

Christ United Methodist Church
Snyder, New York

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

UPDATE

December 10, 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:

We are half way through Advent and on our way to celebrate the Incarnation! We have celebrated Jesus the bringer of peace. We have been challenged by Jesus the bringer of Hope! This week we are looking at Love. We sing the carol “Love came down at Christmas”. We see the season as a time to “gather with the ones you love” and we recognize that the Incarnation is an essential component of our understanding of God’s love for God’s creation. Small acts of love can change the world. We sometimes delude ourselves into thinking that we have to do things on a grand scale – somehow with one mighty gesture we will put it all right. But that is not God’s way nor the biblical way. Mary’s pregnancy still took 9 months, Jesus was 30 when his public ministry took place – these things took time to develop, to mature and to come to the fullest fruition. Small acts of love change the world. When we look at the Christmas story it would be easy to be overwhelmed by the shouts of shepherds or the choirs of angels and the enormous and outrageous fact

that God became a human being and lived among us. But if we did that we might miss the small acts of love that make it all happen. Mary's "let it be according to your word" (Luke 1:38) or Joseph's refusal to "set Mary aside quietly" (Matthew 1:19) are great examples of these small acts of love that make the rest of the story possible. I often wonder if I am missing the chance to make a difference because I am looking to make a "big splash" and all God needs from me is a kind word, a presence, a simple gesture . . . an act of love.

Here is what is going on at Church:

1. Attendance last Sunday was 150. With appreciation to Mac and Melanie and George Frederick Handel!
2. This Sunday is the Third Sunday in Advent. We are going to look at a poem, spoken by Jesus' mother Mary, in Luke 1:38. The poem is usually called the "Magnificat" (the first word in the Latin version) and is one of the most radical and politically disturbing poems in the entire Bible. It speaks of an inversion – up becomes down, down becomes up. It speaks of the powerful being deposed and the marginalized being lifted up.
3. On behalf of the Staff (Sally, Dave, Doris, Janelle, Kevin and I) we would like to thank the Staff Parish Relations Team for a lovely Christmas gathering last evening. Everyone seemed to have a great time. Thank you to Peggy and Brad Bermudez for hosting us.
4. In our prayers: Sandy Cummings had foot surgery on Friday; Mitch Mooney had surgery Friday; Janelle Martin (our Office Manager) is having shoulder surgery on Tuesday; Fred Painton (good to see him Sunday morning); Guy Castellino, 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. Remember to pray for Alex and Ian (US Navy) and all our service men and women; remember those looking for work and all who may be in harm's way. Pray for families in crisis (especially this time of year).
5. Christmas Pageant is Sunday December 22 at 11:00 a.m. "Bed, Bethlehem and Beyond!" Join us for this Bed & Breakfast event. Breakfast will be served in Crafts Hall. Sponsored by the Christian Education Team.
6. CHRISTMAS EVE Tuesday, December 24 at CHRIST CHURCH

9:00 p.m. – Lessons and Carols with Candles featuring our Choir and a message from Pastor BJ

11:00 p.m. – Carols, Candles and Communion and a message from Pastor BJ

Christmas Eve Reception – Join us on Christmas Eve for a reception following the 9:00 p.m. worship celebration. If you can supply cookies or other snack items please let Sally know (or use the form provided in Sunday's bulletin).

7. Christ Church Joys from your Mission team:

A. The Family Justice Center coalition of churches received this message from Mary Murphy today:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We showed off the new satellite yesterday to our partners and they were sincerely flabbergasted at how gorgeous it is and especially at the massive team effort that went in to making it happen. Your efforts are so very impressive and so, so, so appreciated. I will be forever grateful for your time, your talent, your treasure. One of our board members, who saw it for the first time yesterday, was overwhelmed at the transformation of the house and, again, at the enormous outpouring of help that made it happen. Meantime, we're getting close to serving clients at the new site.

B. At the Habitat for Humanity Buffalo Celebration tonight, Barbara and Bruce Burr were honored with a Key of Hope Award for their devoted service to the Habitat Buffalo Family Committee since its inception in 1985. They were consultants to the very first Habitat Buffalo family and continue to serve on that team. Marg Bauza presented the Christ Church partnership church gift of \$1000. Partnership churches gave over \$11,000 and M&T matched \$8000, for a total of over \$19,000.

C. Keh Blut (the father from our Journey's End family) is now employed at the Cheesecake Factory.

8. Uganda Necklaces are available this Sunday – We sold over half of them last Sunday -- these colorful lacquered paper necklaces are available for just \$5 each. All proceeds go to support a women's ministry in Jinja, Uganda run by our friend Moses Wasige. They make great gifts!

9. Happy Birthday this week:

December 11 – Ed Fisher, Gavin Gabel, Geoff Hill (AND **Dave Wolf, church custodian**)

December 13 – Betty Kreib; Marcia Rhinehart, Marilyn Morris Chris Smith

December 14 – Meaghan Ramsey

10. Happy Anniversary this week – there are none listed

11. **Leadership needs:** Christ Church is seeking a volunteer treasurer. Knowledge of Quicken is a huge plus. Position works with the Office Manger (who will be doing most of the “clerking and data entry work”) to pay the churches bills and give periodic status reports. If you are interested see me.

12. This week at Christ Church:

December 10 – **CHURCH CHOIR – note change in date**

December 11 -- Bible Study at 10:00 a.m.

December 14 – Pageant Rehearsal 10:00 a.m. to Noon – Christian Education team meets at Noon

December 15 – Circle of Joy “Potluck Dinner and Arts and Crafts Program at 5:00 p.m.

December 16 – 9:00 Worship Team rehearsal at 6:00

13. **Calling all Singers:** The Chancel Choir is Rehearsing on TUESDAYS (December 10 and 17). We are getting ready for Christmas Eve and the end of Advent. Come and join us in the choir room at 7:30.

14. First Meeting of Disciple Bible Study is Sunday, January 5 at 6:00 at the Church. This 34 week Bible Survey course is open to all and will be taught by Rev. Jim Pollard and Rev. B.J. Norrix. **If you are planning to participate:** we need to know so we can have the books ordered and on site for the 5th.

15. Through the Bible in a Year:

December 10 – 2 Timothy 1-4

December 11 – Philemon, Hebrews 1-4

December 12 – Hebrews 5-8

December 13 – Hebrews 9-11

December 14 – Hebrews 12-13; Jude

December 15 – James 1-5

December 16 – 1 Peter 1-5

December 17 – 2 Peter 1-3, Gospel of John 1

December 18 – John 2-4

December 19 – John 5-6

16. Coming in January . . . a couple of ideas

1. Would anyone be interested in a Breakfast group (a before work Bible/Faith discussion). We could meet at a local restaurant . . . see BJ

2. We have read through the New Testament and the whole Bible . . . do you want another reading schedule? Let me know. We could, for example, read the Bible Chronologically. . .

17. Beginning January 5 AOL (Adult Opportunities for Learning) will begin a series titled “The Wesleyan Way: A Faith that Matters.” This class meets in the Wesley Room on Sunday’s at 10:00 a.m.

18. **Year End Giving:** Many of Christ Church’s members and friends make “end of year” contributions. As a reminder for these to be credited to 2013 we need them by December 29. We appreciate your generosity and faithfulness!!

19. A **“Year End Giving” challenge.** As many of you are aware we are significantly behind in our Annual “Shared Ministry” commitment to the Upper New York Annual Conference. I am challenging all of Christ Church’s members and friends to make one additional gift (tithe) to close the year. I am going to give \$105 which is the equivalent of one week’s tithe for my regular giving. I challenge all of us to do the same (or more if you can). These funds will be used to make our “end of year” payment to the Annual Conference. Our Shared Ministry Giving is what makes it possible for our Church to have the pastoral leadership it has and helps to connect us to the global church. It helps to fund church camps, and our Bishop, it helps to fund District leadership and Global ministries. It helps keep us connected and faithful members of the United Methodist Church. Thank you, in advance, for your commitment to this covenant.

Parting Thought:

Carly Simon’s iconic song “Anticipation” fills my head and reminds me of the season of Advent. Although it probably also reminds us of ketchup, thanks to it being used in those commercials, there is significance to “making us wait” and “keeping us waiting”. I live in an “instant gratification” world where instant does not seem to be fast enough. I live in a culture that has no sense of waiting – 24 hour groceries, 24 hour banking, 24 hour, well, pretty much everything. Everything has to be available when I want. Waiting is countercultural. It goes against the flow. Waiting is good for us because it reminds us of how the rest of the world lives. So, half way through Advent, when all the rest of the culture around us is “rocking around the Christmas Tree” and having “Grandma run over by reindeer”, I sit in silence and I wait. I am waiting for something more than a jolly fat man. I am

waiting for the coming of the one who will turn everything upside down . . .
frankly who has already turned my life upside down. He is worth the wait. The
Feast of the Incarnation is only 15 days away. I can hardly stand waiting for him!
But I will wait and I will watch because I want to be ready for the real deal when
he arrives. . .

I'll see you when the Church gathers,

BJ Norrix, lead servant, missionary, anticipator

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