

UPDATE

March 3, 2015

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

Or call us at: [716-839-2460](tel:716-839-2460)

Dr. B.J.’s blog is www.drbitthoughts.blogspot.com

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Hi Everyone:

March has arrived. March brings us a month of Lent. It brings us daylight savings time (remember to spring forward this Saturday night). March brings us the vernal equinox (aka first day of spring). And, let us hope and pray, March will bring us a change in the frigid and snowy weather we've been having. March is a month of changes. The daylight gets a little longer each day. The snow will melt (it always has). The crocuses and the snow drops will eventually peak their noses up and the inexorable dance of spring will commence. I love the anticipated time and the bold expectations of change. I've been working on some other changes in my life. This Lent I have been practicing some of the classic spiritual disciplines – I say practicing because I am a long way from being good at any of them. But they are disciplines (practices, if you prefer) that shift my focus from me and mine to listening to God and being aware of what is happening in and around me. Make some space and be with God.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We fell just short of 100 on Sunday (99). I would love warmer weather and, perhaps, just one Sunday where it wasn't snowing in the morning!
2. This Sunday is the last in my series through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Matthew 7:13-29 is our text. I will be preaching on what it means to be a "doer" and not a hearer only. Life in the kingdom of God is a different kind of life.

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.

3. In our prayers: Pray for spiritual renewal in our midst that would draw people to Jesus; Pray for the family and friends of **Marion Steve** who died last week; pray for the family and friends of **Marjorie Facklam** who died on Friday; Pray for **Todd and Mary Jo Evans** – Todd is now at Wesley Rehab (room 714) and has an appointment at Roswell today to explore treatments for liver cancer, **Mary Jo** has been at Suburban Hospital and will be returning to Blocher Homes soon; **Laney Fuller** broke a hip and following rehab is now a resident at Blocher Homes; Pray for **Sue and Harley Estee** – they have finished radiation treatments and are on the road to healing; **Jan Rhinehart** undergoing tests; **Sharon Ferrelli** is meeting with oncologists and will begin follow up treatment from her

cancer surgery early in March; **Dr. Robert Nachbar** has moved to Blocher Homes Room 224 Blocher Homes 135 Evans St, Williamsville, NY. 14221-9244, Phone #: [716-568-9628](tel:716-568-9628); **Julianna Sabol** is recovering from outpatient surgery; **Chuck Gilbert**, following a recent hospital stay; Dorothy Brown; Dona Dalton; Brian Martin for continued healing; 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** is back home at Vinecroft following a brief stay at Suburban Hospital, 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 (and for the rest of us who have to stay here!).

4. Memorial Service for Margery Facklam will be held on Saturday, March 14 at 11:00 a.m. Marjorie joined Christ Church in the spring of 1950 (while we were still in the parsonage basement) and was a well-known and often published author of children's nonfiction.

5. 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 \$2,500. 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!

6. This week at Christ Church:

Tuesday, March 3 – Asbury Pointe discussion group at 2:00p.m.

Wednesday, March 4 – 5:30p.m. Lenten Supper and Study in the Café

Wednesdays through April 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. You are invited to use the Lenten season to create a space in your life that will enable you to grow deeper in your faith. Following a shared meal, Dr. David Pliss will lead us in a mini retreat time using the book Mosaic by Shane Stanford. We will explore how God wants to use the broken pieces of our lives to reframe our purpose. Books are available from Sally Pollard.

Wednesday, March 4 --7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal

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

Thursday, March 5 – Noon to 4:00p.m. “Dress Our People” in the Wesley Room

Friday, March 6 – WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday, March 6 – Books We Have Loved at 10:00a.m. in Wesley Room

7. WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: a service for World Day of Prayer is Friday, March 6 at 1:00p.m. at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church on Main Street. All are welcome.

8. The FOOD PANTRY is collecting PEANUT BUTTER this week.

9. Friday, March 6 is our Hosting day for Family Promise. Help is needed for preparing and serving the meal as well as visiting and spending the night. If you would like to help, contact Lee Watson at 837-0589.

10. AARP Safe Driver Class – April 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The class is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members, paid by cash or check on the day of the class. Lunch will be provided for an additional \$5 for those interested. Please register by calling Janelle in the Church Office (839-2460) or 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 on **March 13 at 7:00p.m.** Come and join us in the Bistro/Café in Crafts Hall for an evening of Jazz. Cost: donation to support the team.

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

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

12. Ron Corsaro Trip – March 13 at 7 p.m. Ron and friends will be playing in the Crafts Hall coffee house. Delicious desserts and beverages will be available. Donations support the Uganda mission team.

Ron has also made 30 CD's of his trio available for a suitable donation (\$25 or more) to the Uganda Team.

13. Happy Birthday this week:

March 4 – Kara Panasiewicz

March 5 – Clem Arrison

March 6 – Elizabeth Curtis

March 7 – Gregory Watson

March 8 – Brad Bermudez; Molly Reed

March 9 – Christopher Kraatz

14. There are no anniversaries listed for this week.

15. THROUGH THE BIBLE – this week

March 3 – Numbers 32-33 and Mark 10

March 4 – Numbers 34-36 and Mark 11

March 5 – Deuteronomy 1-2 and Mark 12

March 6 – Deuteronomy 3-4; Psalm 36 and Mark 13

March 7 – Deuteronomy 5-6; Psalm 43 and Mark 14

March 8 – Deuteronomy 7-9 and Mark 15

March 9 – Deuteronomy 10-12 and Mark 16

March 10 – Deuteronomy 13-15 and Galatians 1

March 11 – Deuteronomy 16-18; Psalm 38 and Galatians 2

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?"

16. 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.

17. 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 you'd like to make this gift.

18. Coming Soon:

March 6 – World Day of Prayer (UMW Sponsored) will be at St. Paul's Lutheran Church 4007 Main Street, Eggertsville, NY 14226

March 13 – Ron Corsaro and friends in concert, Crafts Hall Coffee House (bistro?) see above for details.

March 14 – United Methodist Men – 9:30a.m. Rev. Jim Pollard's photos of Alaska "an Alaskan Odyssey".

March 14 – Margery Facklam Memorial Service at 11:00a.m.

March 21 – Amherst Lions Club Pancake Breakfast – 8:00 to 1:00 at Christ Church

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

April 25 – The Bach Children’s Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir of Ontario, Canada – in Concert (see more on #20 below)

May 2 – Uganda Team Chicken BBQ

May 17 – MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY!!

19. 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!

20. BACH Children’s Chorus and Bach Chamber Youth Choir of Ontario, Canada. Concert Saturday evening, April 25. 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).

Parting Thought

I ran across this quote from E. Stanley Jones about listening to the voice of God in our lives: “God cannot guide you in any way that is not Christ-like. Jesus was supreme sanity. There was nothing psychopathic about Him. He went off into no visions, no dreams. He got His guidance through prayer as you and I do. That is, He got His guidance when in control of His faculties, and not when out of control as in dreams. I do not say that God may not guide through a vision or dream; but if He does, it will be very seldom, and it

will be because He cannot get hold of our normal processes to guide them. For God is found most clearly and beneficially in the normal rather than the abnormal. And Jesus is the Normal, for he is the Norm.” (E. Stanley Jones, *The Way*. Nashville: Abingdon/Cokesbury, 1946, p. 283.) We often think that God only speaks to us in the thunder and dramatic circumstances but the Biblical and experiential reality is much simpler and much more mundane. God speaks to us through the still small voice; in the breathing whisper; in the sudden “AHA!” while reading the Bible; in the challenge and support of friends; in other words, in the day to day. This Sunday is the 42nd anniversary of my conversion into a Christ-follower. Although my moment of change was fairly radical and dramatic, the reality of walking with God since then has been the slow and certain process of listening, remembering, and living into God’s direction and voice in the daily disciplines and routines of a Christ follower’s life. One denomination has as its promotional slogan “God is still speaking.” I would challenge that statement by simply asking: who said God ever stopped? God is still speaking; the problem has been: are we listening?

I’ll see you when the Church gathers,

B.J. Norrix, listener, lead servant, missionary