

**March 24, 2015**

**Christ United Methodist Church**

**UPDATE**

**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:

I want to thank everyone for their encouragement and support and honest emotions following my announcement this past Sunday that I will be leaving Christ Church to take a new position as lead Pastor of the Syracuse United Methodist Church (one church with eight campuses in the city of Syracuse). Some of you have expressed anger and frustration and hurt (which I certainly understand) but all of you who have spoken with me have expressed

encouragement and love and grace – for this I am deeply grateful. Ministry is often treated like a profession (it is often called one of the “helping” professions), but I don’t see myself in that role. Ministry is profoundly more intimate and personal. An effective pastor, while keeping healthy boundaries, builds deep and abiding relationships. Detaching from these is painful. The alternative is a more cold and distant presence that never engages on a personal level. I believe God desires a close personal relationship with all of us, it is why we were created, and Christianity, in its deepest essence, is about relationships and community. Even with all the plusses on the other side, this has been a hard choice for me as well. Thank you for your patience through this transition. The best part about building these friendships is that they do not end with a change of address.

Here is what is going on at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the 140’s! We celebrated the baptism of Alexander Robert Rothfuss, son of Aaron and Diana Rothfuss at 11:00. We discussed the new covenant that Jeremiah wrote about and what it means to “lose life” for Jesus sake!

2. This Sunday is **Palm Sunday** and the beginning of **Holy Week**.

Palm Sunday worship will begin in the Sanctuary with the choral procession of palms at 9:00a.m. and 11:00a.m.

Thursday, April 2 is **Holy Thursday** we will gather for Communion at 7:00p.m.

Friday, April 3 is **Good Friday** we will have an observance of the 7 last words from the cross at Noon and 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 5 is **EASTER or Resurrection Day** worship will be at 9:00a.m. and 11:00a.m.

3. In our Prayers: Sue Estee is at Roswell Park following Surgery and is doing great. She hopes to be home in a day or so; Ruth Swenson (broken shoulder after a fall); Pray for **Todd and Mary Jo Evans** – Todd is now at Wesley Rehab (room 714) and is exploring treatment options for liver cancer; **Mary Jo is at** Blocher Homes; **Glenn Hurst** following a recent hospital stay and will be going to rehab; **Tom Davis** has been at Suburban Hospital; **Laney Fuller** has returned to Asbury Pointe; **Jan Rhinehart** undergoing tests; **Sharon Ferrelli** continues cancer treatments; **Dr. Robert Nachbar** has moved to Blocher Homes; **Chuck Gilbert**, following a recent

hospital stay; **Dorothy Brown; Dona Dalton; Brian Martin** for continued healing; **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 returning from the south following some winter reprieve and those heading out. Pray for **Christ UMC** in this time of transition. Pray for Pastor BJ and our new Pastor to be named later in this season of transition.

4. This Saturday Christ UMC's United Methodist Women will be hosting the Niagara Frontier District's Communion Breakfast and Memorial Service here at Christ Church. Registration and a continental breakfast begin at 9:30a.m. with the worship and memorial service at 10:15 a.m. with speaker Rev. Anne Cole. She will be speaking about "Going Green." Cost for the event is \$5. All women are invited and welcome!

5. EASTER FLOWERS – are available for purchase after both worship services this Sunday in the Parlor. Yellow daffodils, pink tulips and white lilies are \$8 per plant. Please see Beth Reilly Brown if you have any questions.

6. FOOD PANTRY – this week is collecting pure fruit and vegetable juices

7. This Week at Christ Church:

Wednesday March 25 – Lenten Supper and Study at 5:30p.m. in the Café.

NOTE: No choir rehearsal this week

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

11:00a.m. – Visitation Team

6:30 to 8:30p.m. – Living Well Training

6:00 to 9:00p.m. Staff Parish Relations Committee in the Library

Friday, March 27 – Game Night at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 28 – UMW Communion Breakfast

8. MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY is just 7 weeks from Sunday: check out the video from last year's event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8yiUQxxgNc>. Sign-up sheets will be out on Easter Sunday. We are still looking for a “construction” type project (any ideas???).

9. 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. I am calling this the “be kind to Dave Wolf” project. Dave is the one who wrestles that old and often repaired machine most days of the week!

10. AARP Driver Safety Class: Christ Church will host an AARP Driver Safety Class on Friday, April 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Class is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members (paid by cash or check on the day of the training). Lunch will be available for \$5. Register by contacting Janelle at 839-2460 or [cumc350@gmail.com](mailto:cumc350@gmail.com).

11. **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 was on **March 13 at 7:00**. – we raised over \$700 at this event!!!

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

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

12. Happy Birthday this week:

AL SILLATO – Happy 100<sup>th</sup> TODAY (March 24)

March 24 – Pat Noyes

March 25 – Peggy Bermudez

March 26 – Ashley Miller

March 29 – Jordan Maliken

March 31 – Warren Hammond; Jan Rhinehart

13. Through the Bible in a year: this week:

March 24 – Joshua 18-20 and 1 Corinthians 9

March 25 – Joshua 21-22; Psalm 47 and 1 Corinthians 10

March 26 – Joshua 23-24; Psalm 44 and 1 Corinthians 11

March 27 – Judges 1-3 and 1 Corinthians 12

March 28 – Judges 4-5; Psalm 39; Psalm 41 and 1 Corinthians 13

March 29 – Judges 6-7; Psalm 52 and 1 Corinthians 14

March 30 – Judges 8; Psalm 42 and 1 Corinthians 15

March 31 – Judges 9-10; Psalm 49 and 1 Corinthians 16

April 1 – Judges 11-12; Psalm 50 and 2 Corinthians 1

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?"

14. **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. We fly from Toronto through London on British Air. 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.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8yiUQxxgNc>.

**C. 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 this is something you'd like to make this gift.

## 15. HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday (March 29) – Worship with Palms and a reading of the Passion narrative according to St. Mark (9:00a.m. and 11:00a.m.)

Holy Thursday (April 2) – Worship at 7:00p.m. Holy Communion/Last Supper; remembering Jesus in the broken bread

Good Friday (April 3) – Worship at Noon and 7:00p.m. From the Cross, the Gospel records Seven Phrases from the lips of Jesus. What do these phrases say about Jesus, what do they say about life, what do they say about our lives in relationship with Jesus? We will gather in Crafts Hall.

Easter (April 5) 9:00a.m. and 11:00a.m. festival celebrations of the Risen Christ with Communion at both gatherings.

## 16. Coming Soon:

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 worship at 7:00p.m.

April 3 – Good Friday – observance at Noon and 7:00p.m.

April 5 – EASTER – RESURRECTION DAY!!

April 10 -- Uganda Team Fish Fry 4-7 p.m.

April 18 – UMW and UMM Meetings

April 25 – The Bach Children's Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir of Ontario, Canada – in Concert (see more on #18 below)

May 2 – Uganda Team Chicken BBQ

May 17 – MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY!!

May 31 – First Responder's Celebration and Appreciation Day

June 14 – Pastor BJ's last Sunday

June 28 – Uganda Mission Team leaves for Uganda and returns July 14.

17. 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!

18. BACH Children's Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir of Ontario, Canada. There is a concert Saturday evening, April 25. The concert features singers ages 6 through university age are divided into three choirs. These award-winning choirs compete nationally; have released 6 CD's and recorded a song for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics! Mark your calendars – you won't want to miss this. For more information, **or to host children/adults from the group in your home**, contact Sally Pollard (839-2460).

19. Diane Klenk is working with our local Veterans Hospital regarding supplies for the in-patient, day programs and homeless. Below are needed items. If you can help, see Diane or bring these items to the church and leave them in the container provided in Crafts Hall. Needed items: Socks, underwear, T-shirts (White, L to XXXL, V-neck), towels, Toiletries (deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, disposable razors, mouthwash, nail clippers, body wash, combs, shaving cream, pocket mirrors, chap stick – be sure mouth wash and other items are "Alcohol free"; Gift cards (McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Tops); Patriotic throws or lap blankets, books and audio books, DVDs.

## 20. **Baby Blessings Basics at Crossroads**

Two and a half years ago 3 people met in a quiet corner of a local restaurant and took notes on a paper table cloth and Baby Blessings was born. This is a ministry of Crossroads Lutheran Church in Amherst and serves any parent who cannot afford baby clothes for their child. It works just like a food pantry - we receive donations and then give them away! Parents need to have a referral form from an agency or congregation/pastor and then we gladly fill a bag with appropriate items. In 2014 approximately 2600 items of clothing were given out and approximately 125 children were served. Donations have come from as far away as Lyndonville. We are always in need of clothing (up to 4T) or blankets but no toys or equipment. There is a shed in the parking lot (4640 Main St. at Burroughs) where donations may be dropped off at any time. Thanks for all your support and prayers.

21. **ONE FINAL THING:** with my departure in mid June, the 9:00a.m. worship team is without a music leader. The team can provide worship leadership but will need a lead guitar or piano or drummer to hold the music together and to keep the team in focus. I know that many of you play or can play . . . we are praying for you to step up and join us. See BJ for more information.

### **Parting Thought**

I am getting ready to shut down for Holy Week. Every year I cancel meetings and limit appointments (except emergencies) so that I can take the time to walk with Jesus through this most critical week of our faith. I try to walk in real time from Palm Sunday through Easter with Jesus. Each day, after that triumphant entry, Jesus sits on the Rabbi's steps that lead up to the temple. Each day, Monday through Thursday, Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God and through parables and straight talk opens up the amazing new possibilities of a life lived in relationship with a loving God. I make space for Holy Thursday, the last supper, the agonizing prayer in the garden, the betrayal and denial and trials of the night. I make space for Good (God's) Friday, the final trial and condemnation, the beating, carrying of the cross, crucifixion, death and burial. I make sure to pause and wait and wonder through Saturday. I rise early on Easter morning eager to meet, once again, the Risen Lord in our midst and out in the world. These eight days are the essential story of our Faith. All of the teaching, the nativity, the epiphany, the transfiguration, the sermons and healings and other dealings are all confirmed and stamped by the power and grace of God in the events of Holy Week – and stamped upon and by real people in a real place in real time. Many people feel lost in their spiritual journey and many more have yet to find the way. This is a week to be found and to find, to re-read, re-experience and remember the Power of God's Love!

I'll see you when the community gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, fellow traveler