

**February 3, 2015**

**UPDATE**

**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](http://www.Christchurchamherst.org)  
Or call us at: 716-839-2460

Dr. B.J.’s blog is [www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com](http://www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com)

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Hi Everyone:

Another Tuesday, another cold February morning, another few inches of snow – Western New York in winter. We are now in the “depths” of winter. We are half way between the winter solstice and the vernal equinox. Statistically the last week of January and the first week of February are the coldest (on average) of the year and this week is working very hard to keep the average numbers down. It is, quite naturally, part of the cycle of life for we who live in the north. Our ancestors worked very hard for 9 months to lay in provisions, wood, food, etc. so they could survive the winter and early spring. I don’t have to do that because I have

Wegman's, but there is a deep desire in me to hunker down next to a roaring fire and read some good books and do some writing. I'm leaving the roaring fire out of the equation but am in the middle of an ambitious reading plan. I tend to read "horizontally", that is when I find an author that I like I will read everything I can find by him/her. I am currently plowing my way through half a dozen books by Dallas Willard and trying to implement the choices and changes in my spiritual practices that he is recommending. Winter can be a time of waiting or it can be a time of preparation for what is to come. How will you use our "hunkering down" time this season?

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Last Sunday's attendance was about 115. We celebrated communion and learned more of how our transformed lives in Christ produce a very different way of living and set of values by which we live.

2. This Sunday I am beginning Chapter 6 of Matthew and a discussion of the inner life. We have learned that the Kingdom of the Heavens is not a new set of rules and laws to follow. We have learned that Jesus came to make us not only new people but a new kind of people. This newness is worked from the inside out. It is developed in us through our surrender to the life of Jesus and choosing to place ourselves in the presence of God's grace. In a way the spiritual disciplines are the cure/treatment for our brokenness. The only way to be a life transformed is to regularly get as close to the source of that life as we possibly can.

Following the 11:00 worship we will be celebrating **Dorothy Hanson Brown's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday** - plan to join us for cake and goodies!

**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](http://www.christchurchamherst.org). Click on worship then sermons. They are listed in chronological order and by title.

**Saturday, February 7 – Pancake Breakfast to support the Uganda Mission Team (Pancakes, juice, sausage, bacon, fruit and hot beverages). Breakfast will be served for a donation!**

3. Sunday Mornings at 10:00 am, A.O.L. (Adult Opportunities for Learning) is in a study called "Six Ways We Encounter God". All adults are welcome. Rev. Jim Pollard is the coordinator.

4. Disciple I – the first gathering was postponed due to Monday's snowstorm and will meet this Sunday following Worship (1 pm in the Wesley Room). **There is still time to join this newly-forming group.** One of the most effective ways to grow deeper in our spiritual lives is through group Bible study. Disciple is an in-depth small group Bible study experience that reviews and examines all of the key themes of the Bible. If you have questions see Pastor Jim or Pastor BJ. Jim Pollard will be leading this new group and it will be meeting on Monday evenings.

5. In our prayers: Pray for spiritual renewal in our midst that would draw people to Jesus; Pray for Sue and Harley Estee undergoing radiation treatments; Jan Rhinehart undergoing tests; Sharon Ferrelli cancer surgery on February 13; Dr. Robert Nachbar is now at Wesley Rehab. Mail can be sent to: Room 710, Wesley Rehab at Beechwood Homes, 2235 Millersport Highway, Getzville, 14068; Mac Sabol is making progress and is now back to work; Dorothy Brown; Dona Dalton; Brian Martin - recently lost his job (He has passed 100 days since his transplant – continued prayers for healthy markers); 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, Marion Steve, 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.

Please keep the Rhinehart family in your prayers following the death of Woody's brother about 10 days ago

Please keep our friends and missionaries Mark and Diane Abbott in your prayers. Diane's mother died a few weeks ago. Here is the current info for the Abbots if anyone would like to send a card or give them a call:

Mark & Diane Abbott  
7549 Roselake Drive  
Dayton, OH 45414

Cell: 937.479.9395 (Mark)  
937.479.9372 (Diane)

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6. This Week at Christ Church:

Tuesday, February 3 – 2:00p.m. Asbury Pointe Group

7:00p.m. Worship Team

Wednesday, February 4 – 7:30p.m. Choir

Thursday, February 5 – 10:00a.m. Bible Study

Friday, February 6 – 10:00a.m. Books We Have Loved

Saturday, February 7 – 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. Pancake Breakfast

10:00a.m. – Men to the Buffalo Auto Show

Monday, February 9 – SUGAR AND SPICE at 7:00p.m.

Sunday, February 8 – Disciple I meeting after worship in Wesley Room

Tuesday, February 10 – Stewardship and Finance at 7:00p.m.

Thursday, February 12 – Staff Parish Relations Committee at 7:00p.m.

**7. Wednesday, February 18 - Ash Wednesday** – Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the church season called “Lent”. Lent is observed for the 40 days before Easter and was set aside as a time to intentionally focus on the state of our souls in preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.

**Lenten Supper & Study** - 5:30 to 7 pm Dinner in the cafe followed by discussion in the parlor using the book, **Mosaic: When God Uses All The Pieces**. David Pliss, DMin, is the facilitator. Books are now available from Sally Pollard.

**Ash Wednesday Observance** - 7 pm in the worship space

8. February 9 at 7:00 p.m. – Sugar and Spice Evening: Come join the women of Christ Church for an evening of baking and candy making in the church kitchen. We will be making “sweets for our sweeties” while learning facts and superstitions about Valentine’s Day. All women are invited. RSVP to Beth Sweet ([bthswt@gmail.com](mailto:bthswt@gmail.com), 210-8966) if you plan to attend.

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9. UNITED METHODIST MEN – Saturday February 7 the men will be going to the Buffalo Auto Show and having lunch afterwards, meet to carpool at the church at 10:00 a.m. – Better yet come for pancakes at 9:00a.m. and then carpool!! Let Guy Castellino know if you plan to attend (715-2406).

10. DIANE LOVEJOY – Diane is having her 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday on Friday, February 13. She is hoping to receive 62 birthday cards. Send Cards to Diane Lovejoy c/o Turtle Creek apartments, 2370 N. Forest Road. Apt. #217, Getzville, NY 14068. She has some items for sale and will be holding an open house in the 13<sup>th</sup> from 1-3 p.m. if you'd like to stop by.

11. FOOD PANTRY – This week we are collecting Macaroni and Cheese.

12. Happy Birthday this week:

February 3 – Barbara Burr; Marion Rowlands

February 4—Kelsey Reed

February 7 – Emily Mugel, Kristin Scaringi

February 8 – Dorothy Hanson Brown (100!)

February 9 – Joshua Reagan

February 11 – Jayne Kremzier

13. I have no anniversaries for this week.

14. Through the Bible in a Year – this week's readings

February 3 –Exodus 35-36 and Acts 10

February 4 – Exodus 37-38; Psalm 19 and Acts 11

February 5 – Exodus 39-40; Psalm 15 and Acts 12

February 6 – Leviticus 1-3 and Acts 13

February 7 – Leviticus 4-6 and Acts 14

February 8 – Leviticus 7-9 and Acts 15

February 9 – Leviticus 10-12 and Acts 16

February 10 – Leviticus 13-14 and Acts 17

February 11 – Leviticus 15-17 and Acts 18

February 12 – Leviticus 18-19; Psalm 13 and Acts 19

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 it 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?"

## 15. MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

**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 for 2 weeks the end of June/July 2015. Your prayers are desired and appreciated. They will be visiting schools, presiding at Nexus graduations, dedicating water projects and a church, visiting an animal preserve, working in a health clinic and on a school and much, much more.

**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 us know.

**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. They are also selling handmade Ugandan bead necklaces for \$5 each. Contact Janelle (839-2460) for more information.

16. A new **prayer group** is forming. The group will come together to learn to pray and to specifically pray for the ministry of Christ Church and where God is calling us to be in the future. Is God calling you to be a part of this? Contact Pastor BJ.

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17. Coming Soon to a Church near you . . . (ok, coming to Christ Church)

February 7 – Uganda 2015 Pancake Breakfast from 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.

February 9 – Sugar and Spice Event at 7:00p.m.

February 18 – Ash Wednesday – 5:30p.m. Lenten Group with Dr. Pliss followed by 7:00 worship

February 26 – Discussion/Action Group at 7:00p.m.

18. 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!

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### **Parting Thought**

I am nearly finished reading Dallas Willard's The Great Omission. In chapter 10, while discussing the modern tendency to emphasize "Right profession" as all that was required to be identified as a Christian, Dr. Willard wrote "This has now produced generations of professing Christians, who, as a whole, do not differ in character, but only in ritual, from their non-professing neighbors; in addition, a massive population has now arisen in America who believe in God, even self-identify as spiritual, but will have nothing to do with the churches – often as a matter of pride. What has in other days been called "nominal" Christianity now becomes "normal" Christianity, even among those whose tradition had prided itself in not being just nominal Christians (page 110)." The farther along this journey I travel the more I am convinced that the number one need of the American Christian movement is deep people. Many of our churches are bemoaning the lack of numbers – declining attendance, declining participation – but I believe these are symptoms of a greater disease in the American form of Christianity. The core problem (the disease), in me, in us, in the institutional church as a whole, is a profound shallowness of spirit. I want to find others who want to go deep. I want to find others who want to commit together to pray, to study, to engage the classic spiritual disciplines so that we can, in the name of Jesus Christ, transform the world.

I am hopeful,  
BJ Norrix, lead servant, coach, troublemaker