

***Christ United Methodist Church
Harlem at Saratoga
Amherst, New York***

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

UPDATE

March 4, 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

716-839-2460

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

Hi Everyone:

Today is “Fat Tuesday (the French would say Mardi Gras).” It is the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of the season of Lent. People being people, developed what has now become a weekend of over indulgence to make the time before a season of penance and self denial. Kind of an overindulgence “last supper” before trying to be good for the next 40 days. Does anyone else see the inherent disconnect with the purpose of Lent in all of this? Today is also called Shrove Tuesday. The title gets its name from the older word shriven – which means to confess. In my opinion a much more spiritual understanding of the season to come. If I make space today and tomorrow to confess my sinfulness and my brokenness in anticipation of a season of refocus and renewal, I am prepared for a Holy Lent. Earlier today I posted on my blog (www.drbjthoughts.blogspot.com)

some thoughts on what I think it means to live a “holy Lent.” If you have time take a look.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 120. Another snowy Sunday (would someone please make it stop!).

2. **WEDNESDAY March 5 is ASH WEDNESDAY**

5:30 – soup and bread supper and discussion of “God’s Gift of Life” by Larry F. Beman

7:00 – Ash Wednesday Worship with imposition of ashes.

3. This Sunday is the first Sunday in Lent and I’ll be preaching about Jesus temptations from Matthew 4:1-11. The message is titled “Some Tempting Possibilities.” The Epistle to the Hebrews says that Jesus was tempted in all ways, just like we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15) But these temptations in Matthew 4 are out of my reach and are to Jesus. However, even though the actual temptation (stones to bread, angels catching him, ruling the world) are not a temptation to me since I cannot do any of these things, the nature of the temptations (using God’s gifts solely for my own benefit, living this life like a show, taking spiritual and actual short cuts) are among the same things all of us struggle with. Worship is at 9:00 and 11:00 please bring a friend!

4. I have prepared a **10 Minute Lenten Prayer Time** flier and structure for the Christ Church family. They are available in the back of the Sanctuary or through the Church office.

5. In our Prayers: Mitch Mooney (now doing rehab at Beachwood) – he and Sissy are moving to Amberleigh the first of March; Sean Brown is now home in Amherst and recovering; Fred Painton, Guy Castellino, Bim Rowlands, Glenn Hurst, Nicky Sebastiano, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt and Diane Lovejoy. Remember those who are serving in the military (especially Ian and Alex) pray for our college students (nearing Midterm); pray for those looking for work; remember our missionaries around the world, pray for families in crisis.

6. This Saturday, March 8

WOMEN: General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Café. Storyteller Carol Ann Gleason will be sharing to celebrate Women’s History Month. The cost is \$5. Call

Grace Markello (836-7064) or Peggy Bermudez (626-4897) to make your reservations.

MEN: will be meeting in the Wesley Room at 10:00 to view a presentation of the Vietnam conflict by Dave Bechtel. Lunch will follow at a local restaurant.

7. Friday March 7 is Church Women United's: WORLD DAY OF PRAYER. A service will be held at St. Leo the Great Roman Catholic Church in Amherst at 1:00 p.m.

8. THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH:

March 5 – ASH WEDNESDAY

5:30 Lenten Supper and Study in Café

7:00 Ash Wednesday Observance in the Sanctuary

March 6 – Bible Study at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Room

March 7 – Books Loved at 10:00 a.m. in the Wesley Room

World Day of Prayer at St. Leo the Great at 1:00 p.m.

March 8 – UMW General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. in Cafe

UMM presentation by Dave Bechtel on Vietnam at 10:00 in

Wesley Room

March 9 – Memorial Service for Jeanne Bartholomew at 2:00 at Amherst Community Church

March 10 – Discussion/Action group at 7:00

March 11 – April Caller Deadline

Stewardship and Finance at 7:00

9. MISSION YOUTH – held our first gathering on Friday February 28. We had 24 present (youth and adults) and had a great time getting acquainted, experiencing the Bible, eating Pizza and planning for the future. The next gathering will be March 28 at the parsonage. All youth (6th grade and older) are invited and welcome (and parents can come too).

10. DISCUSSION ACTION Group will meet again on March 10 at 7:00. This is a group in the spirit of Nehemiah (rebuilding) and Joel (dreams and visions) it is open to all who are interested in helping revitalize the Christ Church community. Last month we discussed our small group life. After hearing reports and making plans for better group life, we will continue our prayer and exploration.

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. Happy Birthday this week:

- March 4 – Kara Panasiewicz (1)
- March 5 – Clem Arrison
- March 6 – Elizabeth Curtis
- March 7 – Gregory Watson
- March 8 – Brad Bermudez, Molly Reed
- March 9 – Christopher Kraatz

13. Through the Bible this week's readings:

- March 4 – Exodus 36-38 and James 4
- March 5 – Exodus 39-40 and James 45
- March 6 – Job 1-2; 1 Corinthians 1
- March 7 – Job 3-4; 1 Corinthians 2
- March 8 – Job 5-7; 1 Corinthians 3
- March 9 – Job 8-10; 1 Corinthians 4
- March 10 – Job 11-13; 1 Corinthians 5
- March 11 – Job 14-16; 1 Corinthians 6
- March 12 – Job 17-19
- March 13 – Job 20-21; 1 Corinthians 7

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: A chart has been posted in Crafts Hall for those wishing to sign up to donate flowers for worship in 2014.

Opportunity 3: We are putting together a worship “creative” team. Want to be a part of this group? Let BJ 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 9 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 2nd Sunday of May. He will be meeting with our Uganda travelers and supporters as well as the new Mission Youth group

Opportunity 3: Uganda Orphans –The cost is \$125/year. Write the check to Christ Church and put in the memo line “Uganda Orphan”. \$125 pays for an orphan’s tuition and uniform for a calendar year. There are always more children in need – so if you missed the first round there are more opportunities.

Opportunity 4: MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY is only 11 weeks from Sunday . . . many new projects are being planned.

16. WE WANT YOUR SHOES!!!

SHOES Christ United Methodist Church Launches Shoe Drive to Support Microenterprise in Developing Nations, and Help the Environment

The public is invited to Make A Difference by donating used shoes February 18 – May 18

Christ United Methodist Church is conducting a shoe collection drive on February 18 – May 18 to benefit small business ventures in developing nations and keeping old shoes out of local landfills. Individuals can help by donating used shoes at Christ Church.

In the US alone, approximately 630 million pairs of shoes are thrown away per year. The materials used to manufacture a pair of shoes are created from chemical compounds that create health hazards when left to disintegrate openly or in landfills. By donating your used shoes to the Shoe Drive, your shoes are given a second chance to make a difference. All donated shoes will be redistributed to microenterprise partners and used in developing nations for impoverished people to start, maintain, and grow a unique business opportunity to feed, clothe, and house their families. The additional advantage of this shoe collection is diverting shoes from the waste stream and landfills and creating commerce and sustainability in peoples’ lives.

The shoe drive is just one part of Christ Church’s annual “Make A Difference” Day, which takes place on Sunday, May 18. On site will be trucks collecting kitchen appliances for Habitat for Humanity, household goods to benefit Journey’s End refugee resettlement, clothing for Asbury Shalom Zone located on the west side of Buffalo and a Shred-It truck provided by our community partner, Allaire Financial Strategies. Bring your old files and papers to be shredded onsite in a safe secure manner.

Members of the community are invited to make a difference in the lives of others by donating items no longer needed or wanted. They may also help by joining us on May 18 anytime between 10am to 1pm to welcome neighbors, sort items and load the trucks. Contact Sally Pollard at Christ Church with your questions, 839-2460.

Shoe bags and rubber bands can be picked up at the church. 25 pairs to a bag!

17. 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.

18. COMING EVENTS

March 22 – Lion’s Club Pancake Breakfast and Health Fair

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

May 18 – Make a Difference Day

Parting Thought:

March 8 is the anniversary of my conversion. I grew up in a moderately religious Roman Catholic home in Southeastern lower Michigan (down river Detroit). My conversion was not from being “Catholic” to being something else. My conversion was from belonging to a religion to being in a relationship. I went through the religious motions of First Communion and Confirmation. I went through the weekly rituals of highly structured liturgy and proper forms. I went through all the conversations about religious duty and holy days of obligation. What I never knew was the divine presence behind it all. I was a typical teenager of the early 70’s (probably a typical teenager for any place and time). But on the 8th of March 1973

at about 8:30 in the evening I gave up religion and entered a relationship with Jesus Christ – my life has never been the same. Like any relationship we have had our ups and our downs. Like any relationship I have had moments of intense intimacy and moments of infinite distance. But through it all I come back to that first moment (the first of many many such moments) when my spiritual life moved the critical 18 inches from my head and what I thought as an idea and a principle to my heart and who I knew and what I trusted. I don't believe Jesus came so that we could hold seminars about what he taught. I believe Jesus came that we might have a growing, dynamic, vital, life giving relationship with him. For me, that relationship began 41 years ago Saturday.

I'll see you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, coach, Christ follower

This email is a communication ministry of the Christ United Methodist Church. If you do not wish to receive this email please let us know.