

**Christ United Methodist Church**

**UPDATE**

**November 25, 2014**

**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](tel:716-839-2460)

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

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Hi Everyone:

In this week of “giving thanks” and cultivating an attitude of gratitude we have to pause and wonder at the state of race relations in our country. I am hesitant to denounce the verdict in Ferguson as I was not part of the Grand Jury and was not privy to all of the information available and the testimonies given. I am, however, deeply concerned and profoundly affected by the perception of injustice that is experienced by so many of our neighbors – especially people of color. Yes, there are “bad” people of every color, gender, nationality, etc. But I am among those who believe that America is better than this and yet, over and over again, we prove that we are not. I am not an expert in police procedures (even though I have many friends who serve in police forces and an uncle who was a small town chief of police). What I do know is that they too are human beings subject to the same stresses and prejudices that afflict all of us. There are no simple and easy answers. I pray for peace. I pray for justice. I pray that somehow they might someday be the same. That peace with justice would, some day, be our reality. My prayer is not new nor is it my own. From the earliest days of the prophets (who dreamed of Justice rolling down like waters; who imagined a ruler whose name would be Prince of Peace and who would bring balance (righteousness) to the world) through the very words of Jesus (who challenged us to pray for our enemies and to work to bring the Kingdom of God into the human world) the hope for a just peace has been a major thread in the imagination and prayers of people of faith. This Sunday begins the season of Advent. Advent is four Sundays set aside to prepare us for the celebration of the coming of the Prince of Peace; four Sundays for us to prepare our hearts and minds and to join Jesus in the work of making a better world. It might be a good time to cross the barriers that separate human beings. Jesus’ mother, Mary, said it this way: “He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty (Luke 1:51-53).” The prophets and Mary and Jesus and John the Divine envisioned a very different world than the one we are privileged to take for granted.

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 123. We were reminded to have an “Attitude of Gratitude” and to give thanks in all things.
2. Thank you for your faithfulness in returning your pledge cards. Many of you have stepped up in your giving. If you have not yet returned your 2015 pledge card please do so at your earliest convenience as this information is essential to our budget planning.
3. This Sunday is the First Sunday in Advent: I am beginning a series on “Home for the Holidays”. Over the next four weeks I’ll be looking at the traditional Advent themes through the lens of being “Home for the Holidays”. This Sunday the subject is “You can Go Home Again: it is just different.” Next week we “Return to where it all started”

December 14 we look at “the Promise of a whole new beginning.” And on Christmas Eve, “sometimes, home is a place you’ve never been before”. December 21 is the Annual Christmas Pageant.

There is no FaithXpress or Soul Strength this Sunday.

4. We have learned of the death of Bill Kearney (on November 24). Bill was a former member of Christ Church and served as our Lay Leader. His wife, Andrea, served as our Treasurer. Bill taught instrumental music at Amherst Middle School before he retired and moved west to Washington State. We keep Bill’s family and friends in our prayers during their time of grief. Condolences can be sent to Andrea at: **17705 184<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, Woodinville, WA 98072.**

5. There is a community **Thanksgiving Celebration TONIGHT:** 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 7:00).

6. Diane Lovejoy needs a ride this afternoon to shopping on Niagara Falls Blvd and Wegman’s. If you can help call her at: 276-9711.

7. Christ Church delivered two large loads of food to help our neighbors in the South towns. We sent three shopping carts full of food to Lackawanna on Saturday and our collection Sunday (including the \$324) made one full van load of food (including two turkeys) for the Seneca Babcock neighborhood. This means that our shopping carts are now EMPTY. Remember this Sunday to bring in some canned and boxed goods (non-perishables) to fill the carts for the next round.

8. **HELP IS NEEDED IN THE SOUTHTOWNS:** If you would like to volunteer in ANY capacity – flood relief, clean up, food for the volunteers, etc. Here is the hotline to call: [716\) 677-3940](tel:7166773940).

9. In our Prayers: Family and friends of Bill Kearney; Mac Sabol is now home and recovering (Julianna says he is doing good and sleeping a lot); Bob Snyder is now home following a brief hospital stay and is doing well; Dorothy Brown is home (with her son from Chicago) and appreciates your prayers and encouragement; 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).

10. Church Council is meeting TONIGHT at 7:00p.m. in the Parlor. Key business on the agenda is discussion of the Church's 2015 budget.

#### 11. THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH

Tuesday, November 25 – 7:00p.m. Church Council

Tuesday, November 25 – Community Thanksgiving services at Crossroads Lutheran Church at 7:30p.m.

Thursday/Friday – November 27/28 the Church Office is Closed!

Monday, December 1 – SPRT Meets at 7:00p.m.

Tuesday, December 2 – BJ at Asbury Pointe at 2:00p.m.

Thursday, December 4 – Men's pre-work breakfast (Sheridan Family Rest. at 7:00 a.m.)

Thursday, December 4 – Habitat for Humanity Annual Ingathering (5:30p.m.)

12. 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 you 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).

13. 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 on Sunday.

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.

#### 14. Happy Birthday this week

November 26 – Peter Johnson

November 27 – Anne Reed

November 28 – Mary Jo Evans; Elaine Fuller; Barbara Weaver

November 29 – Alicia Bermudez; Sean Johnson

#### 15. Happy Anniversary this week

November 28 – Jim and Sally Pollard (33)

December 2 – Clem and Karen Arrison (14)

16. 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). If you would like a suggestion or two: Mudge, Sarah (#3021845) is my friend and a US2 Missionary serving in Tacoma, Washington: UMCOR is always a good place to invest a few dollars.

17. 7 Christ Church members completed “Visitation Training” here at the Church a few weeks ago. 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.

#### 18. 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.

#### 19. Through the Bible in a year: This week's readings

November 25 – 2 Chronicles 13-14

November 26 – 2 Chronicles 15-16 and Luke 7

November 27 – 2 Chronicles 17-18

November 28 – 2 Chronicles 19-20 and Luke 8

November 29 – 2 Chronicles 21-22 and Luke 9

November 30 – 2 Chronicles 23-24

December 1 – 2 Chronicles 25-27

December 2 – 2 Chronicles 28-29

December 3 – 2 Chronicles 30-31 and Luke 10

December 4 – 2 Chronicles 32-33 and Luke 11

December 5 – 2 Chronicles 34-36

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

In December we'll be continuing our preparations to tell the Christmas story in a fun and memorable way. Special rehearsals are scheduled for Saturday December 13 and 20. 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. The performance will be December 21 as our 11:00 morning worship.**

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.

22. **Disciple Bible Study** is down to its last 5 sessions. If you are interested in joining a Disciple Class for 2015 please let me know: Disciple is a 34 week in-depth survey of the Bible.

### **Parting Thoughts:**

I've been working on “ruthlessly eliminating hurry from my life.” To that end, Karen and I will not be travelling this Thanksgiving. We are planning a nice quiet couple of days off together at home here in Amherst. We are going with the traditional Thanksgiving Lobster (or some other thing). We will hang out, read books, watch movies, and generally kick back and relax without the stress of getting on the roads for a few days. I know a lot of us are seeing family fly in for the holiday and a bunch of you are heading out to be with family who are out of town – be safe and careful in your travels. Somehow and in some way during these few days make sure you take time to STOP the rushing about and offer a simply prayer of thanks to God for the abundant blessings in your life. Make time to break the usual routine and express appreciation for the people in your life. STOP and look around the Thanksgiving feast and thank the people in your life – especially those that irritate the stuffing out of you. You have been blessed by God. Be a blessing to others in your giving thanks this week!

I am blessed to be your pastor,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, thanks giver