

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York

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

UPDATE

November 26, 2013

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 – Praise Celebration Worship

10:00 FaithXPress/Soul Strength/Youth Group 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:

So, we are back from our Uganda journey. We returned on Friday about Noon to Buffalo/Niagara Airport after 19 days of travel, mission and ministry. I was greatly blessed to travel with Kathryn Weaver, Joe Forte, and my old friend Rev. Clair Mosher all of whom worked hard and made a difference in the lives of men, women and children in Uganda. We were blessed to graduate 42 Nexus students from the Kikyusa class. We were blessed to visit a number of High Schools. We were blessed to participate in 3 different youth rallies. We were blessed to preach in different places on the two Sunday’s we were away. I was blessed to teach in 9 different locations (some for a couple of days). It was a great journey (and, yes, it is also great to be home again). I want to express my appreciation to a number of Christ Church folks: to the UMW (Peggy and Beth, et al) for the Children’s Sabbath on November 10; to Rev. Jim Pollard, our guest preacher on November 17. I want to express my thanks to Melanie Rogers (interim keyboard player) and

Mac Sabol (interim Choir Director) – they did a great job filling the spaces between Elizabeth’s retirement and the beginning of our new Minister of Music, Mr. Kevin Durkin. Thank you to Michelle Panasiewicz for the time you worked with us (and welcome Janelle Martin as our new Office Manager). Special thank you to Sally Pollard, who, as I said on Sunday, seems to be the stable rock around which all the change seems to swirl. Sally is a great blessing to Christ Church. Thank you everyone for your support of our Uganda mission (your generosity makes it all possible).

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the 130’s. We welcomed **Kevin Durkin** to worship for the first time as our new Minister of Music! We are blessed to have such a talented musician and organist in our midst.

2. **THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP WEDNESDAY T 7:00** – Come and worship with us at 7:00 on Wednesday evening as we gather before the Thanksgiving Feast to pause and give thanks to God for God’s abundant blessings and grace. We will say thanks with the Great Thanksgiving and Holy Communion. A Special “Thanksgiving Offering” is being received.

3. This Sunday: is the first Sunday of Advent. We begin our preparations for the celebration of the arrival of the Prince of Peace. I am preaching from Isaiah 2:1-5 and Matthew 24:36-44 and the message is titled “All we are saying is give the Prince of Peace a chance!”

4. If you haven’t had a chance yet, welcome Janelle Martin as our new Office Manager. Janelle began work with us on November 18.

5. In our prayers: Mitch Mooney; Richard Ball; Bim Rowlands; Glenn Hurst; Nicky Sebastiano, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Carl and Jean Ericson, Art Gundlach, Alice Schmidt, and Diane Lovejoy. Please pray for our office manager, Janelle Martin, as she is having shoulder surgery on December 17. Remember members of our family who are serving in the military (especially Alex and Ian); those looking for work; families in crisis and all who are in harm’s way.

6. In Sympathy: 1. We remember the life of John Fulsom, early member of Christ Church who died in Orlando, Florida this past month.

2. Doris Steinmetz's memorial celebration and reception is this Saturday at Asbury Pointe at 1:00 p.m.

3. We celebrated the life of Mildred Anderson this past Saturday at 2:00 at Christ Church.

7. SPECIAL CHURCH CONFERENCE REPORT: We met following worship on November 24 with District Superintendent Rev. Wayne Butler presiding. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the purchase of the 4040 Harlem property. After a presentation by the Trustees and the Finance Team we looked at the scope of the project and its impact, with the information at hand the Conference chose to NOT pursue the purchase at this time. Deep appreciation to the Trustees who worked diligently to gather all the data, facts and materials needed for us to make an informed decision.

8. ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE – DECEMBER 2 AT 7:00. This is Christ Church's required annual meeting. We will approve the Pastoral Support portion of the budget (as required by Discipline); we will elect Trustees; we will receive bequests; we will consider any other business needed for an annual meeting. This is a Church Conference, all members of Christ UMC are eligible for voice and vote.

9. "A Dickens Christmas" with Victorian Dancers: December 6 at 5:30 p.m. Roast Turkey with all the trimmings. \$18 – sign up in Crafts Hall this Sunday. Sponsored by the Mature Years Ministry with proceeds going to benefit the Christ Church Youth Group.

10. Coming December 22 "Bed, Bethlehem and Beyond" at 11:00 a.m. Join us for this "Bed and Breakfast" event. Breakfast will be served in Crafts hall. Sponsored by the Christian Education Team!

11. Happy Birthday this week:

November 26 – Peter Johnston

November 27 – Anne Reed

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

November 29 – Alicia Bermudez; Sean Johnson

December 3 – Amy Johnston; Robert Paddock; Hailey Wilsman

December 4 – Mary Parsons

12. Happy Anniversary this week:

November 28 – Jim and Sally Pollard

December 2 – Clem and Karen Arrison

13. Uganda Team Report: On Behalf of the Christ United Methodist Church family and friends, we delivered the **Dress our People** clothing to a new school in the Gomba district at Nabukondo. Nabukondo is where we had the well dug this past spring. The children were deeply appreciative of the new clothes – most of them were very much in need of a new set of clothing. **They loved the stickers – when we drove past later in the day after delivering the clothing we saw children all over the village with our stickers on their arms and heads!** We delivered the medical supplies and microscope to Dr. Ibanda Moses in Lusanja. We presided at the graduation of 42 Nexus Students on November 9 in Kikyusa; we assisted with three youth rallies; a youth leader training event; three different “Bible Scholar Summits”; as well as work with our Nexus classes. We also delivered a gift of \$1034 from the Park UMC in Pulaski and \$1200 from Erisawe Crawford (of Erieville, New York) to Dr. Ibanda. We delivered toothbrushes and pencils to 5 different high schools and at least that many primary schools. Christ Church, friends and family, provided us with \$5000 over and above our expenses to support various mission projects: that money was spent as follows: 1) \$200 for Lugandan language bibles; 2) \$1000 to the Blessed Primary School in Kirimandagi to support their work with orphans; 3) \$800 to “Moses the Engineer’s” church to help purchase a new roof for the church facility; 4) \$600 to the school in Nabukondo for supplies and equipment; 5) \$500 gift to the Matovu family in appreciation and to help them continue to upgrade the home; 6) \$400 gift to Nexus Seminary Uganda to support the tutors; 7) \$1200 to purchase a brick making machine for Bishop Sam and Oskar’s church in the Mbale slum – the machine will provide quality bricks and will, when operational, employ 5 local men; 8) \$2500 gift to the Eternal Life City Church for the purchase of land for their expansion. The total is greater than the \$5000 given because each team member provides mission resources from their own pockets (as each are able).

Next on the Nexus/Uganda front: Rev. Davis Matovu will be visiting the United States in May/June of 2014 and will be preaching at Christ Church probably on Mother’s Day in May (depending on flights, schedules, etc.).

I am planning to return to Uganda in the Fall of 2014 to continue our work . . . is God calling you to come with me? Let me know.

We are planning a “Youth Focused” trip (10 days) in late June/early July 2015. Are you 16 or over and would like to make this journey? See me.

14. This Week at Christ Church:

Wednesday, November 27 – Thanksgiving Eve Worship at 7:00 (NO CHOIR THIS WEEK)

Friday, November 29 – 7:30 Game Night

Sunday, December 1 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Monday, December 2 – 7:00 Annual Church Conference

Tuesday, December 3 – Library Team at 9:30

Friday, December 6 – MYM Christmas Dinner at 5:30

15. Through the Bible in a Year: This week's readings

November 26 – Matthew 23-25

November 27 – Matthew 26-27

November 28 – Matthew 28 and 1 Thessalonians 1-3

November 29 – 1 Thessalonians 4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 1-3

November 30 – Romans 1-4

December 1 – Romans 5-8

December 2 – Romans 9-12

December 3 – Romans 13-16

December 4 – Ephesians 1-4

December 5 – Psalm 119:1-80 and Ephesians 5-6

16. Christmas is Coming: Christ Church Christmas Gatherings

December 6 – MYM Christmas Dinner at 5:30

December 22 – Bed, Bethlehem and Beyond at 11:00 (Education Team)

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Worship at 9:00 p.m. – Carols, Candles, Choir, Lessons

Worship at 11:00 p.m. – Carols, Candles, Communion

Parting Thought:

I'm still a bit jet lagged (I think my brain is approaching the coast of Newfoundland this morning) but am returning to full functioning. I am feeling a little disorientated but also greatly blessed. It is such an amazing privilege to be a servant of Jesus Christ. In my 40+ years of trying to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, I have met some amazing people, I have helped and been helped by some outstanding friends and I have been blessed to work and/or visit in a number of locations. I am finding that my later years are even more adventurous than my early years. Yes I have those little aches and pains we all get as we get olded and yes I don't quite have the stamina I had as a younger man, but somehow it just doesn't seem to matter enough to keep me from doing what God has called me to do. I think about our aging denomination (the United Methodist Church) and what

I see, more often than not, is an institution that no longer loves, believes or trusts God enough to take any risk (let alone any really big ones). I see an institution that is so locked into preservation mode that we can't get past our disagreements to see what an amazing vision God has for His church. Historian Philip Jenkins notes a striking change in the makeup of the Christian Church. In 1910 80% of all followers of Jesus lived in Europe and the United States. In 2010 70% of all followers of Jesus live in the southern Hemisphere, South America, Africa, and the East. The movement that Jesus started is gaining ground among the poor and the persecuted (just like it always has) while it atrophies among the rich and the secure. The United Methodist Church, globally, is rich and secure and has deep investments and deep pockets and it is failing (badly failing) in the United States. The Christian movement, globally, is thriving among those who need the hope that only the gospel can provide and who are living into the transformation that only the power of resurrection can make happen. My African adventures have ruined my comfortable American world view. I have seen, first hand, what faith and trust in Jesus Christ does to lift the downtrodden, broken and marginalized. Meanwhile, I was touched by this statement on another church's website . . . What we mean by "all people are welcome," single, twice divorced, under 30, gay, filthy rich, black and proud, poor as dirt, can't sing, no habla ingles, married with pets, older than God, more Catholic than the Pope, workaholic, bad speller, screaming babies, three-times divorced, passive-aggressive, obsessive compulsive, tourists, seekers, doubters, bleeding hearts. and YOU!!

As we move toward the celebration of the incarnation, what kind of Christ followers do we intend to be?

I'll see you when the Church gathers,

BJ Norrix, missionary, lead servant, faith explorer

This e-mail is a communication ministry of the Christ United Methodist Church, Snyder, New York. If you do not wish to receive this communication please let us know.