

**Weekly Update: March 8, 2016**

**Christ United Methodist Church**

Harlem & Saratoga Rds

Amherst, NY 14226

***“Living Christ Ways and Exploding With Love and Service”***



**Church Office Hours - Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm**

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Christ-United-Methodist-Church-Amherst/294709713921168?ref=hl>

**A word from Pastor Darryl**

Last Sunday we continued our Lenten journey toward the celebration of Easter Day reflecting on the passage of Luke 15:1-3 & 11b-32 with the question *“What If God Were the Prodigal Son?”* The challenge for us lies in being open and ready to discover newness in this familiar story. If we think we already know what the story is about, or think that it only means a couple of things, then we close ourselves off to its depth. It is difficult for us to see something new in the parable of the Prodigal Son. We have heard the story so many times we believe that we have squeezed it dry of meaning. So here are some questions to consider this week in your personal devotional time: what if God were the prodigal son in this story? How might we twist the kaleidoscope (scenes/images in the story) to allow ourselves to see the story’s pieces arranged in different ways, so we might experience its power even more greatly? Chances are, we already connect to this parable in meaningful ways. So, what opportunities are offered for us to build on that preexisting relationship and acknowledge its importance? What if God is the God who comes to us in the disguise of those we despise, those who have hated and killed us, rejected us and abandoned us, those who annoy and frustrate us most, and those who are excluded? In the disguise of the sinner, the debauched, the prostitute, the unclean, the enemy, the unsavory, and God comes to us and challenges us to participate in a *radical, irresponsible hospitality* that turns the rules of polite society upside-down. And if God comes to us as this, how do we respond? As the father does, subverting social norms and opening his life to the chaos the prodigal brings? Or as the brother does, maintaining society’s values but closing off his life to loving the ‘other’? In this parable, Jesus is asking us whether we will entertain angels/strangers, even if the angels/strangers look to us like demons, like exactly what we fear and detest. Jesus is asking us whether we can overcome our prejudice and the oppression of religious legal doctrine/dogma to open our arms enough to embrace the ‘other,’ the other who is

actually our closest kin. Jesus once said that if we have seen “*the thirsty, the oppressed, the imprisoned, the lame, the blind, the abused, the neglected, then, we have truly seen him.*” Jesus told this story to make several points, but surely one of them was to say something about the nature of God. People ask the question: what is God like? The simplest and clearest answer is given in the story of the Prodigal Son. God is love, and God rejoices when we repent and turn to God. The word repent has within it the idea of turning, or returning – in this case returning home to reestablish a relationship with a parent. If someone asks the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The most common answer given is “Be good.” But this is not what Jesus is saying in this story. His answer is not “Be good,” but cry “Help!” People often feel that they must first clean up their acts, and then they can come to church. But Jesus reverses this. He is saying, first come and reestablish your relationship with God, and everything else will follow. As always, I am praying for you and with you daily. May God’s love and blessings be always with you, and my love to all of you. Invite someone to join us for worship!

## **Daily Bible Reading – 2016      Shaping Our Life Experience**

Excerpts from both the Old and New Testament are included each day. This is a great way to support your ongoing growth in faith and the Christ Church community as well.

March 8: Deuteronomy 5-7; Mark 12:1-27

March 9: Deuteronomy 8-10; Mark 12:28-44

March 10: Deuteronomy 11-13 ; Mark 13:1-13

March 11: Deuteronomy 14-16; Mark 13:14-37

March 12: Deuteronomy 17-19; Mark 14: 1-25

March 13: Deuteronomy 20-22, Mark 14:26-50

March 14: Deuteronomy 23-25, Mark 14:51-72

March 15: Deuteronomy 26-27, Mark 15:1-26

**Thank you.....**

**To AI Wrisley for painting the Choir Room 😊**

**In Our Prayers**

**Elvira Gonzalez** – currently at Buffalo General Hospital

**Peter Zaleski** – in church on Sunday

**Diane Klenk** – broken leg, in church on Sunday

**Frank Annunciata, Lois Lewis** - recovering at home

**All who are caregivers for others**

**Alex Dunbar, Lindsey Darling & Ian Johnson (deployed)** – all serve in the US Navy

## **This Week at Christ Church**

Monday, **March 7** – 10:30 am Library Team

Tuesday, **March 8** - 7 pm Christian Education Team

Wednesday, **March 9** - 5 pm – **“Invitation” Lent Supper & Speaker Series**

Speaker: Olivia Ebsary & guests – Sacred Dance

7:30 pm- Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, **March 10** - 10 am – Life Lessons w’ Pastor Darryl

7 pm – Staff-Parish Relations Team

7 pm – Apprentices/Mentors meet – banner work

Saturday, **March 12** - **Spring Ahead 1 hour**  
**Change your clocks!**



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**Opportunities to Make A Difference**

**Food Pantry** - This weeks suggested items

**March 6 – Hot & Cold Cereals and cereal bars**

**March 13 – Canned meats (chicken, tuna, salmon)**

*All food items, paper products and toiletry items are welcome anytime.  
Grocery carts are available in the church for your donations. Thank you!*

### **Offer Hospitality -**

Sign up on the bulletin board in the café to host some Sunday morning or even a *month of Sundays*! Invite your family, friends, ministry team or group to join you! Share in this Café ministry of hospitality and welcome.

### **Ways to save –**

The café uses many paper cups each week. – Mugs are available for your use or donate a sleeve of 8 oz cups. Baked goods & cookies are always enjoyed and donations are welcome in the café.



### **Hearts and Hands - Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

Links willing volunteers with older or physically challenged adults for basic services such as transportation for medical appointments, errands or social activities, caregiver respite, companion visits, wellness checks, phone pals and minor home maintenance. Call 406-8311 or visit [www.hnhcares.org](http://www.hnhcares.org)  
**Call 406-8311 to sign up for a volunteer orientation (about 1 hour).**

## ~ Lenten Supper & Speaker Series ~

“Invitation “

Wednesdays March 9, 16

**March 9 – Olivia Ebsary – Sacred Dance & Textile Art**

## March 16 – Tara Scime – Ballroom Dance

*Guest presenters will share the in which their particular art invites them to some deeper experience involving their own soul and we'll consider ways in which we who experience works of art respond to this invitation to explore and respond.*

*Sign up on the clipboard in the Café or call the church office 839-2460*

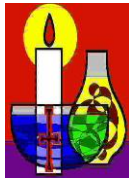
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## Sunday, March 13 – 5th Sunday in Lent

### “Pressing Forward”

Isaiah 43: 16 -19, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Philippians 3:4b-14

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### Confirmation Sunday – March 13

Come, worship and celebrate with Apprentices

**Ariana Castellino - Marie Miller, mentor**  
**Becca Lopez – Peggy Bermudez, mentor**  
**Ryan Lopez – Brad Loliger, mentor**  
**Jacob Rhinehart – David Lawson, mentor**

And their families as they are **Confirmed in Faith** and become full members of the church.



Sundays at Christ Church

10 am - **FaithXpress**- for children

### **March – Join the Journey with Jesus**

10 am **Apprentice** – for youth

10 am - [A.O.L.@CUMC](#) – Adult Opportunities for Learning

### **Encounters With Jesus**

## **Holy Week Observances**

### **Sunday, March 20 – Palm/Passion Sunday**

**Worship at 9 am & 11 am**

### **Thursday, March 24 – Maundy Thursday**

**Worship at 7 pm – Stripping of Sanctuary**

**Meditation Stations available**

### **Friday, March 25 – Good Friday**

**12 Noon – observance in Crafts Hall**

**7 pm – observance in sanctuary**

**Meditation Stations**

### **The Caller**

The “Caller” monthly newsletter will now be made available electronically right to your email address. Print copies will be available to pick up at the church on the first Sunday of each month. Mailed paper copies will be made available by contacting the church office. As always, the “Caller” will be available on the church website at [www.christchurchamherst.org](http://www.christchurchamherst.org). **Please notify the church office with the method of delivery (email, church pick-up, or mail) you prefer by March 20.**

Coming .....

## EASTER MORNING JAZZ BRUNCH

with

### The RON CORSARO JAZZ TRIO

### Easter Sunday, March 27 at 9 am-10:30 am



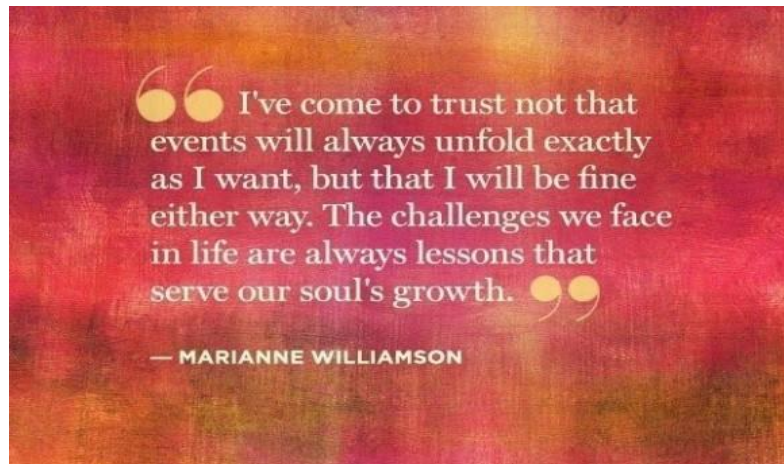
Start your Easter morning celebration with music, readings, hot food and cool jazz! "Where Jazz meets the Spirit!" A Love Offering will be received to help support the Outreach Ministries of Christ Church and to support our monthly *Jazz Vespers*.

Following the Jazz Brunch you are invited to join us for our **Traditional Easter Sunday Worship** with the **Celebration of Holy Communion at 11:00 am**. Invite your family members and friends to join us for this great morning of celebration of the Risen Christ!

## Happening At Christ Church

Encore Experience will be hosting spring and summer ARTS day camps at Christ Church! For more information and to register, visit [www.encoreexperience.com](http://www.encoreexperience.com).

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**Christ Church is a Community Center for Faith & Service**

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DRB/sjp