

**September 24, 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.drbjthoughts.blogspot.com](http://www.drbjthoughts.blogspot.com)**

**Like us on Facebook!**

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

Hi Everyone:

The spiritual life is lived from the inside out. We are transformed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is not a “God does it all” thing, however. We participate in the process of our transformation through certain practices (also called disciplines). These practices are exercises that we choose to undergo for the sake of the transformation of our souls. I was watching “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” a few weeks ago. There is a scene at an exclusive club where a woman sitting at the bar makes a profound confession. She says, “I did join a gym last year.” Then, after a long pause, she says: “Apparently you actually have to go to the gym for it to have any benefit.” At the gym she would have found the exercise and workout equipment that, ***if actually used***, could have given her the health and vitality she sought. The spiritual life works the same way. We can “join a church”. But being present at church is only the first step. It won’t do for me to go to my gym and talk about exercising and working out. I actually

have to engage in those activities for them to have any benefit. It won't do for me to go to church and talk about prayer and Bible study and worship and accountability and mission in ministry – if I never engage in these activities. The transformational benefit only comes when we apply the discipline to engage in these practices on a regular basis. How are you doing with the steps to spiritual maturity?

Here is what is happening at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was in the 120's (when we include the 19 women at Asbury). It was a good day at Christ Church. We had a "stomp band" rehearsal. We had special guest liturgist (thank you Dave Lawson), we had a special guest children's moment leader, and, since we were attempting to have "guy" church, we even had bacon in the Café!!

Friday, September 19 we celebrated the Baptism of Randolph (Randy) Beron (Thank you Dave and Barb Mitchell for the loan of your pool).

Sunday we welcomed Randy Beron as a member of the Christ United Methodist Church! WELCOME RANDY!

**DID YOU KNOW . . .** that every Sunday message (By Pastor BJ or others) is recorded and is available for listening through our church web site? Go to <http://www.christchurchamherst.org> at the top right of the home page is the word "Worship" move the cursor there and a drop screen labeled "Sermons" will appear. Click on "sermons" and a screen will appear that lists every sermon of this year by date and title and preacher. Click and listen to any and all.

**2. Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction is this Friday from 5 to 7. Tickets at the door or through the Church office: \$10 (\$8 for students).** Come and support BJ and Joe as they head to Uganda Sunday, October 5.

3. This Sunday at Christ Church: The theme is "Accountable Relationships". The genius of John Wesley's (the founder of Methodism) approach to spiritual growth was to live life in covenantal relationships where we were accountable to one another for our spiritual growth. Question: who has the right to speak truth into your life? Question: who has earned the right to ask you the "hard" questions of accountable discipleship?

**We will be dedicating the new Garden Sculpture** this Sunday morning. The sculpture, designed and imagined by resident artists Lisa Lawson and Dave Mitchell, was

built using the hands of 2014 Vacation Bible School participants (and their active assistants). Take a walk in the Memorial Garden and see this unique work of art! (THANK YOU LISA, DAVE, and all for your most excellent assistance.)

4. **TREASURER ANNOUNCEMENT:** We are pleased to announce that Chris Smith and Peter Zaleski have stepped up to fill the Treasurer position at Christ Church. Chris will be taking the lead position and Peter will be assisting from his wealth of banking experience. Transition is in process. Welcome! Thank you for stepping up.

**Thank you Eric Dokken** who has done an excellent job as our treasurer this year. We wish Eric and his wife Christine well as they complete their move to Charlotte, North Carolina.

5. **ROOF** – Contracts are signed and the roofers will begin work on Monday, September 29 (I'm guessing first light). Thank you for your patience during this necessary repair work to our facility! **THANK YOU** to Tom Weaver and our most excellent board of Trustees. This team works hard to provide space for ministry here at 350 Saratoga! Thank you, everyone!

6. **LIVING WELL WORKSHOPS: Help Yourself and Others to have less stress, deeper peace and more.**

"We knew it was working when, instead of staying angry for a couple of days, my wife and I would get over it in a couple of minutes," said Dr. Tom DeLoughry. He was discussing some of the strategies he teaches in **Living Well**, a mind-body-spirit program for seniors, adults and teens. **Christ UMC will be offering this award-winning program, beginning Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. If you prefer to participate from the comfort of your home, you can go online** for the Living Well Internet workshops, beginning Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. The online workshops will be recorded so you can watch at your convenience. You may register for any of these free programs at [www.FindingMoreLove.org](http://www.FindingMoreLove.org) or by calling the church office at 839-2460. Later this fall, **to prepare participants to offer practical help and spiritual support to friends, family and co-workers**, I (Pastor BJ) will be co-leading a **Living Well Coach Training program** with Dr. DeLoughry. Living Well has been honored by *AARP's Social Impact Award* "as simple mind-body-spirit program for grandparents, parents and teens of any faith" "...or no faith." The program is led by a partnership between the Upper New York United Methodist and Lutheran churches, in association with AARP, the Civic Engagement Institute at Niagara University, the Amherst Center for Senior Services and Hearts and

Hands. [Click here to download a Living Well flyer](http://findingmorelove.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/LW-Christ-church-flyer-092014.pdf) [link is <http://findingmorelove.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/LW-Christ-church-flyer-092014.pdf>] to share with family, friends or coworkers. Please visit the Living Well website at [www.FindinfMoreLove.org](http://www.FindinfMoreLove.org) to learn more and to register.

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**Did you know? There are over 40 baskets and other items in the Silent Auction!**

#### 7. This week at Christ Church

WEDNESDAY – September 24 – Finance Workshop “10 Strategies for Securing Your Financial Future.” The workshop is presented in partnership with Allaire Financial Strategies. It is free and open to all (call the Church office to register)

Thursday – September 25 – 7:00 a.m. Men’s Breakfast (Sheridan Family Diner)

10:00 a.m. – Bible Study

2:30p.m. – Dress our People (packing day!)

Friday – September 26 – 5-7 p.m. **Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction**

7:30p.m. – Game Night in the Wesley Room

Saturday – September 27 – Uganda 2015 Team meeting 10:00 a.m.

Monday – September 29 – 7:00p.m. – SPRC meeting

7:00p.m. – “Finance Workshop” “Investment Principles for Today and Beyond”

Tuesday, September 30 – 7:00p.m. – Church Council

#### 8. Food Pantry is collecting: **soap/shampoo/toothpaste**

9. IN OUR PRAYERS: In our Prayers: Dave Mitchell as he recovers from surgery last week (it was good to see him in worship Sunday), Brian Martin (bone marrow transplant was September 17 – pray as he recovers); Glenn Hurst; Edmond Wrycza (Julianna Sabol’s father in a nursing home in Fort Erie) soon to be 97 and not doing well; Lois Lewis, Barbara Clinton, Mac Sabol, Donna Hammond, Tom Davis, Caroline Hess, Fred Painton, Guy Castellino, Mitch Mooney, Bim Rowlands, Glenn Hurst, Nicky Sebastiano, Marian Steve, Ruth Kitson, Shirley Downey, Ed Maker, Alice Schmidt, and Diane Lovejoy. Remember those who are serving in the armed forces (especially Alex Dunbar and Ian Johnson and Lindsey Darling). Pray for the citizens of the Ukraine and Gaza and Israel. Pray for the west African nations that are battling the Ebola virus. Pray for the ongoing

situation in Iraq and Syria. It looks like we are “at war” again. Please pray for all who are in harm’s way.

10. Congratulations to Rosemary Kochan – Grandson born last week – James Paul Dorman is his name. Rosemary is in Memphis helping out.

Many of you know my friend, Rev. Clair Mosher. Clair became a grandfather (first time) last week. We welcomed at 7 pounds 13 ounces, Matthew Dixon Frary.

#### 11. FINANCE WORKSHOPS

September 24 – 7:00p.m. – “Strategies for Securing your Financial future”

September 29 – 7:00 p.m.– “Investment Principles for Today and Beyond”

October 4 at 10:00 a.m.– Children and Money

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12. MYM (Mature Years + Ministry) Autumn Days at Chautauqua Lake. This year’s event is October 3-5 and Rev. Drew Heitzenrater will be the facilitator. Cost for the weekend is \$80, payable to MY+M and mailed to Phyllis Nicholson at 17 Princess Drive Cheektowaga, NY 14225.

13. Happy Birthday this week:

September 24 – Lisa Malpica

September 25 – Danielle Keller

September 26 – Barbara Carier

September 27 – Jean Wood

September 28 – K. Wayne Butler (Niagara Frontier District Superintendent)

14. Happy Anniversary this week:

September 27 – Frank and Linda Parete (39)

15. Through the Bible this week’s readings:

September 24 – Ezekiel 11-13

September 25 – Ezekiel 14-15 and John 11

September 26 – Ezekiel 16-17

September 27 – Ezekiel 18-19 and John 12  
September 28 – Ezekiel 20-21  
September 29 – Ezekiel 22-23 and John 13  
September 30 – Ezekiel 24-26  
October 1 – Ezekiel 27-29 and John 14  
October 2 – Ezekiel 30-32 and John 15

#### 16. DRESS OUR PEOPLE

1. September 25 at 2:30 p.m. – Packing clothing for Ugandan children. All are welcome to come and help!

2. DONATIONS NEEDED – We are in need of plain t-shirts (or funds to make purchase).

24 boys shirts size small (5/6)

Several medium (7/8)

Several Large (10/12)

If you can help with the donation please contact Peggy Nye at 648-1850

#### 17. ON THE MISSION FRONT:

1. **UGANDA 2014:** Pastor BJ Norrix and Joe Fort are **11 days** away from their mission journey to Uganda and Kenya (depart October 5 return October 23). Please keep them and our Ugandan partners in your prayers as they prepare. They will be teaching and preaching in multiple sites, presiding at a Nexus Graduation, opening a new teaching location and reconnecting with our friends there. They also will be travelling to Mombasa, Kenya (on the Indian Ocean) to work with a group of Anglicans. A **Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction** in support of this journey will be held **September 26**.

Rather than taking “direct contributions” for our journey this year we have decided (expecting the dinner and auction to cover the balance of the journey) to take a special collection for Rev. Davis Matovu’s new church plant (and build) in Seta, Uganda. If you would like to make Donations for Davis Matovu’s church at Seta, Uganda see Pastor BJ.

2. **Uganda 2015 youth experience** (June 28 through July 10, 2015). **This team is now 11 (maybe 12 or 14) travelers, with 7 or 8 from Christ Church and 4 – 6 from the Syracuse area.** Is God calling you to join us? I will cap the group at 15. **The Uganda 2015 Mission Team is meeting together on Saturday, September 27 from 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. at Christ Church. We will begin to get acquainted and begin to outline our**

**mission parameters and plans, discuss fund raising and other related African travel matters.**

18. Coming Soon:

September 24 and 29 – Financial Workshop Opportunities at 7:00

**September 26 – Spaghetti Dinner/Silent Auction (over 40 baskets and other items) to support the 2014 Uganda Mission Team**

September 27 – 2015 Uganda Mission Team meeting at 10:00 to 2:00 at Christ Church. There will be at least 11 of us traveling June 28 through July 10

September 30 – Church Council

October 3 – Tom Kossler and Kari Kibler wedding in West Seneca

October 4 – Children and Money workshop at 10:00 a.m.

October 5 – Blessing of the Animals at 10:00 a.m. and Worship following

October 12 – Children’s Sabbath

October 17 – UMW Harvest Dinner

October 19 – CROP Walk for Hunger (1:00p.m. at Amherst Community Church)

November 2 – 350 Saratoga Concert 3:00 p.m.

November 7 – Ron Corsaro Trio – 7:00p.m.

November 16 – Annual Charge Conference

19. Advance Notice: We have been working on scheduling a concert that would feature all of the groups who rehearse at Christ Church. The **“350 Saratoga” Concert will be held on the first Sunday of November at 3:00 in the afternoon.** It will feature select groups from the “Red Blazer Chorus”; the Bel Canto choirs; the Ballroom Dance studio; the Christ Church Choir and Praise Band and some select surprises. Admission will be a canned or boxed item for the food pantry.

20. Speaking of November – Ron Corsaro’s trio will be doing a concert on Friday November 7 (coffee house format) as a fund raiser for Mission Youth (in particular the 2015 mission team) . . . plan to come and enjoy an evening of excellent jazz!

### ***Parting thought***

I see that we are “at war” again. Part of me wants to rail against violence of any kind and part of me realizes that this “ISIS or ISIL” group is comprised of mean spirited bullies and the only way to deal with a bully is by direct confrontation. But I am conflicted. I am concerned that many will take the “Islamic State” language and think that the religion of Islam is somehow more inherently violent than other religions. I’ve read the Koran (at

least an English translation) and it is no more violent than the majority of the Bible nor is it any more inherently violent than the religious texts of Hinduism. I am conflicted because I see and acknowledge that these same violent tendencies have roots in me. There are times when I want to be so right about what I believe that I am willing to do damage to others to promote it (like when I'm cheering for my favorite football team). Historically, people claiming to be under the banner of Christianity have started wars and have started new "states." Most of these were violent, bloody affairs. All of them did serious disservice to the name and cause of Jesus of Nazareth. The fundamental problem is not "Muslim/Christian/Jewish/Hindu/whatever." The fundamental problem is that human beings are inherently violent creatures who use whatever ideological (religious, anti-religious, political philosophy or world view) underpinning they can find to promote their thirst for power and control. Before, and even when, I condemn such senseless and destructive acts of violence, I had better take the time to connect with those profoundly violent tendencies in my own soul – and work even harder through the practice of spiritual exercises to root them out of me. C.S. Lewis wrote during WWII that the time may come when it will be necessary to "kill my enemy". However, he wrote, it will never be necessary or right to hate him/her. Pray for our leaders (and our enemies). That is the Christian response. Even if I have to oppose the oppressor, I am never permitted to hate them. Jesus says to pray for your enemies and to bless those who persecute you (bless and DO NOT curse). May I find the grace to do so.

I'll see you when the church gathers,

BJ Norrix, apprentice to Jesus, missionary, lead servant

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