkin Organ Recital at 3:00 p.m.
May 16 – Church-Wide Variety Show (sponsored by UMW) – watch for
more
May 18 – Make a Difference Day

Parting Thought:

Lent is a time to slow down. Lent is a time to “be still and Know that God is God”. Lent is a time to “screw down the spiritual plow” and go deeper on this journey. It would be easy to reduce the season to a period of not doing something. All too often we treat Lent as a time to engage in some form of fasting where I don’t eat candy or drink pop or skip a meal – and some of this could be very beneficial. Unfortunately that behavior often gives us the illusion that we are in control that, somehow, spiritual development is like going to the spiritual muscle gym (we pick things up we put them down). Lent is not a time of effort but a time of intentionality. What practices will I adopt for the next 40 days that will help me draw near to God? First the good news: God has already drawn near to you. In fact it is not possible for God to be any closer. Now the bad news: attitudes, behaviors, our essential human brokenness all create the illusion of distance. When I am preoccupied with me and mine and what I want I am oblivious to the presence of God in each and every moment. Lent is a time to become aware. I have put together a little Lent devotional guide. It is a 10 minute guide to prayer that I have made available beginning Sunday, March 2. When we make time and space in our lives to connect with God we discover that God is already present with us and we take the next step deeper on our spiritual journey.

I’ll see you when the Church gathers.

BJ Norrix, missionary, lead servant, coach

This email is a communication ministry of the Christ UMC in Amherst, New York.
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