

UPDATE

February 24, 2015
Christ United Methodist Church

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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Hi Everyone:

We are into the season of Lent. How are you doing? Are you using the “cabin fever” weather to fret and worry or are you making some extra space to listen, to pray, to read or to engage in any of the other spiritual disciplines? I’m told that upstate New York and western New York cities are setting record temperatures for cold. My guess is a lot of the homes in the Buffalo area have some kind of ice damage and internal leakage. There is not much that can be done except to wait for the thaw and pray for warmer temperatures. Eventually the days will warm and the sap will flow and we’ll move out of deep winter into the maple season. After this come the first crocuses and snow drops

and later the other bulbs. Soon after it will be early summer and strawberries and we'll move into the fruitful cycle of life in this part of the world. The best part about celebrating the changing seasons is the knowledge that they always change. I am learning to embrace change and it is not always easy. Someone, I can't remember who, once said that change is the only constant in the universe. I agree with that statement with one caveat: God. God never changes. Our perceptions, our understandings and our experiences of God may be constantly changing but God does not change. In the cycle of our ever changing world there is only one anchor. Are you making space this Lent to deepen your hold on the anchor (or allowing the anchor to take a deeper hold of you?)? Here's what I know from my own experience: the closer I get to God, the more willing I am to embrace change and to take great risks for His sake.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We had great improvement in our worship attendance this week (from 55 to nearly 90). One thing about this winter that deeply distresses me is how it is keeping people from participating in worship and the life of the community (come on spring!). My message was about not judging others.

There were almost 30 of us here for a cold and snowy Ash Wednesday.

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

2. This Sunday, March 1, is the 2nd Sunday of Lent. I will be preaching from Matthew 7:13-22. What does it mean to live the life of an apprentice to Jesus? What does it mean to bear fruit?? We will also be celebrating Holy Communion together.

3. Death notice #1: We learned of the passing of Marion Steve last week. There are no calling hours and the funeral services will be private. Marian was a long time member of the Christ Church family.

4. Death notice #2: Marjorie Facklam died on Friday. Marg became a member of Christ Church in 1950 (in that first wave) and was a well-known author of children's non-fiction. A Memorial Service celebrating her life will be here at Christ Church on Saturday, March 14 at 11:00 a.m. There will be a luncheon to follow. Keep her family and friends in your prayers as they grieve.

5. In our prayers: Pray for spiritual renewal in our midst that would draw people to Jesus; Pray for the family and friends of **Marion Steve** who died last week; pray for the family and friends of **Marjorie Facklam** who died on Friday; Pray for **Todd and Mary Jo Evans** – Todd is now at Wesley Rehab (room 714) and has an appointment at Roswell today to explore treatments for liver cancer; Pray for **Sue and Harley Estee** – they have finished radiation treatments and are on the road to healing; **Jan Rhinehart** undergoing tests; **Sharon Ferrelli** is meeting with oncologists and will begin follow up treatment from her cancer surgery early in March; **Dr. Robert Nachbar** has moved to Blocher Homes Room 224 Blocher Homes 135 Evans St, Williamsville, NY. 14221-9244, Phone #: 716-568-9628; **Julianna Sabol** is recovering from outpatient surgery; **Chuck Gilbert**, following a recent hospital stay; Dorothy Brown; Dona Dalton; Brian Martin for continued healing; 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, Ruth Kitson, Ruth Luss, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, Diane Lovejoy; and all those who are dealing with colds, flu and bronchitis. Remember our service men and women (domestic and foreign) especially: Alex Dunbar, Ian Johnson and Lindsey Darling (all serving in the US Navy). Pray for the members of our congregation who are headed south for some winter reprieve (and for the rest of us who have to stay here!).

6. On the ***Wish List: the Church's snow blower*** (which has lasted over 15 years of heavy duty use) is on its last legs. The Trustees would like to purchase a new, commercial grade snow blower that would cost about \$2500. Is this something you'd like to purchase for your church? See me or Tom Weaver if you'd like to help.

7. This week at Christ Church:

Wednesday, February 25 – 5:30p.m. Lenten Supper and Study in the Café
Wednesdays, February 18 through April 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. You are 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, Dr. David Pliss will lead us in a mini retreat time using the book Mosaic by Shane Stanford. We will explore how God wants to use the broken pieces of our lives to reframe our purpose. Books are available from Sally Pollard.

Wednesday, February 25 --7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 26 – 10:00a.m. Bible Study

7:00p.m. Discussion/Action Group

Friday, February 27 – 7:00p.m. – Game Night in the Wesley Room
Tuesday, March 3 – 2:00p.m. Pastor BJ at Asbury Pointe
Thursday, March 5 – Living Well Coaches training continues at 7:00p.m.

8. FOOD PANTRY – RICE and mashed potatoes

9. **Uganda Team Fund Raisers and events** (come and help us out)

A. **Anderson's Coupon Books – Uganda team** is selling these books for \$4. They contain over \$60 worth of coupons and all proceeds benefit the Uganda 2015 trip.

B. We are also selling handmade Ugandan bead necklaces for \$5 each. Contact Janelle (839-2460) for more information. Proceeds support two ministries in Uganda.

C. **Ron Corsaro Trio** in Concert on **March 13 at 7:00p.m.** Come and join us in the Bistro/Café in Crafts Hall for an evening of Jazz. Cost: donation to support the team.

D. **Krolick's Fish Fry – is scheduled for April 10 here at Christ Church** – Tickets are \$12 and will be available in advance.

E. We are planning a chicken barbecue in early May (watch for more details as the date approaches).

10. FAMILY PROMISE – It is our turn to host on Friday, March 6. Help is needed for preparing and serving the meal as well as visiting and spending the night. If you would like to help, please contact Lee Watson (837-0589).

11. Happy Birthday this week:

February 25 – Viki Smith

February 26 – Linda Parete

February 27 – Janice Beckwith; Michele Sciolino

February 28 – Ashton Hannon

March 1 – Marcia Snyder

March 2 – Gregory Yungbluth

March 4 – Kara Panasiewicz

12. I have no anniversaries listed for this week.

13. HEARTS AND HANDS – wants to remind you that their website is a convenient way to find out more about their organization. Learn how easy it is to become a volunteer, find out what services they provide to care receivers, see all the exciting events planned for the future, and even make a donation. Visit www.hnhcares.org today.

14. NORTHTOWN CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S CONNECTION LUNCHEON – All women are welcome to join us for a luncheon on Wednesday, February 25 at 11:30 a.m. at Christ Church. Homemade soups and desserts are the menu. Veronica Hogle, a native of Ireland and lace collector, will share the story of Irish Lace and the important role it played during the Irish potato famine in her presentation: "Lace: Threads of Survival for a starving People" Cost is \$8. Contact Peggy Bermudez (626-4897) for reservations.

15. Bible Readings this week

February 24 – Numbers 14-16 and Mark 3

February 25 – Numbers 17-18; Psalm 29 and Mark 4

February 26 – Numbers 19-20; Psalm 28 and Mark 5

February 27 – Numbers 21-23 and Mark 6-7

February 28 – Numbers 24-27

March 1 – Numbers 28-29 and Mark 8

March 2 – Numbers 30-31 and Mark 9

March 3 – Numbers 32-33 and Mark 10

March 4 – Numbers 34-36 and Mark 11

HERE'S A WAY TO ENHANCE YOUR BIBLE READING: Try keeping a Journal. Sometimes, when you are reading, something in the reading will speak to you or stand out to you. Take a moment and write down the SCRIPTURE. Then make an OBSERVATION (what spoke to me??). Thirdly, ask "How would I APPLY this to my life. Finally, make what you learned into a PRAYER. This method of bible reading is called the S.O.A.P. method and allows us to ask "how will I be different because of what I just read?"

16. **MISSION OPPORTUNITIES**

A. Uganda 2015 – The team is 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. We will be travelling to Uganda June 28 through July 14. 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 a school and much, much more.

B. MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY we are beginning to set up projects and mission opportunities for our annual Make a Difference Day the third Sunday of May. Have an idea or a project? Let Janelle know at your earliest convenience.

17. **Uganda Bibles:** For our graduates in Rakai and Nakasangola, I need to purchase a case and a half of Lugandan language bibles (every graduate of Nexus Seminary, Uganda, receives Bible study resources, a Bible (English or Lugandan), and a copy of my Bible Primer (in English or Lugandan). The purchase price for 33 of these Bibles is \$400. Would you like to be the donor of these Bibles? Please see me (BJ) if you'd like to make this gift.

18. Coming Soon:

March 6 – World Day of Prayer (UMW Sponsored) will be at St. Paul's Lutheran Church 4007 Main Street, Eggertsville, NY 14226

March 13 – Ron Corsaro and friends in concert, Crafts Hall Coffee House (bistro?) see above for details.

March 14 – Marjorie Facklam Memorial Service

March 21 – Amherst Lions Club Pancake Breakfast – 8:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. at Christ Church

March 28 – Niagara Frontier District United Methodist Women Communion Breakfast and Memorial Service at Christ Church from 9:30 to 12:00. Rev. Anne Cole is the guest speaker and Dr. B.J. Norrix will be presiding at Communion.

March 29 – Palm Sunday

April 2 – Holy Thursday

April 3 – Good Friday

April 5 – EASTER – RESURRECTION DAY!! –

April 10 -- Uganda Team Fish Fry

April 25 – The Bach Children's Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir of Ontario, Canada – in Concert.

May 2 – Uganda Chicken BBQ

May 17 – MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY!!

19. Christ Church's Mission footprint (AKA our "Salt Map"): 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!

20. **DISCIPLE I** Class began Monday February 23 at 6:00 p.m. There is still a small window of opportunity to join this group. Contact: Rev. Jim Pollard who is leading this class.

Disciple is an in depth Bible survey course. Haven't you always wanted to learn your way around the Bible, understand its central themes, and thereby deepen your relationship with God? Here is your chance.

Parting thought:

Hope is a dangerous thing because a person who still has hope will never stop. Hope overcomes fear. Hope gets us out of bed in the morning. We invest hope in our children. Whether it is hope for a new future, hope for change, or hope for a better result: hope is a powerful force in our world and in our lives. All too often people give up on hope and choose to just survive. A Japanese proverb says that hope is the little bird that sings for the dawn while it is still dark. My Bible tells me that hope will not disappoint us (Romans 5:5). It says we hope for what we do not yet have. Red, in the movie Shawshank Redemption, as he finally leaves not only the walls of incarceration but the identity of incarceration, says, "I find I'm so excited that I can barely sit still or hold a thought in my head. I think it's the excitement only a free man can feel. A free man at a start of a long journey whose conclusion is uncertain. I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope." This was in response to his friend Andy who wrote in a letter to him: "Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies." What is your hope? For what do you dream? What better future motivates you? We live in a world that is in desperate need of hope filled and hopeful people.

I hope to see you all soon,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, purveyor of hope