

United Parish of Bowie

United in Christ—Our Mission: To Serve
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

FALL 2009
NEWSLETTER



Here, Gratitude, Now, Grace! by Rev. Dan Holland

I bring to you an offering of four words — as a window into my spiritual journey — which I've held onto from the experience of a retreat almost ten years ago that was a turning point in my call to ministry.

I didn't really know what I was doing there. I had way too much work back at home, and it was hard to imagine what tangible benefit a prayer retreat was going to be for my real life. The leader of the retreat invited us to "marinate in prayer." He told us that Sabbath is *the* spiritual practice of the Christian life because it is the time we set aside to relate with God. That week, our Sabbath took the form of silence every morning from the time we woke up until after lunch. It was the longest silence I could remember. As we prayed with scripture on the first morning, the word that seemed to speak to me, in fact the only word that spoke at all in the midst of the morning silence was the word "here." It was a reminder that regardless of when or where "here" may be, that's exactly where God is. I walked the grounds of the retreat center I saw the stability of God in the boulders in the stream. I saw the sustenance of God as the animals foraged on the forest floor. I saw the guidance of God as the path extended before and behind me as far as I could see... In the freedom of the birds, the constant call of the flowing water: no matter where I looked I saw a revelation of the character of God. It is true that God is everywhere... and when I have eyes to see, God is especially here.

The next morning we walked the labyrinth. I was acutely aware of the winding path, people walking near me, passing in either direction, no way to know who's on the way in, who's on the way out. As I walked I was struck by gratitude. The concept was utterly foreign to my then-present world of stress and isolation. As I prayed for hope, the sun began to break through the clouds, as I prayed to know the spirit's presence in my life, rain fell gently on my face. It happened at the same time, the mixture of sun and rain; it was the perfect metaphor of hope and presence... the sun shined, always searching for a way through the clouds—regardless of my mood; the rain fell on the just and the unjust alike. As I stood there getting wet, I realized that the things in my life which had been weighing me down weren't given by God as burdens, but rather as opportunities—perhaps even blessings. It was an invitation to give up some of the shoulds and oughts, to let go of some of the feelings of failure and inadequacy that I carried around and instead, to recognize, to enjoy and to be grateful for the gifts of God.

I don't remember the specific time that week when the third word came into my consciousness. I guess that's fitting because the word was "now" and what it meant for me is to live in the present... not caught up in anxiety about the future or worry about the past. "Now" is the time in which I get to choose who I am and who I will be. "Now" is the concrete expression of my priority which is neither a promise nor a memory. Each and every moment, "now" is the only time I have.

The final word is "grace" and it is what has allowed me to remain in ministry for the last decade. I will never forget the feeling when, after speaking with her for half an hour, the spiritual director at the retreat looked me in the eye and asked if I was one of those people who was trying to put Jesus out of a job. She had seen right through me... I was. Somehow my work in ministry had become all about me. Without realizing it I had lost my ability to listen to God because I was so busy trying to be God. But her question brought freedom because it showed me the truth of where I was and also offered the way to get back to right relationship—grace. I'm not called to be a savior (thank God that job's already been taken), but I am called to participate in the savior's work. I'm not called to be perfect, but I am called to be faithful.

The words and invitations of that week almost a decade ago resonate strongly in my life even to this day. And so I offer them to you, in the hope that we all might remember with gratitude to rely on God's grace in every "here" and in every "now."

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Fall Adult Ed: A Celebration of Discipline

Take advantage of our UPB Adult Christian Education class. Offered on Sunday mornings from 10 to 10:45 am in the Christian Education Room, it is a great way to dig deeper in faith while enjoying a cup of coffee before the worship service. Nursery care is available for children.

This fall we will be looking at the “modern classic” book *The Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster. We are drawing from the wealth of talented teachers at UPB and

have a wonderful team ready to guide us through the Disciplines, with a new teacher and style each week. We will be taking an in depth look into: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, Confession Worship, Guidance, Bible Study, and Celebration.

Class begins September 20th and will wrap up November 22nd. Please talk with UPB Adult Education Chair Doug Snyder to find out more!

Stewardship at UPB

I’ve heard that when people hear stewardship season is coming they often have one of two reactions... Either a wave comes over them... “Oh no, are we going to have to listen to someone tell us to give money for four weeks?” or a question arises...

“What is stewardship anyway?”

One author defined stewardship as “the responsive practice of humans tending to what has been placed in their care by God.” You’ll notice that if we believe God has given us

everything, that definition includes all we do and all we have: our time, our gifts, our abilities and our resources... but even when we believe it theoretically, it’s hard to imagine what acting on that would look like.

It is not the person who has too little who is poor, but the one who hankers after more... What is the proper limit to a person’s wealth? First, having what is essential, and second, having what is enough.

—Seneca (Letters to Lucilius)

Fall Leadership Workshop 9/26

Get involved in helping UPB to prayerfully meet our mission, vision, and values as we plan for the future. Please come to the Fall Leadership Workshop on Saturday, September 26th from 9am to Noon. We will continue the discussion begun at the Spring Leadership One-Day retreat, incorporating the results of the Natural Church Development Survey, and examining how to lead UPB into the future.

All who are in leadership roles (committee chairs, board members, etc) should plan to be there as well as anyone who wants to take part in the discussion of the direction of the church. RSVP to Pastor Dan.

So, in this stewardship season, we’ll ask the question: How can I live faithfully and how can I give faithfully in a world that’s so engaged in getting, spending, accumulating and filling the calendar? —especially given that I’m not ready to abandon the comforts of life and move to the middle of nowhere.

Josi Hillary will be coordinating the stewardship season, which begins the 11th of October and will culminate with the Consecration Sunday Celebration Luncheon on November 1 after the service. Save the date and make plans now to be there!

Fall Fellowship Events by UPB Fellowship Chair Jan Barbato

There are a lot of opportunities for fellowship at the United Parish this Fall. Please mark your calendars and get excited!

Fall Fellowship Events:

Rally Sunday

Sunday September 13th

A special worship service followed by an all church picnic and ministry fair! A great opportunity for outreach, fellowship, and to find out all UPB has to offer in the year.

Progressive Dinner

Saturday October 10th

Travel to UPB homes as you progress through the courses of dinner. A delicious way to get to know folks better!

Consecration Sunday Sunday November 11th

Celebrate the success of the UPB stewardship drive with the annual luncheon.

Bowie Interfaith

Thanksgiving Service

Wednesday Nov. 25th Evening

Connect with the interfaith community in a Thanksgiving celebration. A great time to come together with others in the common bond of faith and thankfulness.

Ongoing Fellowship Events

Chat & Chew: A time of food and fellowship after worship the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Bring food to share (A to G, 2nd Sun., H to Z, 4th Sun)

***Mark your calendars
now for all the Fall
Fellowship Events!***

UPB Book Club: A gathering of new and old friends to enjoy food and good conversation on the 1st Friday of the month: 9/11 due to holiday, 10/2, and 11/6.

Family Playdate: A time for families of all ages to participate in a fun activity together the 3rd Sun. of each month after worship.

Men's Breakfast: A gathering of UPB Men the 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month at 7:30am at Bowie Bob Evans.

At the Baseball Game by Natalie Holland, age 3, as dictated to and edited by her mom

We went to two baseball games this summer with the church. Dora the Explorer and Boots were there for one of them. They are my favorites. Our church friends were there too.

Diane explained how baseball works. I had fun playing with the other church kids. We got to eat peanuts and ice cream too! I liked that.

I hope we get to go next summer with everyone again and even stay for the fireworks!



Enjoying the view at the Bowie Baysox Game

Are You Toned and Ready for Fall Opportunities?

by Shirley Klotz Bickel

In mid-life numerous people reach a point where they're dissatisfied with the condition of their bodies.. If one's core muscles have become weak or flabby, a prudent person will start to stretch and strengthen those muscles to improve her tone. It's a positive action when one tries to evaluate the physical signs of one's health and determine if corrective action would be beneficial.

Likewise, if one professes to live in daily relationship with Christ, it's wise for that person to do some self-examination. As a follower of Christ, one doesn't want to become weak and unhealthy in one's spirit. After

all, it's the spirit of each person that has been designed for an eternity of living with God, and that is exciting to contemplate.. A Christian needs to exercise and nourish his spirit in order to have a healthy spirit. How does one strengthen that spirit? If one engages in daily conversations with God, studying God's Word and books relating to living as a Christian, one's spirit will not wither. If a person's faith in Christ is action-oriented in daily encounters, that person is strengthening her spirit's tone and making preparations for her life beyond the grave. If a person ever reaches the point where he/she doesn't feel the need to learn more about what it means to live each day with Christ at the helm, that person has probably developed a sagging spirit that needs rejuvenation.

One can have surgery to restore better vision, to walk without a cane, to remove an abscessed tooth, and such actions can



improve the tone of one's health. However, nothing can transform a sagging spirit and improve the tone of one's spirit more than a renewed commitment to know Christ better and let Him direct one's daily endeavors. In searching for a more meaningful life, we can become more diligent in searching God's Word. We can strengthen our relationships with other people who have picked Christ as their mentor and their Savior. We can support one another as we consider what it means to imitate Christ. Toning one's spirit is a lifelong commitment, and most of us have so much to learn.

We want to hear from you!

Please send all announcements,

photos, and articles to

upbannounce@gmail.com .

Winter Newsletter Deadline: 11/18

Chat and Chew Standard by UPB Fellowship Chair Jan Barbato

It has been brought to my attention that the Chat and Chew Evaluation Committee is looking for members available to help revamp and revitalize the standards which were set in January 2001, as published in our 2001 UPB Cookbook. We're anticipating that a list of suggested items and their acceptable substitutes will be disseminated along with a

rubric of items required for the best possible grade.

Committee members are asked to partake of our after church refreshments on the second and fourth Sundays of each month and judge whether the Congregation has put forth their best efforts. Our guidelines thus far state that those whose last names begin with A through G should provide the

refreshments on the second Sunday, and last names H through Z have the fourth Sunday responsibility.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this committee, please contact Jan Barbato or Roy Eades. Our committee members should be evenly divided among the letters of the alphabet to avoid bias.

UPB Work Day



Clean Up Day

Fall clean-up
November 7th
from 9am-Done.
There's a lot to
be done both
inside and out!
Sign up in the
Narthex.

UPB Choir

The UPB Choir has started but it is not too late to join the fun! All abilities are welcome. Rehearsals take place Wednesdays at 7:30pm in the sanctuary. Please talk with choir director, Diane Eades if you are interested.

UPB Prayer Group

Inspired by the large interest in the Spring Prayer Course, we will be beginning an UPB Prayer group, meeting the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm. All are welcome. Contact Rebecca Holland for more information.

Festival of Carols Special Choir an invitation from Diane Eades

We are already preparing for the UPB Festival of Carols Worship Service happening on Sunday, December 20th. Please consider participating in the special choir or being a part of the artistic team. All talents are welcome!

Festival Choir Rehearsals

Tenor/Bass Sectionals:

9/23 6:45 to 7:30pm
10/7 6:45 to 7:30pm
10/28 6:45 to 7:30pm
11/11 6:45 to 7:30pm

Soprano/Alto Sectionals:

9/30 6:45 to 7:30pm
10/14 6:45 to 7:30pm
10/21 6:45 to 7:30pm
11/4 6:45 to 7:30pm

Full Festival Choir:

Saturday 10/3 9am
Saturday 10/31 9am
Wed. 11/18 6:45 pm
Wed. 12/2 7:30 pm

Dress Rehearsal

Saturday 12/19 9am



Talk with our Choir Director Diane Eades to find out more about how to get involved!

UPB Fall Service Opportunities - Make a Difference

Fall is a great time to get involved in a UPB Service Project. You can encourage your whole family to participate in living out our faith as we serve those in need in our community.

Make a Meal Together!

We are continuing to provide meals for the Family Crisis Center the third Sunday of

every month. To get involved, sign up in the Narthex with what you would like to provide for the families in need.

Buy Food to Donate

We are also continuing to collect dry and canned food for the Bowie Food Pantry. Please bring your donations to the box in the Narthex.

Join with the Youth Project

The UPB Youth will be creating and organizing a service project for December 6th. Sign up to participate!

Take Initiative!

There are countless opportunities and ways we can serve our community. Talk with UPB Mission and Service chair, Nancy Snyder.

Children's Corner by Children's Director Nikki Hillary

The new Sunday school year is ahead and we are excited about it. There will be two classes, one for the elementary kids, and another for preschool and kindergarten kids. Kids are welcome to attend the class that best fits their needs.

Elementary Sunday School

We are going with a new curriculum called Power Express. This calls for several teachers to present the same Bible story or theme over six to eight weeks each using a different participatory teaching method.

We start our Fall classes with the study "Abraham and Sarah" contained in selected passages in Genesis 12 through 21. The focus of the study is *God promised to be with Abraham and Sarah just as He promises to be with us today*. Eight teachers will use eight different lesson plans on "Abraham and Sarah" each through methods of art, storytelling, creative cookery, science, games, computer, music, drama, or video. So, there is plenty of opportunity of adults in our church to use their special gifts to teach the children one Sunday (during a period of three months) which will do wonders for the kids; and provide the satisfaction of educating the kids for the adults.

Preschool & Kindergarten Sunday School Class

For the younger class, we are going to use the curriculum distributed by the Presbyterian Church (USA) called "Wee-believers." The focus of the year-long study is *God made me and I am a child of God* using various verses from the Bible and activities. We aim to instill the concept that each one of them is a child of God and loved by God. The children will come to know of God's love through Jesus Christ and others in their lives who love and care for them, such as parents, church, school, community.



UPB Kids Enjoying Summer

Sunday School Staff

There will be two adults in each class. The older class will be taught by a teacher and greeted and taken care of by a "Shepherd". Shepherd is a "Power Express name" for the teacher's helper. The younger class will be staffed by a teacher and a teacher's aide.

Children in Worship

We believe that it is important for the children to worship with all members of their church family and take part in singing, praying, worshipping, and become familiar with the order of service. Therefore we are making some changes to our Sunday school schedule.

The Elementary Sunday School students will:

begin in the service for a short time every Sunday before they are dismissed for classes ;

begin in the service for a longer time on the third Sundays, which will include a children's sermon;

begin and worship with all for the entire service on special Sundays, like Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. There will be no Sunday school on those days.

We are looking forward to the new Sunday school year and to welcoming the children back in the classrooms!

UPB Youth's Day at Six Flags by UPB Youth Member Megan Fuqua

Imagine a towering roller coaster of steel 250 feet high. The superman is the tallest rollercoaster at six flags, it so tall you can see it from the parking lot out front.

Some of us went on it and had a blast but a couple kids went on twice.... With their hands in the air.

The youth group of UPB went to six flags for a little fun but it was an adventure.

Some of us went on our first roller coaster, others their 20th, and one person both.

There was laughing and screaming, we all had a blast.



UPB Youth at Six Flags

UPB Youth Group 2009—2010

Who?

United Parish Middle School and High School Youth and the adults volunteering to be a part of their lives!

Where? When?

1st Sunday of the month
Service Project or Fun Event
out on the town! The youth will decide where they go!

How?

With your help!

Please volunteer to provide a lunch for the youth, help drive to an event, or work directly with youth! Email upbannounce@gmail.com to find out more!

What?

Gather for fun, food, fellowship, and faith!

3rd Sunday of the Month

Meet in the UPB Library for youth group fun!

UPB Family Playdates - 3rd Sunday of the Month

Families of all ages are invited to attend one of the United Parish Family Playdates on the 3rd Sunday of each month, following worship.

The Family Playdates are a wonderful opportunity for the families of the church to get to know, support, and encourage one another in faith.

Please join us for one or all of the Family Playdates!



Fun at a UPB Summer Family Playdate

September 20th

Picnic in the Park
We will head to a local park for a family picnic and play!

October 18th

Pumpkins and Crafts!
We will create fall decorations for our homes!

November 15th

Playdate Event to be announced—mark your calendars & plan to be there!

Fall 2009

UPB Worship 11 am

Nursery Care Available for Infants and Young Children

Sunday School Available for Preschool to Elementary Children

RALLY SUNDAY - September 13th

Special Worship Service 11 am

All Church Picnic and Ministry Fair following

All are welcome! Come experience meaningful worship, friendly fellowship, good food, games, and more as the United Parish kicks off its program year. Invite your friends and family to join in the fun!

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Address Correction Requested