

Christ United Methodist Church
“Living Christ’s ways and exploding with love and service”
UPDATE
September 6, 2011

Hi Everyone:

Karen and I are back from our week off. We mostly just goofed off, I played a little golf (Dad shot 78 on his 81st birthday last weekend), watched Syracuse roar from behind to beat Wake Forest and enjoyed time with my family.

Thank you, Rev. Jim Pollard, for filling the pulpit in my absence and thank you to the Christ Church staff and leadership for “minding the store” in my absence.

Thank you, all of you, who sent birthday greetings and wishes. I survived another birthday – I have noticed that people who have the most birthdays tend to live the longest, so another birthday is a good thing. It means I am still here and that means there is still work to be done, the kingdom of God to be ushered in, lives to be touched in the name of Jesus and so much more.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance on Labor Day Sunday was 77. Again, thanks to Jim Pollard for preaching and all who led and participated in Sunday’s worship.

2. This week we RESUME OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE: It looks like this
9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship with the new worship team led by Bill and Marg Bauza (and the rest of us).

10:00 – FaithXpress (join us for the feast in Crafts Hall); Adults are welcome to join. Jesus grew up in a Jewish home, learned to read the Jewish Scripture and celebrated the special festivals of the Jewish people. At Faith Xpress Feast we’ll taste, see and do some of the same things that Jesus did.

11:00 – Traditional Worship with the return of the Choir and other features.

This Sunday is the 10th Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington D.C. We will light a candle in remembrance of all of those who died in that event and for all those who have died in actions taken as a result of these attacks. Remember to pray for our leaders and our country and our men and women serving overseas.

I will be continuing my “On the Road” series with a familiar story from John 3 about a man named Nicodemus. The sermon is titled: “On the Road to Nowhere!”

3. This Sunday is the Chiavetta Chicken Barbecue – serving begins following the 11:00 Worship. \$8. Proceeds benefit the Christ Church youth group.

4. A Day to Make a Difference at Christ Church: Saturday September 17 from 10 to 3. Led by Dr. Scott Johnson (Upper New York Conference Lay Leader). Child care provided; lunch provided (for donation). Sign up.

There is a survey from Dr. Johnson that was mailed to every household this past week. Please complete the survey and return it to us.

There is an “ON LINE” version of the survey available. Go to:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DJK8TCH>

5. Order deadline for Angel Food Ministries is this Sunday (September 11) – pick up is between 1 and 2 on September 24.

6. Hurricane Relief is not over: We can support the cleanup efforts through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). UMCOR’s overhead is fully funded through our Apportioned giving. Because of this every dollar that is given to advance special #901670 – Hurricane 2011 goes directly to the Hurricane relief efforts. You can give through the web site (UMCOR.ORG) using a credit or debit card.

There are work teams being formed to help with the cleanup efforts for churches and communities in New York, New Jersey and Vermont. Anyone interested? We can get you connected for a day, a weekend or more.

7. In our Prayers: Nicky Sabastiano, Diane Lovejoy, Judy Radel; Mary Emens, Barbara McCray, Mary Jane Shanley and Peter Shanley; All those going back to school this week (teachers and students and administrators); those looking for work; families in crisis;

8. ATTENTION MEN:

Saturday September 10: Kayak Tour of the Buffalo River 9 to 1. Led by our own Tim Reed of Adventures in Fitness, see some of the landmarks from a completely unique perspective. Everything furnished. See Tom Nye (648-1850).

Saturday October 29: Iron Sharpens Iron Men’s Conference. For more information contact Bill Bauza at 837-2421.

9. UGANDA 2011 – Thank you for the generous support that several of you have provided for this coming journey. I need about \$1500 to complete the cost of this trip. Checks to Christ Church – Uganda 2011 would be appreciated. This trip is in support of Nexus Seminary: a training program for rural Ugandan pastors. See the Caller for details.

We will be taking a “SPECIAL COLLECTION” on September 18 for this Outreach ministry.

10. Happy Anniversary this week:

September 8 – Tom and Kathy Weaver (27 years)

September 10 – Curtis and Louise Barber (62 years)

11. Happy Birthday this week:

September 4 – Kayleen Hannon and Ryan James
September 6 – Kathleen Morris, Al Wrisley
September 8 – Don Parsons
September 9 – Bim Rowlands
September 11 – Darcie Beyer, Emma Reagan

12. Church Gatherings this week:

September 6 – Outreach Team at 7:00
September 7 – CHOIR resumes
September 8 – Stewardship and Finance at 7:00
Elizabeth Circle meets at 7:30
September 10 – Men's Club 9 to 1
September 11 – Staff Parish Relations following the 11:00 Worship
September 12 – Health and Wellness at 7:00
September 13 – Christian Ed Team at 7:00

13. Beginning September 12 Pastor BJ will be leading an Open Bible Study on Monday evenings at 7:00. This is an open class and everyone is welcome regardless of how much experience they may have in reading and/or studying the Bible.

14. This Sunday, September 11 at 3:00 there is an Installation Service and Celebration of our new District Superintendent, Rev. K. Wayne Butler. This event will be held at the Clarence UMC.

15. Remember: Grace Critoph's memorial celebration will be held at Christ Church on Saturday, September 17 at 4:00 p.m.

I have been thinking a lot about the events of 10 years ago. I vividly remember watching the live news feed and seeing the first tower collapse behind the news commentator before he was even aware of it. I remember concern for the lives of extended family and friends who worked in the World Trade Center (and nearby) and the Pentagon. I remember the anger and rage that was openly expressed and the deep sorrow, grief, and fear the lay just below the surface for many of us.

There was a United Methodist Men's retreat at Camp Casowasco scheduled for the weekend after 9/11 that year and the featured speaker was an Airline Pilot with Southwest. Obviously, he was unable to attend (planes were still grounded) and I was asked by the leadership of that event to address the assembly of men. I don't remember much of what I said but what I do remember was a caution that we not "overreact" and go charging into places we don't belong and to try to

bomb a place back to the “stone age” that has barely left the stone age. It was an uncomfortable conversation but one I still stand by.

As Christians, we are required by our Lord to pause, consider, pray, and reflect before we react. As Christians, we are required to pray for our enemies and (here is the uncomfortable part) to forgive. Forgiveness is not saying what happened didn't matter, or it didn't hurt or that it wasn't horrible. Forgiveness is surrendering my right for vengeance and revenge. I realize that nationally this is profoundly difficult and it is hard to imagine this happening on that level. But individually, we are called to release the anger and vengeance and to pray for those who may be our enemies or who have spitefully used us (see Matthew 5:11ff; 5:43ff; and especially 6:14-15). Even if I am called to military service I am never allowed to hate the other. I am praying that as we approach this significant anniversary we would allow ourselves to examine the why's and wherefore's of the event itself and our response.

I am praying that as a nation and a people, we will find ways to build bridges instead of walls and build understanding instead of hatred and reprisals.

I'll see you when the church gathers,

B.J. Norrix, lead servant, prayer partner, grace extender