

**November 19, 2014**

**UPDATE**

**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](http://www.Christchurchamherst.org)

Or call us at: 716-839-2460

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

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Hi Everyone:

On this past Sunday (November 16) as part of my Stewardship of Resources sermon, I laid down a challenge to the members and friends of Christ UMC. Over the past several years we have played with a \$20-30K gap between our anticipated income and our anticipated expenses. The primary result of the gap is that we have not been sending 100% of our “Shared Ministries” to the Annual Conference. These “Shared Ministries” funds are vitally important. They pay for the church camps, and our District Superintendent, they pay for national and international missionaries and our Bishop, they pay for training programs like Hand2Plow and Living Well. These funds are the glue that holds the connection together and represent our “fair share” of being United Methodists in Upper New York. I challenged the members and friends of Christ Church to “step up”. There are things we need to do but cannot because we are handicapped by this budget gap. I would like to hire a part time youth pastor. We need to increase our

mission foot print. We need to take better care of our staff – but cannot do much because of the gap. When you break \$30,000 down by 120 regular giving units it comes out to shortfall of \$250 a year, or about \$5 a week. I challenged every member of the congregation to step up that extra \$5 – which, though I am already tithing (giving 10+% of my salary to Jesus Christ through the ministry of Christ Church), I agreed to do as well.

I am deeply blessed by so many of you who answered the challenge – and several of you who stepped up, over and above, the \$5 challenge. We'll see what the final numbers show but I am convinced that those of you who stepped up will be deeply blessed (as God promises). There is still time. Let Doris Schanzlin know that you are meeting the challenge and “stepping up” with that plus \$5 (or more if you can). Let's get this done! I am already celebrating your faithfulness!

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. We were 119 in worship Sunday (long weekend???)

We expressed our appreciation to Marg and Bill Bauza for their 3 + years of service as our 9:00 a.m. Praise Team leaders. There was a gift from the worship team and cake and punch and many deeply expressed appreciations to Bill and Marg! THANK YOU!! BTW – Bill and Marg are not going anywhere just leaving this aspect of ministry to pursue other options – not the least of which is regular visits to that grandbaby in Chicago!

The 9:00 worship team is reconfiguring but will continue – join us for worship.

2. This Sunday is “Christ the King Sunday”. This marks the end of the Church year and celebrates the promise of the Bible that Jesus, one day, will rule over all! We will be focused on “Thanksgiving” and the celebration of God's abundant blessings in our lives! Join us at 9:00a.m. and/or 11:00a.m.

This Sunday marks **Kevin Durkin's** first anniversary as our Minister of Music. It has been a great year, Kevin. We are blessed to have you as part of the team!

3. There is a community **Thanksgiving Celebration** on Tuesday, November 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Crossroads Lutheran Church, 4640 Main Street. Special music will be provided by Amherst High School's “Sweet 16's”. This gathering is sponsored by the Snyder/Eggertsville Clergy Association. **There will not be a “Thanksgiving Eve” service this year** at Christ UMC (last year was held on Wednesday at 7:00p.m.).

4. There will be no choir rehearsal tonight because of the anticipated weather.

5. In our prayers: Mac Sabol's surgery went well yesterday and he is at Buffalo General recovering (I saw him this morning and he was sitting up and getting ready for lunch); Dona Dalton (Dona was my Administrative Assistant for 27 years in Syracuse. She is battling Lymphoma); Barb Critoph (recovering from knee surgery); Al Wrisley (recovering from oral surgery); Brian Martin (now home following bone marrow

transplant); 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, Marion Steve, Ruth Kitson, Ruth Luss, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, Diane Lovejoy. Remember our service men and women and especially: Alex Dunbar, Ian Johnson and Lindsey Darling (all serving in the US Navy).

6. **Crafting for a Cause** will be finishing up Teddy Bears on this Saturday morning (November 22) at 10:00a.m.. All are welcome. Please bring black embroidery thread and embroidery needles.

7. **FOOD PANTRY:** For the poor there is no holiday season nor an off season. Remember to pick up a few extra cans or boxes of food when you do your shopping and bring it to church and place it in the shopping carts – we will be supplying local food pantries all winter long.

8. **ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE** was held this past Sunday afternoon at Pendleton Center UMC. We approved the Senior Pastor's support items (no increases); we elected three trustees to our board of Trustees (Phyllis Maliken, Thomas Weaver, Christopher Sciolino) for the class of 2017. We heard a message from Bishop Webb and engaged in conversation about the future and building ministry, etc.

#### 9. THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH

Thursday, November 20 – Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.

Friday, November 21 – Books We Have Loved at 10:00a.m.

Friday, November 21 – MYM Board Meeting 12:15p.m. in Wesley Room

Friday, November 21 – Mission Youth 6:00p.m.

Saturday, November 22 – Uganda 2015 Meeting at 10:00a.m. in Wesley Room  
-Crafting for a Cause – 10 a.m.

Monday, November 24 – Praise Team Rehearsal 5:45p.m.

Tuesday, November 25 – Community Thanksgiving services at Crossroads Lutheran Church at 7:00p.m.

10. **The Giving Tree** – the Giving Tree will be in Crafts Hall starting this Sunday. If you wish to participate, please take a tag and return your UNWRAPPED gift by December 14. Attach the tag to your gift. This year's recipients are Gateway-Longview, Haven House, Primera Iglesia UMC, and Habitat for Humanity. If you have any questions please contact Diane Klenk (651-0236).

11. **Christmas Dinner and Concert:** Mature Years Ministry is hosting their annual Christmas dinner on Friday, December 5 at 5:30 p.m. The menu this year includes ham, au gratin potatoes, green beans and chocolate trifle. Tickets are \$18 and are on sale in Crafts Hall the next two Sundays.

Following dinner at 7:30p.m. will be a concert by the Buffalo Silver Band, which is open to the public. This award-winning group will present a variety of Christmas music

with a big brass band sound. A Free-will offering will be received to support Mission youth (and our youth on mission).

This from Bob Snyder: The Buffalo Silver Band is celebrating its 100 year anniversary and their music is really great! Marcia and I heard them at Kleinhans this spring. In your email would you please make the points 1) it is a big 30 plus member English style brass band. 2) They have played at the amphitheater at Chautauqua and of course Kleinhans plus other places in Western NY. 3) This year they won the Hannaford Cup at the Toronto Festival of Bands (They are the real deal) 4) They play jazz, classical, marches, etc. I asked and they will play "Sing Sing Sing". Wait 'til you see and hear that! We had the Lancaster Steel Drum Band a few years ago and this group will also rock big time.

12. Happy Birthday this week:

November 19 – Ashley George (and my mom Lorna Norrix!!)  
November 20 – Jim Beller  
November 21 – Evelyn Cole  
November 22 – Reid Lesswing  
November 23 – George Voskerchian  
November 24 – Wyatt Hannon  
November 26 – Peter Johnston

13. Happy Anniversary this week:

Geoff and Janet Hill – November 21 (44)  
Jim and Laurie Hannon (34)  
Guy and Sharon Ferrelli (40); Fraser and Lucile Mooney (30); Al and Julie Wrisley (52)

14. DOUBLE YOUR MISSION GIVING IMPACT on "Giving Tuesday: December 2, 2014". The United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries announced that on December 2, 2014 it will match up to \$1 million in gifts made on line to any project through the Advance as part of UMC #Giving Tuesday. See more at [www.umcmmission.org/give](http://www.umcmmission.org/give).

15. Last week 7 Christ Church members (along with about a dozen from other congregations) completed "Visitation Training" here at the Church. They were trained to visit in homes, the hospital, nursing homes, etc. They were trained to deliver communion as well compassion and love and grace. We will be forming a team with these newly trained persons and expect to be able to provide much better spiritual care of our home-bound members.

16. FOOD COLLECTION: This week bring SOUP (let's make it a SOUPER day this Sunday). Chicken Noodle is still the favorite.

17. **MISSION OPPORTUNITIES**

**Cheektowaga Food Pantry** – Janet Neiman, Director of the Cheektowaga Food Pantry, is in need of volunteers to help each Tuesday and Wednesday during November. Call Janet (392-2318) for details.

**Uganda 2015** – Our team is nearly set. Dr. BJ Norrix will be leading a team of 8: John and Brandon Miller, Vicki and Hannah Smith, Kathryn Weaver, Janelle Martin, and Erisawe Briere (and possibly ONE more). We will be travelling to Uganda for 2 weeks the end of June/July 2015. 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 clinic and on a school and much, much more.

**Habitat for Humanity:** Christ Church was one of the founding partners for Buffalo Habitat and will present its annual \$1000 check of support on December 4<sup>th</sup> at the ingathering.

18. Congratulations to Ian Johnson and Nicole Langenfeld who were married on Saturday, November 15 at Christ Church!

19. Through the Bible in a year: this week's reading:

November 19 – 1 Chronicles 25-27

November 20 – 1 Chronicles 28-29 and Luke 4

November 21 – 2 Chronicles 1-3 and Luke 5

November 22 – 2 Chronicles 4-6

November 23 – 2 Chronicles 7-9

November 24 – 2 Chronicles 10-12 and Luke 6

November 25 – 2 Chronicles 13-14

November 26 – 2 Chronicles 15-16 and Luke 7

November 27 – 2 Chronicles 17-18

20. **Christmas Pageant - there's a place for you!**

At FaithXpress at 10 am this Sunday through December we'll be preparing to tell the Christmas story in a fun and memorable way. All children, youth and adults are invited to participate in speaking & non-speaking roles as well as instrumental and song opportunities. Join us Sunday at 10 am to hear more about **The Kings of Orient, AR.**

21. AOL (Adult Opportunities for Learning) kicks off Advent series titled "Christmas: the Good, The Bad & the Ugly". Led by Rev. Jim Pollard. The study launches November 30 and will run for 4 weeks. See Jim or Sally for more information.

### **Parting Thoughts:**

I'm always somewhat stunned by the first significant snowfall of the season. I find myself stunned by two things. First, the treacherous beauty of any significant snow event. I sat in dazed amazement as I looked out the window of the train on Monday and saw the glistening snow covered trees along the tracks – it was spectacular. I watched, and prayed, as I saw news clips of people stranded on the Thruway (including the entire Niagara University Women's basketball team) in a blinding snowstorm (treacherous, indeed). I have been offering prayers for the first responders (police and fire) who are

providing critical assistance for those stuck in the elements. The other stunning thing is people's responses and reactions. After all here in the Buffalo area it does this **every year** and yet many people seem angry or disappointed or just seem to have completely forgotten how it all works. There is a spiritual need in each of us to learn to take life as it comes. All too often we are stuck in the past or lost in the future and we miss the beauty and wonder of the moment. All too often we get overwhelmed by unrealistic expectations – maybe it WON'T snow this year? Maybe the Bills will make it back to the playoffs this year? Maybe at Thanksgiving dinner Uncle (fill in the blank) won't get drunk this year? Unrealistic expectations? Perhaps. OK, some maybe, NOT all are unrealistic but a snow storm from Mid November to Mid March should not come as any kind of huge surprise. There is an expression (actually it is an expression I am learning to not like) that says "it is what it is." But the truth is so much of life simply is what it is and railing against the machines or railing against the fickleness of weather patterns won't change a thing. Maybe we should do what the kids do when it might snow (and maybe, just maybe, they'll get a snow day). They go to bed with their pajamas on inside out in hopes that they'll get that bonus day off. What could be better than hunkering down at home with a hot beverage and a good book or movie or just playing some games with family and friends? You can't change it. You can leave it (and many do) or you can learn to love it (and most of us do). Either way it is what it is . . .

Have a great week (and be safe out there);

BJ Norrix, missionary, lead servant, personal friend of old man winter