

Christ United Methodist Church

UPDATE

January 13, 2015

**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:

A friend pointed out a few weeks ago that in the movie series “Back to the Future” when they go forward into the future from 1985 they arrive in 2015. The film maker’s imagination of what 2015 might look like is both surprisingly accurate and humorously wrong. They were accurate with split screen televisions and video conferencing. However, we don’t have “hover cars” or “hover boards” or self-lacing sneakers. Looking into the future can be a perilous process because life and the social and political forces all around us are highly unpredictable and volatile. Who could have predicted the power of social media even twenty years ago? Understanding the rapidity and fluidity of change is critical when thinking about a church’s (or The Church’s) future. There are voices that call us to step away or battle the forces of change. There are other voices that call us to embrace the change and “go with the flow.” I don’t find help or hope in either voice. For the Christ-follower there is always another voice. It is the voice of the One who called us and continues to call us to be faithful. Faithfulness to Jesus means living the life he called us to, sharing the gospel wherever and whenever we can, and striving to make our world a better place. I believe faithfulness dictates that we use

whatever tools are available to us to communicate the Gospel. That means we have to have a presence in the social media world (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, just to name a few) just as Christians have had to find ways to be present in the media of their times. For the first Christians that place was under the Stoas in the City Center – which was the marketplace, information center, and gathering place of their time. The Reformation Christians utilized the new fangled printing press and 20th Century Christians utilized radio and television to reach people where they were and to communicate the gospel. Today we use the social media tools to communicate and connect and begin conversations that enable us to offer Christ to the world.

Here is what is happening at Church

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the 120's. We heard from a great ministry called "Hearts and Hands" -see below for more information - and we heard that everyone (no matter our brokenness) is considered blessed in the Kingdom of the Heavens!

2. This Sunday I will be speaking about Salt, Light and Righteousness. My text is Matthew 5:13-20. Salt is a flavor enhancer, light eliminates darkness. Both saltiness and illumination are extensions of what it means to be in a right relationship with God, our neighbors, and ourselves (righteousness).

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

Sunday Morning at 10:00a.m. - AOL (Adult Opportunities for Learning) is in a study called "Six Ways We Encounter God". Led by Rev. Jim Pollard, it is an open gathering.

3. A word about DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDIES

A. the Disciple 2 class begins this Sunday at 6:00p.m. – I have an extra book if someone wanted to join us (prerequisite is having taken Disciple I).

B. Disciple I – I have five people that have expressed interest but need a few more to make this work. The class will likely meet on Monday evenings. Are you interested? Disciple I is a fairly in-depth Bible survey course that utilizes a small group format for teaching and discussion. Please let me know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you are interested.

4. Hearts and Hands is a local organization whose mission is to help older and physically-challenged people be able to live with dignity and independence, improving the quality of their lives while remaining in their homes of choice. This is accomplished by caring individuals who provide (at no cost to the receiver) driving to appointments, light household chores and routine maintenance, companion care, as well as friendly phone calls and visits. Hearts and Hands currently serve over 500 care receivers. More than 300 volunteers are part of the organization, which now employs 4 full time and 4

part time staff and one AmeriCorps VISTA worker. See Sally if you want more information or take one of the brochures in the Café.

5. In our prayers: Pray a spiritual renewal in our midst that would draw people to Jesus; Pray for Sue and Harley Estee undergoing radiation treatments; Sharon Ferrelli soon to begin cancer treatments; Dave Mitchell and family as they grieve the passing of Dave's mother Dorothy; Debbie Fiebelkorn and family on the death of Debbie's aunt Arlene; Dr. Robert Nachbar is now at Wesley Rehab. Mail can be sent to: Room 710, Wesley Rehab at Beachwood Homes, 2235 Millersport Highway, Getzville, 14068; Mac Sabol is making progress and is now back to work; Dorothy Brown; Dona Dalton; Barb Critoph; Brian Martin (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. 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.

6. This week at Christ Church:

Tuesday, January 13 – 7:00p.m. Stewardship and Finance Team

Wednesday, January 14 – 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 15 – Bible Study at 10:00a.m.

Dress our People 1- 5 p.m.

Friday, January 16 – 10:00 a.m. Books We Have Loved

2-6 p.m. BLOODMOBILE (see below for more)

7. CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate the birth of Jacob McCoul Mong, son of Kathleen Morris Mong and Steven Mong (grandson of Marilyn and William Morris. Jacob was born on December 16.

We celebrate the birth of Gabriel Richard Moser son of Matthew and Joelle Moser. Great-grandson of Joyce Moser. Born on January 2.

8. BLOOD MOBILE – Health and Wellness sponsor a Red Cross blood drive on Friday, January 16 from 2 to 6 p.m. Call Geoff Hill to set up an appointment (316-1522). All donors receive a \$5 Dunkin Donuts card!!

9. FOOD PANTRY – January 18 – Pancake Mix

10. MEN AND WOMEN

The UMW (United Methodist Women) met on Saturday at the Church and heard about the 2014 National UMW gathering that Beth Sweet and Peggy Bermudez attended.

The UMM (United Methodist Men) and friends, toured the new Buffalo Harbor Center (in a blizzard I might add) and enjoyed lunch at the 716 sports bar at the Center.

11. Happy Birthday this week:

January 16 – Joel Jackson

January 17 – Kimberly Gabel, Bob Snyder, Carol Teresi

January 18 – Lucille (Sissy) Mooney

January 20 – Nicole Sciolino and Jasen Wilson

12. There are no anniversaries listed for this week.

13. DRESS OUR PEOPLE – All are invited to help cut fabric into patterns to be sewn into clothing for children in Uganda. We will be meeting on Thursdays (January 15 and 22) from 1-5 p.m. in the Youth Hall. Come at any time for as long as you can and bring shears and pins. For more information see Peggy Nye.

14. THROUGH THE BIBLE in 2015

January 13 – Genesis 31-33 and Luke 13

January 14 – Genesis 34-36 and Luke 14

January 15 – Genesis 37-38, Psalm 7 and Luke 15

January 16 – Genesis 39-41 and Luke 16

January 17 – Genesis 42-43, Psalm 5 and Luke 17

January 18 – Genesis 44-46, and Luke 18

January 19 – Genesis 47-48, Psalm 10 and Luke 19

January 20 – Genesis 49-50, Psalm 8 and Luke 20

January 21 – Exodus 1-2, Psalm 88 and Luke 21

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 – Our 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. We will be visiting schools, presiding at Nexus graduations, dedicating water projects and a church, visiting an animal reserve, working in a health clinic and on a school and much, much more.

Food Pantry Collections: Pancake Mix and Rice and Beans are always welcome.

Uganda Orphan sponsorships –Money will be sent this week. Thank you for your continued support of the Blessed Junior School in Kirimandagi.

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.

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

16. UGANDA TEAM – PANCAKE BREAKFAST – FEBRUARY 7 from 9 to 1

Pancakes, sausage/bacon, juice, fruit will be served from 9 to 1. Cost: donation of your choice. All proceeds will benefit the 2015 Uganda Team. Want to help? Let me know.

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

January 29 – Men's pre-work breakfast at Sheridan Family Diner on Sheridan at 7:00 a.m.

January 29 – Visitation Team Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

January 30 – Game Night at 7 p.m.

February 7 – Uganda 2015 Pancake Breakfast from 9:00 to 1:00

February 18 – Ash Wednesday – 7:00p.m. worship

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

18. Christ Church's Mission footprint: 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!

19. I would like to start a new prayer group. The group would 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? Please let me know.

20. The Discussion Action group met last night. We noted that many of our early ideas (monitors, 350 concert, visitation team, etc.) are now implemented and in place. We began a discussion of what to work on next. We are looking at some larger community events, a prayer group (see above) and some ways to communicate our presence to the wider community. The group will meet next on February 26 at 7:00p.m. and everyone is welcome.

Parting Thought

Next week (beginning on the 20th) I am taking a little vacation. Karen and I are flying down to Lakeland, Florida to spend a week in, hopefully, warmer weather and to visit with my parents. We have not taken vacation time since last summer, and we are both feeling it. I had a conversation with some folks the other day about "the Sabbath" and how central it is to the Biblical narrative. The Bible teaches us that taking rest is a holy obligation. When the Hebrews were slaves they got no rest and no time to express their devotion to God. They were worked to death or incapacity at which point they were put

to death. There is no Sabbath rest for slaves. But the 10 commandments are instructions on how to live as free people. All too often we allow ourselves to be so ensnared by our culture's definition of success (bigger, more, newer) that we easily work ourselves into illness, unhappiness, and, yes even death. Pastors, like everyone else, fall into the same trap. The Sabbath principle is not a burden but a gift from God. The principle is very simple: every seventh day you need to do no work. The Biblical understanding is that the Sabbath is Saturday (the seventh day of the week). Christians moved away from Saturday for worship in the first century and chose to worship on the "Lord's Day" or "resurrection day" which is the first day of the week (Sunday). I think the principle should be our deeper understanding: simply rest one in every seven days. Do you take every 7th day to rest and be grateful? Karen and I have had the practice for the past 3.5 years of having our Sabbath on Wednesday – it is the one day each week we have off together. We go to the park, we take long walks, we rest and spend time together, we strive to "do no work." So, our brief vacation – our week of Sabbaths – is January 20 through 27. It is good to periodically detach (completely detach) in order to gain perspective and renewal.

Have a great week and I'll see you when the Church gathers,

BJ Norrix, coach, lead servant, missionary, taker of rest