

***Christ United Methodist Church***

***Harlem at Saratoga***

***Amherst, New York***

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

***UPDATE***

***March 18, 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](http://www.Christchurchamherst.org)

[716-839-2460](tel:716-839-2460)

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

Hi Everyone:

We’ve passed through the Ides of March and St. Patrick’s day and, I can actually guarantee this, Spring will arrive on Thursday. There is an inherent problem with using the word “Spring” to describe a particular kind of weather and to have it also mean the vernal equinox. One will arrive on a set date and time while the other could come at any time (maybe even today!). How often in our lives do we allow calendar/time events to control the reality around us? I think it was Satchel Paige (famous American Philosopher) who once said “How old would you be if you didn’t know how old you were.” Why do we let the calendar control the reality around us. I wonder if it is just another form of “destination disease.” We allow

ourselves to get so focused on the “when’s” of life (when I finish school; when I get married; when I get that new job; when the kids leave the house; when I retire; when . . .) that we forget to live life itself. Maybe that’s what famous British philosopher, John Lennon, meant when he said “life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.” As Christ followers the goal is to live in the present -- understand the past but do not be controlled by it – plan for the future but don’t try to live there – relish every moment to walk and live and extend God’s grace into every encounter. On your journey through Lent are you finding/making time to be present with God?

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 166. We saw some new faces in the congregation as well. It was good to see Sean Brown out and about following his recent illness.

2. This Sunday is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent. I will be preaching from John 4 and the story of the Woman at the Well. I think she is one of the most maligned characters in the Bible. Modern readers see that she has had five husbands and is living with a sixth and think she is some totally wanton and promiscuous woman. What we often fail to recognize is the social reality of Jesus time. Women could not get a divorce from their husbands. On the husband had the power to divorce his wife. What that means for our Woman at the Well is that five different men have taken her into their lives and married her and five different men have publically renounced her and sent her away. No wonder she comes to the well outside of the village in the middle of the day – she wants to avoid the prying eyes of others drawing water.

3. In our Prayers: Sean Brown; Fred Painton, Guy Castellino, Mitch Mooney, Bim Rowlands, Glenn Hurst, Nicky Sebastiano, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, and Diane Lovejoy. Remember those looking for work; those serving around the world; remember and pray for the families of those who were on the missing airliner; pray for your church!

4. Lenten Supper and Study will resume this week after taking a week off due to last week’s blizzard. We will gather at 5:30. Following a shared meal we will participate in a mini retreat time reflecting on the Lenten Bible readings. We are using Larry Beman’s book God’s Gift of Life. Everyone is welcome.

5. This Saturday **March 22** The Amherst Lion’s Club will have their annual Pancake Breakfast to raise funds to help the blind, visually-impaired hearing-impaired, and others in our community who need assistance. **Breakfast is from**

**8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at Christ UMC. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance from Tom Davis, Ruth Munson, or Herb Wilbur. Cost is \$6 for Adults and \$3.50 for children 12 and under.

**AND** – in conjunction with the Christ UMC Health and Wellness Committee there will be a community health fair in the Youth Hall (downstairs) from 8:00 a.m. through 11:00 a.m. featuring a FREE diabetes screening. Kalieda technicians will draw blood samples from 8 to 10 to test for blood sugar and cholesterol. Lab results will be sent directly to your physician. There will be an ophthalmologist to conduct eye exams and representatives who will offer outreach on nutrition and physical activity. Preregistration is recommended: call the Church Office at 839-2460 and provide 1) your name; 2) your address; 3) address of your physician. You may also register on site. If you can help out with this event please contact Janelle in the church office.

**6. Mission Youth:** Middle and High School youth and their friends are invited to the next Mission Youth gathering. It will be held on **Friday, March 28** at 6:30 at Pastor BJ's house (next to the church on Saratoga). Parents are also welcome to attend.

**7. Senior Services presentation:** Christ Church will be hosting a FREE presentation on senior services on Friday, March 28 at 2:00 p.m. Come to hear an overview of topics such as financial benefits, disease prevention and preventing Medicare fraud and abuse. RSVP with the church office at 839-2460.

**8. WE WANT YOUR SHOES** – Shoe collection is underway. Pick up a collection bag (instructions are on the bag) and gather as many pairs of shoes as possible to support developing countries AND the ministry of Christ church. Shoes may be dropped off at the main entrance of Christ Church now through Make a Difference Day (May 18). Any style, any size, any condition!

9. This Week at Christ Church:

Tuesday March 18 – 7:00 Christian Education Team (office)

7:00 Outreach Team (library)

7:30 Trustees (Café)

Wednesday March 19 – 5:30 to 7:30 Lenten Supper and Study (café)

7:30 – Choir rehearsal

Thursday March 20 – 9:30 a.m. Caller Collation team (Wesley)

10:00 a.m. Bible Study (Library)

Friday March 21 – 10:00 a.m. – Books We Have Loved

Saturday March 22 – 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. HEALTH FAIR

8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Tuesday March 25 – 7:00 Church Council (Parlor)

10. Happy Birthday this week:

March 19 – Karen Arrison; Marjory Gibson; Florence Stengel (93)

March 21 – Nicky Sebastiano (102!!); Barry Wood

March 24 – Al Sillato (99); Pat Noyes

March 25 – Peggy Bermudez

March 26 – Ashley Miller

11. 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.

***Buckets are along the wall in Crafts Hall awaiting your assistance.***

12. Men's pre-work breakfast group will meet again on March 27 at 7:00. We are gathering at the Original Pancake house in Williamsville.

13. Through the Bible:

March 18 – Job 32-33 and 1 Corinthians 11

March 19 – Job 34-35

March 20 – Job 36-37 and 1 Corinthians 12

March 21 – Job 38-40 and 1 Corinthians 13

March 22 – Job 41-42

March 23 – Proverbs 1-2 and 1 Corinthians 14

March 24 – Proverbs 3-5

March 25 – Proverbs 6-7 and 1 Corinthians 15

March 26 – Proverbs 8-9 and 1 Corinthians 16

March 27 – Proverbs 10-12 and Titus 1

#### **14. 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: **I would like to build a new Hospitality team. Interested? See me (BJ)**

Opportunity 3: We are putting together a worship “creative” team. Want to be a part of this group? Let BJ know.

Opportunity 4: **A New small group for singles is being discussed: want to be a part of the discussion? Let me know.**

Opportunity 5: New “Senior Adult” ministries and groups are being discussed: want to be a part of the discussion? Let me know.

#### **15. 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 **7 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of May. He will be meeting with our Uganda travelers and supporters as well as the new Mission Youth group

Opportunity 3: MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY is only **8 Weeks** from this Sunday. Team leaders are being recruited and signup sheets will be going up soon.

16. 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.

## 17. COMING EVENTS

March 28 – Mission Youth 2 6:30 at the Parsonage

Holy Week is April 13 through 20 – watch for more

Palm Sunday – April 13 – Kevin Durkin Organ Recital at 3:00 p.m.

May 4 – Dinner in the Country – MYM at the White Inn in Fredonia

May 5 through May 12 – Rev. Davis Matovu of Soul Fishing Ministries and President of Nexus Seminary, Uganda will be with us.

May 11 – Rev. Richard Davis Matovu guest preacher

May 16 – Church-Wide Variety Show (sponsored by UMW) – watch for more

May 18 – Make a Difference Day

May 19 – Carl Ericson Memorial Service

### *Parting Thought:*

I am convinced that God is at work all around us. I am equally convinced that the distractions of day to day living combined with the dual edged tendencies to live in the past and fear the future make it extremely difficult to be fully aware of this work. I see God at work in and through the Christ Church family. Maybe I see it because I'm looking for it or maybe I see it because I am more regularly exposed to it; either way God is at work in our midst. Have you noticed the renewed energy of our Sunday worship gatherings? Have you noticed the rising worship attendance numbers? Have you noticed that there seems to be multiple conversations about new missions and new ministries? Have you noticed that there are lives being transformed by the ministry of this church? Churches that have been experiencing slow decline and an aging population tend to focus on either what was or "how it used to be." I am not wired that way. I tend to look around and see what actually is and then try to figure out what God would have us do to make it better, stronger, more effective, etc. Have you noticed that there are more children during the children's time in worship? Did you know there were over 2 dozen people at the inaugural "Mission Youth" meeting? Are you aware that our reputation for mission and caring and connection is spreading in the community around us – not just among "churched" people but especially among our friends and neighbors who are not connected to any formal religious community. In this season of Lent, a season of focus, preparation, and renewal it would be sad to miss the renewal already happening all around us. God is at work all around us . . . "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:18-19)." A word of hope in a hope filled season.

I'll see you when the Church gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, coach, missionary