



Weekly Update: November 23, 2015

Christ United Methodist Church

Harlem at Saratoga Rd.
Amherst, NY 14226

"Living Christ's ways and exploding with love and service"

Church office hours - Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm

SUNDAY AT CHRIST CHURCH

Praise Worship at 9am

Traditional Worship at 11 am

10 am: FaithXpress - Children

Apprentice - Youth

A.O.L.-Adult Opportunities for Learning –

"Advent - Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"

Advent & Christmas with Charles Wesley - based on his hymns

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Happy Thanksgiving!

This week's update has several suggestions for families and friends to count their blessings and celebrate Thanksgiving.

A word from Pastor Darryl

In his commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 John Wesley writes, *"Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer; it is almost essentially connected with it."* Giving thanks is as essential to our spiritual growth as prayer, which the letter in 1 Thessalonians calls us to do continually. Here are some creative ideas for Thanksgiving (choose one or two of these ideas):

Fill a family Thanksgiving box. Create a Thanksgiving Box. Each day family members write on slips of paper something for which they are thankful that day and place them in the decorated box. The box will make a nice Thanksgiving table centerpiece, and when opened, will be a way to remember how blessed we are every day. Feel free to add to it all year long!

Serve someone. In the coming weeks of the Advent and Christmas seasons many agencies serving those in need expand their work. Food banks, our churches, and other service organizations supply meals to the hungry on Thanksgiving Day. Centenary United Methodist Church in Los Angeles holds a sleepover for youth called the “turkey lock-in.” On the night before Thanksgiving the youth prepare, and the next day deliver meals to people in the community who will be alone on Thanksgiving and/or during the Advent and Christmas seasons. We can offer some suggestions of places near us to serve or donate.

Take time for quiet reflection. As the big day approaches, things get busier. Set aside some time each day this week to say thank you to God for all God has provided for us. Invite your family and friends to share in the *Morning Prayer of Thanksgiving*.

Make a Thanksgiving frame. As you and your family reflect on those things for which you are thankful, compile a list. The day before Thanksgiving, neatly transfer the list onto a piece of paper you can then insert into a frame for a beautiful expression of gratitude to decorate your home.

Invite someone new to dinner. Athens First United Methodist Church invites international students from the University of Georgia to spend Thanksgiving with their members. The students enjoy spending time away from campus and in family homes. We can explore ways to invite those who may be alone or far from family to celebrate with us during this holiday season.

Share blessings together. When gathered around the table, many families will ask each other to share something for which they are thankful. Mary Jane Pierce Norton suggests creating a list together, such as foods each person enjoys. Then together offer “thanks for the Earth and all with which we are blessed in the world God created.”

Send cards to those we miss. Remember those who are not able to be with you this year by making or purchasing cards for them. “On Thanksgiving Day invite all who are gathered in your home to sign and/or write a note on the cards to those who are missing.” Mail them the next day to share the gratitude.

Create a keepsake of thanks. When we take that group photo around the table or in front of the fireplace, record not only the names of those in attendance, but also something for which each person is thankful. This will be a great item to revisit when everyone gathers again next year.

Include children. Involve the children celebrating with you by sharing the child’s Thanksgiving Prayer. Use this prayer at the kids’ table as a grace or an after meal blessing, having one of the older children lead. Then encourage the kids to write their own Thanksgiving prayers. They can then lead the adults in prayer later in the day.

Voice your gratitude. If your family is musical, consider a Thanksgiving sing-a-long, as you might do with Christmas carols. Do a Quiz of Hymns with lines about thanksgiving. Make a game out of who can guess the most.

However we can find ways to give thanks to God for all of God’s blessings throughout our celebration this year, instill the habit of an attitude of gratitude, which will extend far beyond Thanksgiving Day. Remember, thanking God for our blessings is a spiritual discipline that should not be limited to a single day. “...But give thanks to God in all circumstances (in all seasons of life)...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

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!

Happening at church...

Making a Joyful Noise-- Our Praise Band now includes Kaitlyn Fedele on piano, Harold Price (bass) and Greg Maliken on guitar, Jeff Boyer and Darryl Barrow on drums and singers Beth Sweet, Diane Klenk, Jim Pollard & Sandy Cumming.

Sue Estee, on piano, and the choir moved us with the song, "Thankful," at the 11 am worship service. We're thankful to them for enriching our worship with their gifts of music & song.

Thank you to the **Worship & Altar Guild Team** for the beautiful harvest arrangement on the worship table affirming God's generosity.

A pink rosebud on the table celebrated the birth of **Lena Rose Webber**, granddaughter of **Ian & Hilde Webber**.

The GivingTree

The tree in Crafts Hall has many tags representing youth from Gateway-Longview, women at Haven House, Habitat for Humanity families, Veterans, Family Justice Center and Primera Iglesias UMC (3 Kings celebration). Take a tag(s) from the tree, purchase gifts for the person on the tag and return them unwrapped to the tree. Gateway-Longview and Haven House gifts should be returned by **Sunday, Dec 6** and the other gifts by **Sunday, Dec. 13**. *For information contact Diane Klenk 651-0236.*

MYM Christmas Dinner

There has been a price *decrease* for the Christmas Dinner at Sean Patrick's Restaurant on Sunday, December 13 at 1 pm. Contact Bob and Marcia Snyder for details.

Children's Christmas Shoppe

Items are still be collected for this Christmas Shoppe at Seneca St UMC where children are able to shop for Christmas gifts for their families.

Needed for women are: toiletries, picture frames, candles, jewelry, handbags and DVDs

For Pets-- Dog & cat food, treats, toys, leashes, collars, food bowls

Other-- scotch tape, gift tags, tissue paper, gift bags, gift cards, or money donations.

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Contributions should be in by this Sunday, December 29.

In our prayers

Mary Jo Evans - celebrating her 80th birthday this Saturday, November 28.

Mitch & Sissie Mooney - their son-in-law, John, died last week.

Family & Friends of **Ruth Kitson** who died on November 11.

Central City Cafe

Central City Cafe recently celebrated 25 years of serving meals to those in need. At the celebration, **Barbara Burr** was recognized as one who has been a **volunteer at the cafe for 25 years!!**

Cookie Baking for ANS

Thank you to **Apprentices - Jacob Rhinehart, Becca Lopez, Ryan Lopez, Mentors - Peggy Bermudez, Beth Sweet, Michele Sciolino and to Pauline Williams and Emily Williams** for baking frosting and packaging MANY cookies! These special treats, along with a bookmark containing information about upcoming events at Christ Church during Advent & Christmas, were given to the staff and families of the **Amherst Nursery School**. We expressed our friendship & thanks for all the ways they help children blossom & grow. This is a mission we share! Thank you to **Pastor Darryl, Sally Pollard & Janelle Martin** who greeted the staff members and families and distributed the cookies.

Food Pantry

The Outreach Team is collecting the following items for our local food pantries:

November 22 - Toiletries

November 29 - Paper products

Mobility Study

Looking for 40 individuals age 65 or older, willing to be interviewed by graduate students in the University of Buffalo, Dept. of Rehabilitation Science. The purpose of the study is to gather information on supports and constraints to mobility in the community. What is learned will go to enlighten policy makers and lead to policy change. Participants will be compensated for their participation and Christ Church will receive recruitment payment for participants successfully recruited. If you think you may be interested please speak to Sally Pollard, 839-2460, sjpioy@christchurchamherst.org, or sjpioy@aol.com as soon as possible. Dr. Laura Lien from UB will contact you. You can express interest with no obligation.

Hearts and Hands

Hearts and Hands is a not-for-profit, neighbor-helping-neighbor organization which pairs volunteers with care receivers for door through door transportation for medical appointments and routine errands. Volunteers also can provide companion visits/caregiver respite, wellness checks/phone pals, and minor home repairs and maintenance. Christ Church is a partner church. **If you or a family member or friend need some help, call 401-8311. If you'd like to become an H & H volunteer call the same number.**

Coming this Sunday, November 29...

Advent season begins

Jazz Vespers at 4:30 pm featuring the Ron Corsaro Trio
Soup & Bread supper to follow
All are welcome!

Sunday, December 6 - Cookie & Candy Sale

Are you a baker or candy maker? Your homemade creations are welcome! Please bring them to the church kitchen by Friday, December 5th. All proceeds from the sale will support outreach missions.

Sunday, December 20 - "Christmas Presence"

Children, Youth and Adults are preparing each Sunday morning for the Christmas pageant. Several youth musicians will also be playing on Sunday, December 20th at the 11 am worship service. Join us for the **Wrap Party** at noon in Crafts Hall!

Happening this week:

Tuesday, November 24 - 9:30 am - Caller Collation

Wednesday, November 25 - 7:30 pm - **NO** Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 26 - **Give thanks with a grateful heart!**

Friday, November 27 - **Church office closed**
7 pm - Game Night

* Sunday, November 29 - Following both worship services this Sunday **Brad Loliger, leader of the Stewardship & Finance Team**, will be on hand to consider options for the 2016 church budget plan. Please remain after worship for this brief meeting regarding our spending plan for mission & ministry for the coming year.

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